

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

NOTE TO USERS

The original manuscript received by UMI contains pages with slanted print. Pages were microfilmed as received.

This reproduction is the best copy available

UMI



Université d'Ottawa • University of Ottawa

**DISTRICTS AND DISTRICT SUPERIORS
WITHIN THE MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE**

by
 Rev. Thomas M. CASSIDY, O.M.I.

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Canon Law,
Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Canada, in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Canon Law

Ottawa, Canada
Saint Paul University
1997



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-28329-1

Canada

Districts and District Superiors Within the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Thomas M. Cassidy, OMI

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a Catholic missionary institute, founded in France in 1826 by Saint Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod, has always placed a very strong emphasis on the importance of high quality, fraternal, community living. This emphasis was, in part, a result of the impact of the founder's own dysfunctional family history on his personality and value system.

His congregation spread quickly to four continents, while there were actually very few members. Geographic factors necessitated that many early Oblate missionaries live alone, or with fewer confreres than were necessary to form a canonical house, the mainstay of religious community living at the time. The Oblate general administration of de Mazenod's immediate successor approved the grouping of these isolated missionaries into geographically based units, local communities called 'districts', which had most of the characteristics of a house, including a superior. From the beginning, the sole purpose of districts was to facilitate the living of the *vita fraterna* in inhospitable circumstances. Districts existed for over 25 years before, with the approval of the Holy See, they became part of Oblate proper law in 1910.

Districts were soon employed in various areas of the congregation to solve problems (geographic, political, apostolic), which arose from time to time. The Second Vatican Council, the 1982 Constitutions and Rules, and the 1983 Code of Canon Law relaxed or removed many legal restrictions on religious institutes and called for renewal and restructuring. The legal, theological, and spiritual texts from these sources called for the proper application of the principle of subsidiarity within religious institutes.

Prior to the Second Vatican Council, district communities were usually established in current or former mission territories and in rural areas. Since the Council, that concept has been expanded beyond mission and rural areas to cover urban areas within the Oblates, especially in provinces where numbers are decreasing, institutions are disappearing, and individual apostolates are more common. Contemporary districts, where over 25 percent of the congregation now live, have met with varied levels of success, depending on the manner in which each province has applied the concept.

After the 1992 General Chapter, which reaffirmed their existence and importance for the Oblates, the Holy See expressed a specific interest in the theory and praxis of districts and district superiors.

The preliminary questions posed in this work are interconnected. What lies at the root of the establishment of districts, and district superiors, within the Oblates? How did the practice spread? How was it viewed by the general chapters of the institute and by the common law of the Church over the century and a half since its beginning? How was it renewed in the light of the call of the Second Vatican Council? What is its current status and future prospects in Canada and the United States? Are the changes to the administrative structures, proposed in 1996 for the 1998 General Chapter, a help or a hinderance to the enhancement of this type of local community?

The answers to those preliminary ones build up to the two major questions asked in this thesis:

– Is there sufficient basis in the common law, the themes of the renewal of religious life as found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, and in the historic lived reality within the Oblate Congregation, for this concept of districts, with superiors, as local units of apostolic community and government, to be put forward as a clear and practical model for other institutes?

– Is it possible to propose a canonically-based definition of a district, such that it could be applicable within any apostolic religious institute, male or female, clerical or lay?

The first four chapters analyse the history and legal basis of districts; the fifth analyses a lengthy questionnaire on the present status and future prospects of districts, answered by a large proportion of the general administration, North American provincials, and district superiors; the sixth critiques the proposed changes to the Constitutions and Rules on the subject. The conclusion outlines the historical and canonical basis of districts and presents both the comprehensive concept and the definition of a district in such a way that it can be utilized by any apostolic institute having local superiors, be it male or female, clerical or lay.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
INTRODUCTION	xii
Chapter 1: OBLATE HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF DISTRICT COMMUNITIES	1
1.1. History of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate	1
1.1.1. Nature and Foundation	1
1.1.2. The Early Years of the Society	3
1.1.3. Papal Approval	5
1.1.4. Expansion in General	7
1.2. Family Life of the Founder and His Community Concept	8
1.2.1. Early Life of the Founder	8
1.2.2. Exile Years	10
1.2.3. Eugene's Exile's End	16
1.2.4. Back in France	18
1.2.5. Saint-Sulpice Seminary, Paris	20
1.2.6. Return to Aix-en-Provence	22
1.2.7. The Deaths of Eugene's Parents	23
1.2.8. Family Life: Conclusion	24
1.3. Historical Circumstances of the Introduction of Districts/District Superiors in the Oblates	25
1.3.1. France: 1816-1826	25
1.3.2. Importance of Community Life	26
1.3.2.1. Article 1 of the Rule	26
1.3.2.2. Writings of the Founder	27
1.3.3. Expansion: 1826-1851	30
1.3.4. Foreign Missions: Provinces and Vicariates of Missions	32
1.4. Chapter Summary	35
Chapter 2: CEYLON AND THE EARLY DISTRICTS	36
2.1. The Missions of Ceylon	36
2.1.1. Bishop Étienne Séméria, O.M.I.	38

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ii

2.1.2. The Apostolate and the Community	39
2.1.3. Séméria and Fabre	40
2.1.4. Approval of Oblate Districts, 1865	44
2.1.5. Bishop Christophe Bonjean, O.M.I.	46
2.2. The Spread of Districts to Other Territories According to the Official Personnels	48
2.2.1. Personnel, No. 1, 1880	48
2.2.2. Personnel, No. 2	50
2.2.3. Personnel, Nos. 3 to 23	50
2.3. Ecclesiastical History of Districts	50
2.3.1. Diocesan Districts	51
2.3.2. Districts under the <i>Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide</i>	52
2.3.3. Uncertain Ecclesiastical Roots	54
2.4. Districts in Religious Law	54
2.5. Districts According to Oblate Pre-Code General Chapters	55
2.5.1. The 1893 General Chapter and Previous General Chapters	56
2.5.2. The Chapter of 1904 and the French Third Republic	57
2.5.3. General Chapter of 1908 (September 19 to October 24)	60
2.6. Parallels in Other Clerical Religious Institutes	61
2.7. Chapter Summary	66
Chapter 3: THE LAW PRIOR TO THE 1983 CODE	68
3.1. Religious Life Prior to the Second Vatican Council	68
3.1.1. The Beginnings of Religious Life	68
3.1.2. Monasticism	68
3.1.3. The Mendicant Orders	69
3.1.4. Conciliar Legislation	70
3.1.5. The Society of Jesus: Clerks Regular	71
3.1.6. Spread of Institutes of Simple Vows	72
3.1.7. The French Revolution	73
3.1.8. District as Custom	75
3.1.9. The First Vatican Council	76
3.1.10. Documents of the Holy See: 1900-1917	76
3.1.11. The 1917 Code of Canon Law	78
3.1.12. Conforming to the 1917 Code	79
3.1.13. Prior Rights	80
3.1.14. The Local Superior (1917 Code)	81
3.1.15. Oblate Establishments	82

TABLE OF CONTENTS

iii

3.1.16. District Superiors' and Residence Directors' Functions	83
3.1.17. The Local Superior (1928)	84
3.1.17.1. The Authority of the District Superior	84
3.1.17.2. Subsidiarity: Individuals and District Superiors	86
3.1.18. The Status of a District as a Moral Person	87
3.1.19. Constitutional Amendments of 1953	88
3.2. Second Vatican Council and Contemporary General Chapters	89
3.2.1. The Calling of the Council	89
3.2.2. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)	90
3.2.3. <i>Lumen gentium</i> : Chapter VI - "Religious"	91
3.2.4. <i>Perfectæ caritatis</i>	91
3.2.5. <i>Motu proprio. Ecclesiæ sanctæ</i>	92
3.2.6. The General Chapter of 1966	93
3.2.6.1. Preliminary Work	93
3.2.6.2. The Constitutions and Rules, <i>ad experimentum</i>	94
3.2.6.2.1. Apostolic Community	94
3.2.6.2.2. The Role of the Superior	95
3.2.6.2.3. Renewal of the Apostolic Community	96
3.2.6.2.4. Spirit of Government: Role of Superiors	97
3.2.6.2.5. Constitutions and Rules for Local Superiors	99
3.2.6.2.6. The District Council	100
3.2.6.2.7. The Community as Extraordinary Council	101
3.2.6.2.8. Minor Divisions of the Congregation	103
3.2.6.3. End of the First Phase of Vatican II Renewal	103
3.2.7. The General Chapter of 1972	104
3.2.7.1. Administrative Structures Renewed	105
3.2.7.2. Subsidiarity in Administrative Structures	105
3.2.8. The General Chapter of 1974	106
3.3. Chapter Summary	107
3.3.1. Prior to the Second Vatican Council	107
3.3.2. The Second Vatican Council Until 1974	108
Chapter 4: THE REVISED CODE AND THE NEW RULE (1982/87)	110
4.1. Moving Towards the Revised Code: The 1977 Draft	110
4.1.1. Subsidiarity as a Principle of Revision	112
4.1.2. The 1978 Reports and Revisions and the 1980 Draft	113
4.2. The General Chapters of 1980 and 1986	114
4.3. The 1983 Code of Canon Law	115
4.3.1. Mind of the Legislator	115
4.3.2. The Legislation	115

TABLE OF CONTENTS

iv

4.3.2.1. Subsidiarity	116
4.3.2.2. Religious Life: Canon 607	117
4.3.2.3. <i>Domus</i> or House – Generic	117
4.3.2.4. <i>Domus</i> or House – Specific	118
4.3.2.6. “House” in Subsequent Canons	119
4.3.2.7. Summary: Houses and Districts	123
4.3.3. Local Superiors	124
4.4. The 1980 and 1986 General Chapters and the 1982/87 Constitutions and Rules	125
4.4.1. Preparation of the Proposed Text (1979)	125
4.4.2. The Proposed Texts and the 1980 Text	126
4.4.2.1. Apostolic Community	127
4.4.2.2. Spirit of Government	128
4.4.2.3. Administrative Divisions: Community Bonds	129
4.4.2.4. The Local Community	129
4.4.2.5. District Superior’s Term and His Council	131
4.4.2.6. Districts and the Ownership of Property	132
4.4.2.7. Approval by the Holy See	132
4.4.3. The 1986 General Chapter and the Adjustments to the Constitutions and Rules	132
4.4.3.1. Changes to the Constitutions	133
4.4.3.2. Changes to the Rules	133
4.5. The General Chapter of 1992	134
4.5.1. Lead-Up to the Chapter: District Survey	134
4.5.2. Lead-Up to the Chapter: Growing Awareness	136
4.5.3. State of the Congregation Report	138
4.5.4. “Witnessing as Apostolic Community”	141
4.5.5. Administrative Structures Committee	142
4.6. Other Related Activities Outside the General Chapter Committee	142
4.6.1. Correspondence with the Roman Congregation	142
4.6.2. Synod of Bishops, IX Ordinary Assembly: “The Consecrated Life and Its Role in the Church and in the World”	143
4.6.2.1. <i>Lineamenta</i>	143
4.6.2.2. <i>Instrumentum laboris</i>	144
4.6.2.3. <i>Vita Consecrata</i>	147
4.6.2.4. Synod Conclusion	148
4.6.3. Regional and Provincial Directories: Administration of Temporal Goods	148
4.6.4. Districts: “The Wheat and the Chaff”	149
4.6.4.1. Origin and Evolution	150
4.6.4.2. Rausch’s Critical Overview	150
4.6.4.3. Analysis	151
4.6.4.4. Rausch’s Contribution	152

TABLE OF CONTENTS

v

4.7. Chapter Summary	152
 Chapter 5: A 1994 SURVEY OF DISTRICTS IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES: GENERAL, PROVINCIAL, AND LOCAL VIEWPOINTS	 154
5.1. The Questionnaires	154
5.1.1. Preparation of the Instrument	154
5.1.2. Distribution and Returns	155
5.1.2.1. Return-Rate Significance	156
5.2. Survey Results	157
5.2.1. General Information (Question number 1 ¹)	157
5.2.2. District Membership (Q2)	157
5.2.3. Particular Statutes (Q3)	158
5.2.4. Reason for the Introduction of Districts (Q4)	158
5.2.5. Changes Since Vatican II (Q5)	158
5.2.6. District Superior Evolving into a New Position (Q6)	160
5.2.7. A District is Run Like a House (Q7)	161
5.2.8. Nominal District Superiors: Relations with Provincials (Q8)	163
5.2.9. District Superiors are Merely Nominal (Q9)	164
5.2.10. Successful of Different Types of Districts (Q10)	165
5.2.11. Does District Community Improve Local Situations? (Q11)	165
5.2.11.1. Small Residences Now Part of Larger Unit (Q11.1)	165
5.2.11.2. Reintegration of Solitary Apostolates (Q11.2)	165
5.2.11.3. All Helped by Having a Local Superior (Q11.3)	165
5.2.11.4. Other Reasons for District Communities? (Q11.4)	165
5.2.12. Non-improvement of Community in Districts (Q12)	166
5.2.12.1. No Commitment to Build Community (Q12.1)	166
5.2.12.2. Appearance Is All That Is Desired (Q12.2)	166
5.2.12.3. It Legitimizes Lone-Wolf Apostolates (Q12.3)	166
5.2.12.4. Other Reasons for Lack of Improvement (Q12.4)	167
5.2.13. District Superior, <i>Under the Provincial</i> , Has: (Q13)	167
5.2.13.1. Appropriate Input Into the Apostolate (Q13.1)	167
5.2.13.2. Appropriate Input Into the Spiritual Life (Q13.2)	168
5.2.13.3. Appropriate Input into the Finances (Q13.3)	168
5.2.13.4. Active Role in Problem-Solving (Q13.4)	168
5.2.13.5. Primary Responsibility for the Health (Spiritual, Physical, and Mental) of the Members (Q13.5)	168
5.2.13.6. Active Role in Ongoing Formation (Q13.6)	169
5.2.13.6.1. Examples: Appropriate Input (Q13.6.1)	169
5.2.13.6.2. Examples: Inappropriate Input (Q13.6.2)	169
5.2.13.6.3. <i>Other</i> Appropriate Input (Q13.6.3)	170

¹ As found in Appendix 10.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

vi

5.2.13a. Provincials Must Share Authority With Superiors (Q13a)	170
5.2.13b. Superiors and Provincial Governing Structures (Q13b)	171
5.2.13c. Qualities in a District Superior Will Vary (Q13c)	171
5.2.14. District Superior, Unnecessary Level of Authority? (Q14)	171
5.2.15. District as Monitor of the Health of Its Members (Q15)	172
5.2.16. Districts, Provincial Centralization, and Subsidiarity (Q16)	172
5.2.16.1. Over-Centralization: Strain on Provincial (Q16.1)	173
5.2.17. District Superior as Intermediary (Subsidiarity) (Q17)	173
5.2.18. House With Residences and Individuals Attached is Like a District (Q18)	174
5.2.19. What Could be in Provincial District Guidelines? (Q19)	174
5.2.19.1. General Administration and Guidelines for Provincial Statutes (Rule # 86) (Q19.1)	175
5.2.20. District Council: Important to Local Government (Q20)	176
5.2.21. Entire District as a Council in a Larger District? (Q21)	177
5.2.22. Reasons for Discontinuing the Use of Districts? (Q22)	177
5.2.23. Will Residence Directors Lose Independence? (Q23)	178
5.2.23.1. Is Such a Shift in Authority Beneficial? (Q23.1)	179
5.2.24. How Often For Regular District Meetings? (Q24)	180
5.2.24.1. Size and Purpose of District (Q24.1)	180
5.2.24.2. All Aspects of Community in Meetings (Q24.2)	182
5.2.25. Sufficient Preparation of District Superiors? (Q25)	182
5.2.25.1. Was There <i>Any</i> Preparation? (Q25.1)	184
5.2.25.2. Regional Involvement in Preparation? (Q25.2)	185
5.2.25.3. Encouragement by General Administration? (Q25.3)	186
5.2.26. Consultation Before District Personnel Changes? (Q26)	187
5.2.26.1. Pool for Choosing of District Superior (Q26.1)	189
5.2.27. Celebration of the Eucharist Together (Q27)	190
5.2.28. Three Formed Houses or Three Communities? (Q28)	191
5.2.29. Do You Want a Copy Of the Answer Summary? (Q29)	192
5.2.30. Any Other Comments or Suggestion? (Q30)	192
5.3. Chapter Summary	193
 Chapter 6: THAILAND INTERCAPITULAR MEETING AND THE 1996 PROPOSED TEXT	196
6.1. Intercapitular Meeting: Thailand 1995	196
6.2. "Becoming Witnesses in Apostolic Community"	196
6.3. Report: United States of America Region	198
6.4. Report: Asia-Oceania Region	198

TABLE OF CONTENTS

vii

6.5. Structures Committee: Basic Rationale Statement	199
6.5.1. The Bangkok Process	200
6.5.2. Preparation of an Adapted Text	200
6.6. Adapted Text of Part III of the Constitutions and Rules	201
6.6.1. The Spirit of Government	201
6.6.2. Administrative Structures	202
6.6.2.1. Critique	203
6.6.3. Superiors: General Norms	206
6.6.3.1. Critique	206
6.6.4. The Local Community: Nature and Role	207
6.6.4.1. Critique	208
6.6.5. The Local Superior, Specifically	209
6.6.6. The Local Community: Structures and Functioning	210
6.6.6.1. Local Community Structures	210
6.6.6.1.1. Critique	210
6.6.6.1.2. Formation Community: Critique	211
6.6.6.1.3. Particular Statutes: Critique	212
6.6.6.1.4. Canonical Establishment: Critique	212
6.6.6.2. Functions of the Local Superior	213
6.6.6.2.1. Critique	214
6.6.6.3. Term of Office	214
6.6.6.3.1. Critique	214
6.6.6.4. Local Council	215
6.6.6.4.1. Critique	215
6.6.6.5. Local Council Competence	216
6.6.6.5.1. Critique	216
6.6.6.6. Matters Affecting the Entire Community	217
6.6.7. Local Superiors and the Life of the Province	217
6.6.7.1. Co-operation in General	218
6.6.7.1.1. Critique	218
6.6.7.2. Extraordinary Provincial Council	218
6.6.7.2.1. Critique	219
6.6.7.3. Regular Meetings	219
6.6.7.3.1. Critique	220
6.6.8. Provincial Directory	220
6.6.8.1. Critique	221
6.6.9. The Regional Conference	221
6.6.9.1. Critique	222
6.6.10. Temporal Goods	222
6.6.10.1. Ownership by Law	222
6.6.10.1.1. Critique	222
6.6.10.2. Financial Competence	223
6.6.10.2.1. Critique	223
6.6.10.3. Financial Management	224
6.6.10.3.1. Critique	224

TABLE OF CONTENTS

viii

6.6.10.4. The Local Treasurer	224
6.6.10.5. Fraternal Sharing	225
6.6.10.5.1. Critique	225
6.6.10.6. Goods Held in Common	225
6.6.10.6.1. Critique	226
6.6.10.7. Competence of the Provincial Treasurer	227
6.6.10.7.1. Critique	228
6.6.11. Obligation of the Constitutions and Rules	228
6.6.11.1. Critique	228
6.7. Chapter Summary	229
7. CONCLUSIONS	231
7.1. Historical	231
7.2. Canonical	233
7.2.1. Local Community and <i>Domus</i>	233
7.3. Constitutions and Rules	235
7.3.1. Proposed Constitutions	236
7.3.1.1. Particular Statutes	236
7.3.1.2. Formation of Local Superiors	236
7.3.1.3. District Community Meetings	236
7.4. Viability of Districts as Units in Other Institutes	237
7.4.1. The Society of the Divine Word	237
7.4.2. Other Institutes	237
7.5. Comprehensive Concept and Definition: District	238
7.5.1. Glossary of Oblate Terms	240
7.6. Areas for Further Study	241
7.7. Finis	242
APPENDICES	243
1. Districts in Other Institutes	243
2. Correspondence : Fabre to Séméria (1865)	251
3. Correspondence : Séméria to Fabre (1865)	253

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ix

4. Règlement provisoire du district (1869)	261
5. Déclarations: Chapitre général (1893)	265
6. Ecclesiastical Maps of Ceylon (19th Cent.)	267
7. Personnel Nos. 3 to 22	269
8. Principles Governing the Relationship Between Superiors of Districts and Directors of Residences (1954)	272
9. Statutes of Districts and District Superiors, Southern Africa (1989)	276
10. Questionnaire (1994)	279
11. Proposed Oblate Constitutions and Rules, Excerpts (1996)	289
12. Correspondence Table: 1996 Proposed Text and 1994 Survey	298
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 301
1. Sources	301
1.1. General	301
1.2. Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate	304
1.3. Religious in General and Other Institutes	307
2. Books	310
2.1. General	310
2.2. Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate	312
2.3. Religious in General and Other Institutes	314
3. Periodicals, Articles, and Excerpts	318
3.1. General	318
3.2. Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate	319
3.3. Religious in General and Other Institutes	322
 BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES	 330

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank all of the Oblates who made this study possible. In particular, Fr. Douglas Crosby, OMI, then Provincial, who gave the initial approval for my entry into this field, the late Fr. P. Gerald Morris, OMI, his successor as Provincial, and Fr. Francis Kavanagh, OMI, Provincial Administrator, who encouraged me, and Fr. Christopher Rushton OMI, presently Provincial, who saw it to completion. The basis for this study was a suggestion of Fr. Marcello Zago, OMI, Superior General, and the historical research was aided by Fr. Romuald Boucher, OMI, Archivist, Archives Deschâtelets and Aloysius Kedl, OMI, General Archivist. Without the efforts of the many Oblates who spent their time answering the questionnaire, and Bro. Glenn Doughty, OMI, who collated them, nothing would have been accomplished.

I am very grateful to Professor William H. Woestman, OMI, who directed me with a steady hand, prodding when necessary, always with support, kindness and understanding. To Professors Michael O'Reilly, OMI, Francis G. Morrissey, OMI, and Michel Thériault, who gave me of their insights and experience, I give my thanks. To the late Dean Thorn and Dean Pagé for their support and encouragement, and Professors Gilles Fortin, Saint Paul University, and Gordon Irving, Carleton University, for their help with the questionnaire and statistics, know that without you, it would still be an idea. To Ms. Dawn Das Neves, Frs. Joseph Mullany, OMI, Anthony Hall, OMI, Jacques Croteau, OMI, and J. Roy Boucher, OMI, Peter Heney, Teresa Ryan, Tim Webster, and Louise and Michelle Poirier for translations, transcriptions, proofreading, computer assistance, and refining of the text, thank you.

To my family and friends who have put up with this obsession of mine for the last few years, and my ecclesiastical superior and mentor, His Excellency Archbishop Carlo Curis, Apostolic Nuncio in Canada, for his support and kindnesses, thank you.

The work itself, I dedicate to the two contemporary superiors of my district community, Frs.

Gilbert Mason, OMI, and David Perrin, OMI, and to the Oblates of the Ottawa District Community: you were where I found the passion to proceed. Finally I offer this work as a homage to the memory of Fr. Robert Eamon McGrath, OMI, JCD, a teacher of genius, who inspired in me a love of canon law which has never ceased to grow.

INTRODUCTION

What is it that differentiates Religious from other dedicated Christians? On a theological level, it is a public commitment through religious vows, but externally, it is more difficult to see. It used to be the habit, but that is not always the case now. Probably, it is the common life, and the distinctive and characteristic way in which the members of each religious institute live their common life, the *vita fraterna*.

“Ecce quam bonum, et quam jucundum, habitare fratres in unum.”¹

Since the time of Benedict’s foundation, c. 530 A.D., each expression of that common life has been unique, but its existence is common. From a monastic beginning, through the mendicant foundations, to the apostolic post-Ignatian communities and beyond, there have been continued variations in ways of living the common life. These changes have been influenced by two factors: the charism of the founder and the needs of the apostolate. One common thread appears to be that, over the centuries, there has been a lessening, in the newer traditions, of a dependence on a physical structure (the monastery/convent), to accomplish that end, the achieving of the *vita fraterna*.

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, since the time of its foundation in the early 19th century by Saint Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod, has placed a very strong emphasis on the importance of high quality, fraternal, community living. This emphasis was, in part, a result of the impact of the founder’s own family history on his personality and value system.

His congregation spread quickly to four continents, while there were actually very few members. Geographic factors necessitated that many early Oblate missionaries live alone, or with fewer confreres than were necessary to form a canonical house, the mainstay of religious community living at the time. The Oblate general administration of de Mazenod’s immediate successor approved

¹ “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is to live together as brothers,” Psalm 133, 1.

the grouping of these isolated missionaries into geographically based units, local communities called 'districts', which had most of the characteristics of a house, including a superior. From the beginning, the sole purpose of districts was to facilitate the living of the *vita fraterna* in inhospitable circumstances. Districts existed for over 25 years before, with the approval of the Holy See, they became part of Oblate proper law in 1910.

Districts were soon employed in various areas of the congregation to solve problems (geographic, political, apostolic), which arose from time to time. Most of the Oblates, however, lived in traditional religious houses and rectories, or in residences and missions attached to a house.

The Second Vatican Council, the 1982 Constitutions and Rules, and the 1983 Code of Canon Law relaxed or removed many legal restrictions on religious institutes and called for renewal and restructuring. The legal, theological, and spiritual texts from these sources called for the proper application of the principle of subsidiarity within religious institutes.

Prior to the Second Vatican Council, district communities were usually established in current or former mission territories and in rural areas. Since the Council, that concept has been expanded beyond mission and rural areas to cover urban areas within the Oblates, especially in provinces where numbers are decreasing, institutions are disappearing, and individual apostolates are more common. Contemporary districts, where over 25 percent of the congregation now live, have met with varied levels of success, depending on the manner in which each province has applied the concept.

After the 1992 General Chapter, which reaffirmed their existence and importance for the Oblates, the Holy See expressed a specific interest in the theory and praxis of districts and district superiors.

The preliminary questions posed in this work are interconnected. What lies at the root of the establishment of districts, and district superiors, within the Oblates? How did the practice spread? How was it viewed by the general chapters of the institute and by the common law of the Church over the century and a half since its beginning? How was it renewed in the light of the call of the Second Vatican Council? What is its current status and future prospects in Canada and the United States? Are the changes to the administrative structures, proposed for the 1998 General Chapter, a

help or a hinderance to the enhancement of this type of local community?

The answers to those preliminary ones build up to the two major questions asked in this thesis:

– Is there sufficient basis in the common law, the themes of the renewal of religious life as found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, and in the historic lived reality within the Oblate Congregation, for this concept of districts, with superiors, as local units of apostolic community and government, to be put forward as a clear and practical model for other institutes?

– Is it possible to propose a canonically-based definition of a district, such that it could be applicable within any apostolic religious institute, male or female, clerical or lay?

The dissertation itself is divided into six chapters: two historical, two canonical, and two of contemporary existential analysis, followed by conclusions, including a definition and suggested areas for further study and research. There are 12 appendices of unpublished, or difficult to obtain, source material.

After a short introduction to the Oblate congregation, the first chapter looks at aspects of the life and character of the Oblate founder, St. Eugene de Mazenod, which led him to place such importance on the community life of his followers that it would shape the very structure of the institute.

The second chapter looks at the expansion of the institute to the foreign missions, specifically Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. The necessities of the apostolate in that mission were such that there quickly evolved a very specific type of local community called a district. It was very much like a religious house in many ways, except that its boundaries were geographic rather than the walls of a building. The approval of districts by the institute and Church authorities will be looked at, as well as the early spread of the concept to other provinces of the congregation. The question of similar existing structures in other institutes will be looked into.

Chapter three will first look briefly at the canonical basis for the common life, local communities, and the local superior, from the beginning to the time of the Oblate foundation. Then they will be looked at in more detail as they have evolved since then. Districts were in existence at

the time of the promulgation of the 1917 Code of Canon law, and they are studied in the light of that Code. Districts had not been updated significantly during the century preceding the Second Vatican Council and the experimental Oblate Constitutions and Rules of 1966. They were ripe for renewal. Those first years of the process of renewal, as part of the updating of apostolic communities, is studied here.

In chapter 4, that process of renewal is followed through the more contemporary general chapters from 1972 to 1992. The influence of the 1994 Synod of Bishops on religious life is briefly studied, as are some of the first published articles on district communities. The emergence of districts, as near equals of houses, is noted as such in the Constitutions and Rules of 1982/87. This chapter will analyze the pertinent canons of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, to see how districts fit into the current canonical framework.

Chapter 5 is entirely an analysis of the responses to the 1994 questionnaire sent out by the author to past and present members of: the general administration, those Canadian and United States provincials who had districts under them, and the district superiors in these two regions. The responses look at the background of districts in their provinces, their current status, and future prospects. Respondents were asked for, and gave, their judgements and opinions on many aspects of districts and district superiors.

Chapter 6 considers those changes proposed by the 1996 draft of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules, which had to do with districts and district superiors, and which will be presented at the 1998 General Chapter. These proposals are then analyzed and critiqued in the light of the history, law, and questionnaire results as found in the first five chapters.

The methodology of the thesis varies from chapter to chapter. The first two are basically historical analyses, based on primary sources, and, in chapter 2, on unpublished correspondence found in the 'Dossier Ceylan,' Les Archives Deschâtelets. Chapters 3 and 4 analyze the Oblate general chapters and the common law of the Church, both historically and legally. Chapters 5 and 6 combine both an analytic and interpretive approach to the 1994 questionnaire and responses and the 1996 proposed amendments to the Oblate Constitutions and Rules.

Chapter 1

OBLATE HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF DISTRICT COMMUNITIES

1.1. History of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

1.1.1. Nature and Foundation

The congregation of the “Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate,” commonly known as “Oblates,” is a clerical, non-exempt institute of pontifical right, having both clerical and non-clerical members who are bound by the vows of religion.¹

It was founded under the name “The Society of the Missionaries of Provence” in Aix-en-Provence, southern France, and the first three members² met for the first time in the original community setting, the “motherhouse”,³ (a former Carmelite convent), on January 25, 1816.⁴ That same day Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod, its founder, forwarded to the capitular vicars general a request for authorization, an outline of the purposes of the Society, and the main points of its rule.⁵

¹ *Constitutiones et Regulæ Congregationis Missionariorum Oblatorum Sanctissimæ et Immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ*. Romæ. [Casa Generalizia], 1982. (=CC&RR). All abbreviated references to the Constitutions and Rules will be styled CC&RR followed by the year of approbation by the Holy See and by one of: C. for Constitution, CC. for Constitutions, R. for Rule and RR. for Rules plus the appropriate number; # plus the appropriate number; or, Pars, Caput, §, Art., plus the appropriate numbers, all according to the methodology of each edition. CC&RR 1982, C. 1.

² Fathers de Mazenod, Tempier and probably Icard.

³ This term, although technically correct, has never become common usage within the Oblate congregation. It is still useful to distinguish the first community setting from the house of the general administration and is used as such in histories, documentation and in the acts of various early general chapters especially the General Chapter of 1861, canon 1. See J. LEFLON, *Eugène de Mazenod: Bishop of Marseilles, Founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 1782-1861*, (=LEFLON), F. Flanagan, trans., New York, Fordham University Press, vol. 2, p. 243. See also G. COSENTINO, *Nos Chapitres Généraux*, Ottawa, Éditions des Études Oblates, 1957, pp. 23, 71.

⁴ See LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 38. This is considered to be the birthday of the Oblate Congregation.

⁵ See LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 38.

Certain significant areas of the outline were modelled on the rule of the Missionaries of France, an institute which his friend, Forbin-Janson, co-founded and to which the latter belonged.⁶

The Society, with de Mazenod as its first superior, was canonically recognized by the diocesan authorities on January 29, 1816. This first canonical recognition was given not by the diocesan bishop (the see was vacant), but by the "Capitular Vicars General of Aix." The exact nature of this approval is controverted.⁷

Apart from the works of the apostolate, de Mazenod, as superior,⁸ worked on a more definitive rule over the following two years in order to submit it to the members for approval.⁹

The first general chapter was held in Aix-en-Provence in October, 1818, and ended on November 1, 1818, with the approval of the first Constitutions and Rules by the members.¹⁰ However, during the process of approval it became obvious to de Mazenod that there was substantial wavering on the part of some priests of the Society concerning the inclusion of vows in the Constitutions and Rules. That this would make it into a society of religious was a fear of a majority of them. The founder resorted to rather extraordinary means to salvage his project.

Under the guise of explaining the Constitutions to the three scholastics in minor orders, who were full-fledged members of the Society, he summoned Brothers Dupuy, Courtès, and Suzanne to the Council, knowing that they wholeheartedly favored his plan to change over to the religious state. None of the three failed him. After "hearing the rule read, they unanimously agreed to accept it and assured the Founder, as they had already done privately that they approved the proposed vows." So states the official record.¹¹ If, as Suzanne assures us, Father de Mazenod wanted to prove by this manoeuvre that these commitments were not frightening to the other members of the community, and that he

⁶ See E. SEVRIN, *Les Missions Religieuses en France sous la Restauration, 1815-1830*, vol. 1, p. 59.

⁷ See G. COSENTINO, "Existence juridique de notre Congrégation pendant ses dix premières années," in *Études Oblates*, 12 (1953), pp. 3-24. See also P.-H. LAFONTAINE, "Nature de l'approbation de nos Règles," in *Études oblates*, 6 (1947), pp. 91-116.

⁸ See LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 42.

⁹ See LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 44.

¹⁰ See LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 169.

¹¹ *Actes du premier Chapitre général*, October 24, 1818. A.G.R. *Registre des Délibérations des Chapitres généraux de la Société des Missionnaires de Provence*, p. 3.

hoped thereby to bring about a general approval¹², the experiment must have failed, for, in order to reverse the majority, he had to go still further by giving each of the three scholastics a deliberative vote. Thanks to these added votes, the contested articles were passed by the thin margin of 6 to 4.

Just how proper was the procedure on that occasion? The Acts of the first general Chapter which Suzanne drew up eight years later in 1826, admit that this session of the Chapter was "the only one at which unordained members were present."¹³ However, as it was noted in the Acts, the Constitutions had not as yet come into force. Furthermore, it was declared only just that the three scholastic brothers, who were full-fledged members of the institute, should have the right to express their opinion at a moment when a decision of the greatest importance was being made, since it affected not only the future of the whole Society, but their individual futures as well. The fact still remains, nonetheless, that on this occasion they had played a deciding role, and that their opinion won out over that of the Fathers.¹⁴

This incident illustrates a significant aspect of de Mazenod's character. It exemplifies his steadfast attitude towards law. He established his own authority and showed through his actions that law was to be the servant of the institute and of its members. Law, he believed is the servant of the community not its master, and this belief has been embodied in his Congregation of the Oblates over the years.

1.1.2. The Early Years of the Society

The Society gradually took on more of the external aspects of a religious institute as the Constitutions and Rules were revised and expanded over the next eight years. During this time, de Mazenod, founder and superior general, was working towards papal approval of the Society. With canonical approval as a pontifical institute, the Society would be able to operate free of the Gallicanism¹⁵ of some of the local French bishops, which might place him at odds with his loyalty

¹² The official translator of Leflon's text, F. Flanagan, uses the English word "adhesion" for the French word "adhésion." The alternate meaning of "approval" is called for here.

¹³ *Actes du premier Chapitre général. A.G.R., Registre des Délibérations des Chapitres généraux*, p. 3.

¹⁴ LEFLON, vol. 2, pp. 167-168, 622.

¹⁵ Gallicanism is a name for various theories maintaining that both the church and the state in France had ecclesiastical rights of their own, independent and exclusive of the jurisdiction of the pope. The theory had been put forward during the Middle Ages, but became seriously problematic during the Reformation. Prepared by Boussuet and solemnly declared in 1682 as a document of the French clergy, it was violently opposed by Rome and officially withdrawn in 1693. However, its central doctrine, that the pope should be limited to some degree in the extent to which he could interfere in French ecclesiastical affairs, continued to be held by successive French governments, and some clerics and bishops, down to the

to the pope. More immediately, such an approval would mean that the members of the Society could not be ordered back to their dioceses of incardination by the local ordinary.¹⁶ More fundamentally, the Society, established as "a simple association of secular priests living in common for the purpose of devoting themselves to the missions"¹⁷ would become an institute of religious life with the members vowing themselves for life to the institute through a vow of perseverance.¹⁸

During this process of revision de Mazenod did not concern himself with canonically researching anew the proposed Constitutions and Rules or aiming at a complete originality of thought. He based himself on previously approved constitutions, especially those of St. Alphonsus Liguori.¹⁹

repeal of the Concordat in 1905. See *Encyclopædia Britannica*, [1962 ed.], s.v. "Gallicanism."

Specifically, Gallicanism viewed the conversion of Constantine and the summoning of the first ecumenical councils by him and his successors as the embodiment of the proper relationship between Church and State outlined in the New Testament. The national equivalent of these primal events was the baptism of Clovis and the convocation of synods by the Frankish kings to regulate ecclesiastical discipline. The bishop of Rome, despite his spiritual status, had no place in these happenings.

The foundation myth had as its corollary Gallican insistence upon unchanging tradition. The survival of original forms, however threatened and attenuated by the growth of papal authority, attested to their consonance with divine precept and suggested that the French, like the Israelites, were a people chosen by God. J. SALMON, "Clovis and Constantine. The Uses of History in Sixteenth Century Gallicanism," in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 41 [October, 1990], pp. 584-585.

For a wider explanation and understanding of the term see also Chapter 8, "The Meaning of Gallicanism," in C. LEIGHTON, *Catholicism in a Protestant Kingdom: a study of the Irish Ancien Régime*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1994, pp. 145-156.

As another example of the international appeal of the notion of Gallicanism see A. ALLISON, "An English Gallican: Henry Holden 1596/7-1662. Part 1 to 1648)" in *Recusant History*, vol. 22, no. 3, 1995, pp. 319-349. Part 2 is not yet published.

¹⁶ See COSENTINO, "Existence juridique," pp. 3-24.

¹⁷ LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 167.

¹⁸ See G. COSENTINO, "Existence juridique," pp. 3-24. See also G. LESAGE, *L'Accession des Congrégations à l'État religieux canonique*, Ottawa, Les Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1952, p. 185-187.

¹⁹ "... the Rule as a whole lacked originality and since it had been redacted so hastily, it needed revising before it could be considered definitive. However, most founders of religious orders borrowed from rules of older orders, as prescribed by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. Their religious families nonetheless bear the distinguishing impress of their personalities. That of Father de Mazenod was forceful enough to give his Society such an individualizing mark that no one today would be likely to mistake an Oblate for a Redemptorist," (LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 164-165). See also D. LEVASSEUR, *A History of the Missionary Oblates: Toward a Synthesis*, vol. 1, 1815-1898, J. RHEIDT and A. KEDL, trans., Rome, General House, 1985, p. 57; and J. RESLÉ, "Aux sources de nos Règles, le P. de Mazenod a-t-il copié s. Alphonse?" in *Études oblates*, 25 (1966), pp. 231-249.

1.1.3. Papal Approval

On July 6, 1823, Fortuné de Mazenod, Eugene's uncle, was consecrated bishop of the restored see of Marseilles.²⁰ He appointed his nephew, Eugene, and Father Tempier, a member of the same Society of the Missionaries of Provence, as two of his vicars general.²¹ From that point till Eugene's death in 1861, the history of the Society would be inextricably linked, for better and for worse, with that of the diocese of Marseilles.

In late 1823 it became imperative to place the Society formally under the authority and protection of the Holy See as the various bishops of the Midi were denying the validity of the vows of the members, specifically the vow of stability or perseverance. The bishop of Fréjus and his council gave their official decision, which is quoted in a letter to Father de Mazenod from Father Sebastian Deblieu, dated October 14, 1823.

It is only fitting that I inform you of the reasons, as they were presented to me, why the vows made in your community are null. The following is what the Vicar-General wrote to me:

"The Council has unanimously decided that your supposed vows are null: 1) through lack of power on the part of your Superior who cannot, without authorization from the Holy See, impose any obligation upon those belonging to his worthy Society; 2) because the vow of stability in the Mission Society makes illusory the obedience you promised your bishop at the time of your ordination to the priesthood, and a vow can never be made to the prejudice of a third party. The Council has likewise decided that even were the vow of stability valid, your Superior still could not reserve to the Pope the right to dispense you from it if it prejudiced your bishop's rights. We know that the only vows reserved to the Head of the Church are the vow of perpetual chastity, the vow to enter a religious order and the vow of the three pilgrimages. This being so, there should be no need to caution you against renewing your vow this coming All Saints' Day, if, at that time, you are still with your confrères."²²

This was the view of a number of canonists, and in fact, the missionary Society was not

²⁰ LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 204.

²¹ LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 207.

²² LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 245-246, quoting A. REY, *Histoire de Monseigneur Charles-Joseph-Eugène de Mazenod, évêque de Marseille, fondateur de la Congrégation des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, Rome-Marseille, Maison Générale, 2 vols., 1928, vol. 1, p. 316.

canonically established as a religious society, but only, in 1816, as a community of diocesan priests.²³ The Rule and the vows of 1818 were not approved by any competent authority, and thus were only private vows falling under the dispensing powers of the diocesan bishop to whom these secular priests had promised obedience.²⁴

Between 1823 and 1825 much work was done on the text of the Constitutions and Rules. The name of the Society itself was changed to "Oblates of St. Charles" in October, 1825, when it became obvious that the Society was not limiting itself to the apostolates of the dioceses of Provence.²⁵ With the help of other members of the community, a Latin text of the Constitutions and Rules was prepared for submission to the papal authorities, and, with much trepidation, Father de Mazenod left for Rome on October 30, 1825.²⁶ While in Rome, the founder exercised his skills of diplomacy and statecraft and drew many in the curia to his side, especially those who were aware of the Gallicanism of the French government and of some of the bishops of the Midi.²⁷

On December 20, 1825, the petition for approval of the Congregation and of its Constitutions and Rules was submitted to Pope Leo XII. Both the founder and the pope realized that compliance with the usual long process of approbation for the fledgling institute would play right into the hands of those in France who, for one reason or another, opposed the establishment of the Oblates. The Archpriest Adinolfi, asked by the pope to shepherd the founder through the intricacies of the Roman bureaucracy, recommended a *laudanda*, a normal ecclesiastical "pat on the back" at this stage, which would delay the formal approval of the proposed religious congregation for many years. The day after his audience with the Pontiff, Adinolfi reported to de Mazenod that,

²³ "Article 1. La fin de l'Institut des Missionnaires dits de Provence est premièrement de former une réunion de prêtres séculiers qui vivent ensemble et qui s'enforcent d'imiter les vertus et les exemples de notre Sauveur Jésus-Christ, principalement en s'employant à prêcher aux pauvres la parole divine." (DE MAZENOD, *Constitutions et Règles de la Société des Missionnaires de Provence*; premier manuscrit français, 1951. Rome, Maison générale O.M.I., p. 13. Extraits des *Missions O.M.I.*, 78 [1951], n. 276).

²⁴ See LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 246.

²⁵ See LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 251.

²⁶ See LEFLON, vol. 2, pp. 255-256.

²⁷ See LEFLON, vol. 2, pp. 260-264.

...this certainly was not the opinion of the Holy Father. 'No,' said the Pontiff: 'This Society pleases me: I know the good it is doing.... I wish to favor it. Choose one of the most kindly-disposed Cardinals of the Congregation as *Ponens* of this cause. Go to his home on my behalf and tell him that I want these rules not merely praised but approved.'²⁸

As a result, a commission of three cardinals of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars was appointed to advise the pope. On February 15, 1826, the commission recommended approval.

During the period of time between his departure for Rome and the papal approval, there was a change in the title of the institute. On his way to Rome, Father de Mazenod held negotiations with Father Bruno Lanteri's Oblates of the Virgin Mary which he had hoped would lead to the fusion of the two institutes, but they were unsuccessful.

...The likely hypothesis has been advanced that Father de Mazenod's pains to make it easier for Father Lanteri's companions to come into his Congregation may have been due to a plan to adopt a new and permanent title: "Oblates of Mary Immaculate."²⁹

The new title was proposed when the founder was in Rome, although he continued to refer to himself as, "Père Eugène de Mazenod Oblat de saint Charles, supérieur général,"³⁰ right up until the approval of the new Congregation the next day.

On Friday, February 17th, Pope Leo XII, after a few minor changes to the Constitutions and Rules, approved them and the institute. The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate were now a clerical institute of pontifical right with simple vows.³¹

1.1.4. Expansion in General

The Congregation and its apostolates grew within France and, in 1841, expanded to the foreign missions with a foundation in Montreal, Quebec. Within a decade the expansion included foundations in the British Isles, 1842; Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), 1847; Oregon Territory, 1847;

²⁸ LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 265.

²⁹ LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 258, based on J. THEIL, "Relations du Fondateur avec le Père Lanteri" in *Études oblates*, vol. 5, p. 137.

³⁰ "Corrections des constitutions et règles, Rome, 15-16 février 1826," in *Écrits de Fondateur*, Fascicule 4, p. 118.

³¹ See LEFLON, vol. 2, pp. 265-272. See also T. CASSIDY, *Roots and Branches: a Diary of St. Peter's Province*, Ottawa, English Oblates of Eastern Canada, 1988, pp. 1-3.

Algeria, 1849 (short-lived); Brownsville, Texas, 1849; and Natal, Southern Africa, in 1850.³² The Oblates now have apostolates in more than 57 countries and have nearly 4,844 members.³³

1.2. The Family Life of the Founder and His Community Concept

1.2.1. Early Life of the Founder

Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod, born in 1782, was a child of pre-revolutionary France. His father, Charles Antoine de Mazenod, was the scion of a family ennobled in 1653. Charles Antoine was, like his father before him, a strong supporter of the king, anti-Jansenist, while maintaining a strong anti-Gallican stance. Eugene's father was active in the political life of Provence, being:

Seigneur de Saint-Laurent-du-Verdun, noble of the robe, was president of the Court of Accounts, Aids, and Finances of Provence, and later was president "à mortier" of the parliament of Provence.³⁴

As with many French nobles of this rank, the family had been living for generations according to its social status and beyond its financial means.³⁵ Charles Antoine, age 33, chose the ordinary means to alleviate the situation by marrying a well-dowered³⁶ young woman, age 18, of the middle class. Marie-Rose Joannis, the daughter of a professor of medicine at the royal faculty of Aix, brought nobility to her family and the use of her wealth to her prospective husband's.³⁷

This was a planned marriage between families rather than one which was the result of a love affair between the parties.

³² LEVASSEUR, *A History of the Missionary Oblates: Toward a Synthesis*, vol. I, p. 70.

³³ *O.M.I. Information*, 353 (February, 1997), p. 1.

³⁴ W. WOESTMAN, *The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a Clerical Religious Congregation with Brothers*, Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1995, p. 2. See also LEFLON, vol. I, pp. 3-33.

³⁵ The revenues from his office consisted of a yearly salary of two thousand *livres* and a pension of one thousand *livres* annually from his father (see LEFLON, vol. I, p. 30).

³⁶ "At the time of her marriage, the young fiancée received one hundred and twenty thousand *livres*, eight thousand of which 'went towards her trousseau,' eight thousand in diamonds, twenty-two thousand 'in capital from the Estates in Provence, and eighty-two in ready cash.'" (LEFLON, vol. I, p. 30).

³⁷ See LEFLON, vol. I, pp. 3-33.

In Provence, during the eighteenth century, writes Paul Masson, "strict propriety demanded that marriages between aristocratic families be free of all sentiment." Parents bestowed the hands of their young daughters in marriage about the time they left their convent schools, "without, for the most part, taking into consideration, the feelings of their daughters in the matter."³⁸

There was, however, no question of her dowry becoming the property of the de Mazenod family. It was hers, and was guaranteed by a legal contract signed by the two de Mazenod's.³⁹

Apparently poorly matched, the union at first was a happy one. ...[T]he Mazenods, who were married February 3, 1778, were tasting the last delights of a society on the wane. The Revolution was about to loose its fury on the whole of France, causing separation, exile, and financial disaster for President de Mazenod. Removed from his office, reduced to the status of an emigrant without any resources, and disturbed by the poor health of his wife, who became increasingly moody and nervous — all these troubles introduced harsh discords into the harmony that existed at the beginning of their marriage.⁴⁰

Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod was born of this union four years later, and was to enjoy this aristocratic lifestyle for only eight years, until the Revolution of 1789 and his exile a year later.

During the months of unrest prior to the Revolution, President de Mazenod fought for his rights and privileges in the courts and legislatures of Provence, but to no avail. It was not that he lacked courage; it was that he was unskilled in the art of politics and outclassed in the politics of intrigue.

Narrowly confined by the mentality of his aristocratic, parliamentary and provincial caste, he could not broaden his views to take in the dimensions of a world which was engulfing his own, and to recognize new problems which were effacing outmoded institutions. A slave to old texts and entrenched behind the crumbling ramparts of historical precedents three or four centuries old, he forgot that time moves on for good and bad alike and that strict principles must be adapted to moving and changing realities.

...[A]ll these circumstances explain and throw light on his son's psychology. We can better understand Eugene's great task of ridding himself of all the family and social complexes which had been intensified by his childhood impressions and by the first years of his education. We can appreciate all the more easily the meritorious struggles of mind and soul which his slow and progressive liberation was to demand.⁴¹

³⁸ LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 31, quoting M. MASSON, *La Provence Mystique au XVIII^{ème} siècle*, 3 vols., Paris, 1936, vol. 2, p. 422.

³⁹ See LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 31.

⁴⁰ LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 33.

⁴¹ LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 61-62. For a discussion on the mentality of the Provençal aristocracy, see *Les Bouches-du-Rhône. Encyclopédie départementale*, vol. 3, *Les Temps Modernes* (1482-1789), pp. 854-855.

By December of 1790 tension had risen to such a degree that Charles Antoine de Mazenod was forced to flee to Nice, not then a part of France, in order to escape the spreading terror. By mid-January of 1791 fear and circumstances combined so that President de Mazenod, fearing for his life, called for his son to join him, immediately and secretly, in Nice. Both the de Mazenod and the Joannis families disapproved, feeling that he was over-reacting, but they carried out his wishes.⁴² There was no question of Mme. de Mazenod immediately joining her husband and eight year old son, whose formal education in France was now over until his seminary days seventeen years later.

1.2.2. Exile Years

The stay in Nice lasted five months, and although Eugene was overjoyed that they were joined by his mother and his grandmother Joannis with other women of her family, his father was less so, as, "I foresaw at that time everything I should have to suffer from this reunion, but I was powerless to prevent it, and I cannot possibly tell you everything the poor chevalier and myself had to put up with from this female triumvirate... . They took complete charge of everything, decided everything, gave all the orders."⁴³ Family pressures decreased when his in-laws returned to Aix four months later, but Charles Antoine continued to show that he was a very inept financial manager. By continuing to live beyond his means, borrowing cash, and bestowing gifts on members of the exiled royal family and unwisely investing the money he did have, he permanently placed the family finances in jeopardy.⁴⁴

Eugene continued his education in the Royal College of Nobles in Turin until the family moved on to Venice for safety reasons in April, 1794. To develop normally, Eugene needed the security of a loving, peaceful home life; this was not the case. He was surrounded by unemployed, dour men-folk, stripped of their privileges and power. His mother had her cheerful days but they were not long-lasting. There was no suitable school and no money to hire tutors or buy books. He was in

⁴² See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 75-78.

⁴³ C.-A. DE MAZENOD to la Poire, August 12, 1803, Rome Post. FB IV- , quoted in LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 79.

⁴⁴ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 80-83.

the company of four highly educated men but their aristocratic social code forbade them from engaging in such a lowly task as tutoring; rank had its responsibilities.⁴⁵ Through the intervention of the local pastor, Eugene met the Zinelli family, living just across the street, and was both tutored and loved by them, especially by Don Bartolo, one of two priests in that family, who became his teacher, confidant, spiritual advisor, and, above all, friend. For the next three years, Eugene was, for the first time, an adopted member of a family rooted in love of God and of each other, happy, friendly and not overly preoccupied with matters of social status, finance, or politics. He was part of their daily routine from after breakfast until after rosary and night prayers, and even for lunch on Thursdays and Sundays. His own family were relieved that the onerous task of educating and instructing their son was taken care of, but in their preoccupation with their financial and external problems, they were unappreciative of the extent of the debt which they owed the Zinelli family.⁴⁶

Mme. de Mazenod and Eugene's younger sister, Ninette, left for France in 1795, and the young man's home life lost the indispensable influence of these two charming and affectionate, yet often volatile, women. The reason for Mme. de Mazenod's return to France was financial rather than personal, and she sorely missed her husband and only son. Both her father and her father-in-law had recently died and the only way that she could claim her inheritance and her guaranteed dowry was to return to France and have her name stricken from the list of *émigrés* by the civil government. She, as a Joannis, succeeded in this, whereas her husband, the *aristocrate* de Mazenod, did not.⁴⁷

The president then entered the world of business and commerce, but his utter lack of experience left their financial affairs in a worse state than ever.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ "It is indeed regrettable that the son did not derive greater benefit from his father's fine culture, a culture Eugene would never match. Save while he was at Naples, the boy had lived very little with his father. ...[T]he future Bishop of Marseilles would never fill the gaps left in his early studies. He was always to lack that intangible element of harmony and finish which distinguishes a man of solid culture. This intellectual deficiency would make him one with the clergy of his day, who, by losing leadership in the field of knowledge hindered a magnificent movement of religious restoration." (LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 214-215).

⁴⁶ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 94-105.

⁴⁷ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 109-111.

⁴⁸ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 113-134.

...[T]hese ventures made the family's financial situation worse rather than better and had grave moral and material consequences not only for M. de Mazenod who was hopelessly in debt, and for his wife who was trying to save her dowry but also for Eugene who was striving to patch up his broken home.⁴⁹

In April, 1797, Bonaparte's armies of the *Directoire* took Verona. The de Mazenods' sojourn in Venice was necessarily coming to a close. In the summer Fortuné, the president's brother and future bishop of Marseilles, left the dwindling family group in Venice and legally returned to France. The president, his brother, the former naval captain, and Eugene were all of the family remaining in exile. That same summer "...citizen Marie-Rose-Eugenie Joannis requested the central administration of the Bouches-du-Rhône to have Eugene's name taken from the list of émigrés where it had been 'erroneously' inscribed."⁵⁰ It was so done.

President de Mazenod also attempted to have his name removed from the *émigré* list but was not successful at that time. This poorly timed action was due to his resentment over the great influence which his financially astute mother-in-law had over his wife.⁵¹ It did not matter that these two women could probably handle the financial affairs in France far better than he; it was not their place.

On November 11, 1797, the three de Mazenod's departed for Naples and Eugene left Don Bartolo "with an intense feeling of desolation."⁵² He was about to undertake the last two parts of his exile quite unprepared.⁵³

⁴⁹ LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 114.

⁵⁰ Rome, Post., DM I-5, quoted in LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 143.

⁵¹ See LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 144.

⁵² *Missions*, 269, in LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 147.

⁵³ "It is true that he approached them, providentially protected and provided with firm foundations and solid principles, and through his entire life he would remain grateful to Don Bartolo for all that. However, even the best teachers cannot fully accommodate their pupils to abnormal situations which cause a certain lack of balance. The contrast on the two sides of the street was too great: rich and esteemed bourgeois in one house and dejected aristocrats in the other; one family consisting of a venerable old mother surrounded by her six sons with everyone living a full stable life, the other family made up of M. de Mazenod separated from his wife and daughter, and living with his two uprooted brothers from day to day without any resources and totally ignorant of what the next day would bring. Excellent as was the boy's formation in the rich and bourgeois atmosphere of the Zinelli household, it was still incapable of preventing a certain clash of attitudes and manners proper to their social classes. In the long run, perhaps Don Bartolo had kept his pupil too much like a hot-house plant and under too rigid a discipline, exposing him all the more by that very fact to the dangers of a different

They arrived in Naples even poorer than before, the Venetian business having failed, and had to rely on the generosity of a pension from the Queen of Naples, Marie-Caroline,⁵⁴ sister to the executed Marie-Antoinette, the Widow Capet. The relationship between the president and his wife continued to deteriorate as distance and time increased and as their relative financial states grew further apart. He wanted compassion and understanding, and she coldly told him to put his brothers (Fortuné having rejoined them), to work and offered him cash which he proudly refused. There was a conflict of interest here that would produce ever more heartaches than solutions.⁵⁵

Eugene, on his part, was again without a tutor and bored with the life of an idle aristocrat in exile. His days were spent idly at home and his evenings at the Talleyrands, a sixteen-year-old arguing politics with men thirty years his senior. There were no adolescents of his own age for him to associate with while in Naples and no understanding adults to befriend him.⁵⁶

In the summer of 1798, King Ferdinand, and the Queen agreed to resupply the ships of Admiral Nelson and the army of Bonaparte moved south through the Papal States and into the mainland part of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Naples was about to fall, so the de Mazenods moved to Sicily on January 3, 1799. They were aboard a Portuguese ship, commanded by a friend of the president's brother, which sailed with Nelson's fleet en route to Palermo⁵⁷.

During the years in Palermo, Eugene spent most of his time with the local and exiled nobility. While the war raged in Europe,⁵⁸ his father had, for over a year, not even a note from his wife, while she complained that he did not write to her. The fact that there was no correspondence

atmosphere along with a greater freedom. To complete his work successfully the teacher would have to had accompany and encourage the young man who was now setting out for a strange land with all the freedom in the world after a period of unavoidable tension." (LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 147).

⁵⁴ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 166-171.

⁵⁵ See LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 172.

⁵⁶ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 172-175.

⁵⁷ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 180-186.

⁵⁸ England, Russia, Naples, Austria and the Papal States, among others, were all at war with the Revolutionary Republic.

allowed in or out of France was of no import to these two, who were rapidly becoming more and more embittered towards each other.⁵⁹

While in Sicily young Eugene was befriended by the exiled Chastellux family. The Comte de Chastellux had been the representative of Louis XVII at the Court of the Two Sicilies. His eldest son, César, became Eugene's friend during the next two years. Eugene was also taken in, again adopted so to speak, by the family of the Duke and Duchess of Cannizzaro and had a family life of sorts. He states in his memoirs that,

Providence which has always watched over me since my tenderest infancy, opened the doors of a Sicilian family into which I was admitted as a child of the house.⁶⁰

Once again Eugene entered a relatively happy period in his adolescent life and once again it was as a member of a family, albeit not one of blood but of friendship and shared ideals. This noble Sicilian family was unlike the Zinelli's in many ways. Here he was often in the company of the local and visiting nobility, including the Russian Ambassador, Count Mussin-Pushkin Bruce, British Lord Nelson and the inseparable Lady Hamilton, and royalty including the presumptive heir to the throne of France, the Duke of Berry. These surroundings had the effect of increasing his class consciousness and awakening dreams of titles, coats of arms and the hunt.⁶¹ However, although the morality of the class often left much to be desired, he was not left to drift on his own by the Cannizzaro's. They "guaranteed him at one and the same time a pleasant, liberal, and safe life."⁶²

The mother, who was the Princess of Laderia, was a saint. Both she and her husband, the Duke, felt a great affection for me and were quite happy, it seems, to be able to provide their two sons who were close to my age, not merely with a companion but one who would also be their friend and a good example to them, something of a rarity in that country. From then on, until I went back to France, I was one of the family: there was always a place set for me at their table and in the summer months they took me with them to their summer home where I had at my disposal everything enjoyed by their own children. The latter looked upon me as their brother; in fact, through the affection I showed them I

⁵⁹ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 187-189.

⁶⁰ DE MAZENOD, "Souvenirs", in *Missions O.M.I.*, 5 (1866), pp. 109-144, 265-304; trans. in *Missions O.M.I.*, 79 (1952), pp. 632-697; p. 682.

⁶¹ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 191-204.

⁶² LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 191.

had really become like a brother to them. The Duchess, who often said that a third son had been added to the family, drew me so close to her through her kindness that her own children could not have loved her more than I did.⁶³

When the Duchess, his second mother as he called her, died in May of 1802, Eugene, inconsolable, was asked to go into formal mourning with the family. The heartache of his son was not lost on M. de Mazenod and his brother Fortuné. They spoke in their letters to each other and to Mme. de Mazenod of the kind, wise, and prudent behaviour of the young man in the midst of these sad circumstances.⁶⁴

The effect of living with both the Zinelli and the Cannizzaro families was to ensure that Eugene was to carry with him not only the memories of living within a dysfunctional one parent family, whether that be with his father or his mother alone, torn apart by revolution, exile, class distinctions, and financial ruin, but also the memories of two very different, happy, well adjusted and loving families who could thrive rather than merely survive in these tumultuous times. Eugene was not himself dysfunctional, but coming from a family that was, he compensated for it in his own life by a more than average emphasis on the necessity of a healthy community life. This would be a positive influence on him in his later understanding and appreciation of the benefits of a stable, happy, prayerful community life for his community of missionaries. It was a spirit that he would instill in his band of missionaries and one which would endure, in a more mature form, long after his passing. His Congregation could not be a natural Christian family, but it could and must have many of the qualities of a natural loving Christian family. Once this was established through the primacy of community life, only then could the members look outwards to the apostolate.

Also, it must not be overlooked that the Italian peninsula at that time was overrun with exile French royalty and nobility. Families like those which welcomed Eugene may have had certain obligations towards fleeing relatives and certain high royalty, but certainly not towards the like of young Eugene de Mazenod, unless there was something within his character and personality which

⁶³ *Missions*, 124, quoted in LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 192.

⁶⁴ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 222-223.

made him lovable. He gave love with generosity and loyalty and received it with gratitude and appreciation.

1.2.3. Eugene's Exile's End

In his last months in Sicily, his grief over the death of the Duchess was compounded by another family-related one.

In obedience to the imperious demands of Mme. de Mazenod, the young Count⁶⁵ had to return to France, and return alone, leaving his father and uncles behind him at Palermo. Owing to the influence of Roze Joannis, Citizen Bonnet (Mme. Joannis) and her daughters considered the three de Mazenod brothers undesirables. By the same token that it reunited him with his mother, Eugene's return caused a wider rift in the family circle.⁶⁶

In 1799 she wrote of her joy at the possible return of her son; by November of the next year she was sounding very imperative and the next month showing impatience, then in her last letter of 1800, irritation and opposition.⁶⁷ On December 9th she writes:

I cannot conceal from you that it is absolutely necessary for me to have the child here.... His grandmama is very anxious to have him here and has wonderful things planned for him which cannot be carried out unless he is with us.⁶⁸

And on the 21st of December she attacks the president on a personal level, with a well-laid guilt trip:

... just as these objections did not deter [me] from making the resolution of which [I] informed you, neither should they deter you, unless you prefer your own satisfaction to the welfare of your family; that any delay on your part can cause even greater difficulties than those you now fear.... However, you are the master. You can do as you wish. You had to be told what was best under the circumstances so that a further regret will not be added to so many others of the past. You will be the one to answer for what happens in the future.⁶⁹

This bickering by mail went on for months. Sickly, nervous, and always mercurial, she was alternately defensive, conciliatory, or aggressive. Often the letters revealed the dictation, or at least the influence, of her cousin, the harsh-tongued Roze Joannis. The president's answers were always

⁶⁵ A self-bestowed title. See LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 195.

⁶⁶ LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 226.

⁶⁷ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 226-227.

⁶⁸ LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 227.

⁶⁹ LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 228. Mme. de Mazenod refers to herself in the third person in the letter; it has been changed to the first person in square brackets for better understanding.

measured, but they did reveal the depths of his pain.⁷⁰

The decision to return to France was finally reached in June, 1802. Mme. de Mazenod decreed that, due to their debts in France, both inherited and personal, the president and his brother, the *Chevalier*, could not return to Aix until the children were settled and married. Fortuné was to accompany Eugene, who was to marry a young girl with a good dowry. The president and the *Chevalier* decided that they would not plan on returning, while Fortuné would do so at a later date.⁷¹

This meant a complete break and Marie-Rose intended that her husband should understand it as such for she left him practically no hope of ever seeing her or her daughter again until they met "in the Valley of Josaphat." The antagonism between the de Mazenod clan of three brothers and the Joannis clan under the influence of cousin Roze was now beyond repair. Feeling that Eugene was too attached to his father and uncles, the Joannis family wanted to get hold of the boy; besides, being impelled by an inordinate love of worldly goods they also wanted to get their hands on the entire de Mazenod fortune so that all of it might go to Mme. de Mazenod and her two children, leaving Charles-Antoine and his two brothers nothing.⁷²

Throughout his life Eugene prided himself on not suffering from divided loyalties. He could be both the bishop of Marseilles and superior general of the Oblates; a loving father and a stern disciplinarian to both his flocks; a true Frenchman and a loyal servant of the pope. However, he was not able to reconcile the division of his love for two separated, and soon to be divorced, parents and their feuding families. This cut him to the quick and was a wound which would never be completely healed and one which he would never fully understand nor accept. "The affection both families held for him, instead of bringing them closer together, served only to set them further apart, and consequently confused the boy in his attempts to solve the dilemma."⁷³

The tragedy of this broken marriage and the suffering which it brought to all concerned was not unique. There were so many personal, cultural, and social differences in the union that it would have taken a perfectly stable political and economic atmosphere to preserve it. For the de Mazenod

⁷⁰ See LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 229-230.

⁷¹ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 230-231.

⁷² LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 231, based on letters from M. de Mazenod to his wife, June 11, 1802, Aix, Hôtel Boisgelin, MJ II-1 and from M. de Mazenod to the Marquis de Perier, called La Poire, August 12, 1803, Rome, Post., FB IV-1.

⁷³ LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 231.

and Joannis marriage, as with thousands of similar unions contracted according to the traditions of *l'ancien régime*, there were just too many factors militating against its stability for it to be able to withstand the combined upheavals of the Revolutionary, Napoleonic and Restoration eras of France.⁷⁴

On August 12, 1802, Eugene took the oath of submission required by French law and obtained his passport. After a serious bout with a fever he left Sicily on October 11 of that same year, bidding a heart-wrenching farewell to his father and his two uncles. The sea voyage would be the most miserable of his life, both physically and psychologically.⁷⁵

So it was that Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod returned to France. The son left the father and returned to the mother. He would always love them both, far more than they could possibly appreciate. She waited to greet her boy, but instead would discover a young man, mature beyond his years. He had the added business acumen of the Joannis, but he was, and always would be, a de Mazenod through and through.

1.2.4. Back in France

The first disappointment for Eugene came when, after seven years of separation from her son, Mme. de Mazenod was not in Marseilles to greet him, not even leaving a message at the docks. This was actually the fault of the postal service or the censorship of the French Secret Service, and communication with his mother was established through friends within a few days, but it was not an auspicious start. Under the direction of Roze Joannis, grandmother Joannis-Bonnet succeeded in having all of the existing de Mazenod property and money become that of Citizen Marie-Rose-Eugenie Joannis. However, it was not possible for her to obtain the right to administer her new acquisitions while she was married to Charles-Antoine de Mazenod. She obtained a civil divorce on April 25, 1802, realizing that it did not dissolve the sacramental bond.

However, regardless of how necessary all of these actions were, a spousal relationship could

⁷⁴ "Their particular tragedy was the outgrowth of a general tragedy which made the antagonism between their individual psychologies all the more acute. It was both a family tragedy and one of an era." (LEFLON, vol. I, p. 232).

⁷⁵ See LEFLON, vol. I, pp. 232-234.

have survived only if there had been a complete and utter trust between the couple. This was far from true in this case. The Joannis family did not hesitate to inform the president in no uncertain terms that he was no longer of any use, value, or concern to it or to his wife and children. There appears to have been nothing personal in this arrangement: the same tactic was used on Charles-Antoine's brother-in-law, Dedons de Pierrefeu. The families' only motives were money and personal control.⁷⁶

The Joannis family were never able to obtain the psychological control over the young Eugene which they desired. For a period of time, he did go along with their plans for an arranged marriage of the old style in order to acquire a large dowry, but these schemes did not bear fruit for various reasons, all essentially financial⁷⁷.

Eugene had failed to re-unite his parents, was bored with being cooped up in his grandmother Joannis' home, was resentful of his inability to obtain either a post equal to his dignity or a financially rewarding marriage or an entry into a career in the court of Sicily and, at 23 years of age, was ever more anxious to assert his independence.⁷⁸ A personal internal crisis resulted. After several years of turmoil, he experienced a conversion on Good Friday, 1807.⁷⁹

On October 12th of the following year, he entered the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Paris. He informed his mother only indirectly of his intentions. His 'Uncle' Roze, although a Jansenist and often at odds with Eugene on moral and family matters, was very much in favour of this move and

⁷⁶ See LEFLON, vol. I, pp. 236-250.

⁷⁷ Prior to his return from Sicily his mother had matched him with a young, extremely wealthy, girl named Jauffret and he appeared quite willing to marry her. However she died of consumption in 1803, and his comment in a letter to his father on her passing was, "The plan fell through: let's forget it." The next match fell through in 1805 because the young woman did not have a large enough dowry. His plan to go to Sicily, marry money and obtain a court position was unsuccessful as he was unable to obtain the necessary passport (see LEFLON, vol. I, pp. 257-262).

⁷⁸ See LEFLON, vol. I, p. 267.

⁷⁹ See J. MORABITO, "*Je serai prêtre*", *Eugène de Mazenod, de Venise à Saint-Sulpice (1794-1811)*, Ottawa, Éditions des Études oblates, 1954, pp.100-104. See also LEFLON, vol. I, p. 268; W. WOESTMAN, *Congregation with Brothers*, p. 6-7; DE MAZENOD, "Retreat Notes, 1814", DM IV 2. Note that J. Pielorz in his paper, "Good Friday of 1807 - Myth or Reality", presented at the convention of the Association for Oblate Studies and Research, Ottawa, August 1995, argues that we cannot attribute this conversion to a specific date, but rather to the period between 1806 and 1807. Whether or not it occurred on one day or took two years is not the important factor; the issue is whether or not it actually transpired, and that fact is undisputed.

interceded with his cousin on Eugene's behalf.⁸⁰ The young man thought it prudent to have his sister Ninette also broach the subject with their mother before he would write the latter of his decision and then finally meet her face to face. Mme. de Mazenod's response during this meeting is unrecorded. *La Presidente* did not openly oppose his testing of his vocation and was content to wait for him to return to her and continue the family line according to her plans. Due to the postal service among other things, it was only in 1810, when Eugene was already a subdeacon, that his father indirectly learned of this turn in his son's life.⁸¹

1.2.5. Saint-Sulpice Seminary, Paris

Seminary life for Eugene was enriching. His spiritual life was formed by holy and dedicated men who, along with the saintly Don Bartolo, would be his models for the rest of his life. However, his essential character would not change, but develop.

There was nothing speculative in Eugene de Mazenod and he remained a practical man throughout his entire life. ...With Eugene, it was not a case of proceeding from the doctrinal to the practical; much to the contrary, it was through the practical that he came to know the doctrinal, and his only use of the doctrinal was to make it serve the practical.⁸²

His concept of personal poverty was based firmly on his own spirituality but was made slightly more unavoidable by the parsimony of his mother, whose financial plans had been upset by his vocational choice and who had not given up hope that eventually he would suitably marry, as did his sister.⁸³ Finances would also be her excuse for objecting to his coming to Aix for summer vacations. Even his sister saw through that ploy; if Eugene came home wearing the soutane, it would be socially more difficult (for his mother) for him to leave the seminary and return to the lay state. For Eugene, it was providential in that it gave him a summer vacation at the seminary's summer

⁸⁰ Roze Joannis always believed that he would be able to convince the young aristocrat of the value and virtue of Jansenism. Eugene put up with the situation and the heresy he abhorred for the sake of peace in his mother's family. (See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 287-288).

⁸¹ See LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 290.

⁸² LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 300-301.

⁸³ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 304-305, 319-320. Eugene, without notifying his mother, had received tonsure within days of entering the seminary, in spite of having promised her that he would make no decision for two years

house and further opportunities to become involved in the anti-Napoleonic intrigues of the French Church.⁸⁴ *La Presidente* would have been livid had she known of the risks to his freedom and even to his life, which Eugene was taking through his secret actions in favour of those French and exiled Roman cardinals and bishops who opposed Napoleon, more often passively than actively, at every turn. However, the young zealot was able to reap the benefit of his actions in later years: Rome has always had a long memory.⁸⁵

During his years in the seminary he enjoyed a warm cordiality with staff and fellow students which he would remember and appreciate all his life. This community life would offer him advantages which he could not obtain otherwise and placed seeds in his mind for the future.⁸⁶

Such an environment was bound to contribute to his overall formation and he soon began to expand in the friendly and trustful atmosphere. What surroundings could have been more agreeable and at the same time more beneficial than that exceptionally choice community whose very diversity proved an advantage to him! His viewpoints which were somewhat narrowed by his heredity, education, aristocratic and Provençal prejudices, began to broaden. He learned to understand and appreciate other mentalities, confessed his ignorance of many things, and often had to admit his inferiority, thereby ridding himself of the superiority complex which had made him a proud, self-willed, and imperious young man. Finally, his spiritual life profited from the holy emulation by which his confrères strove to rival one another in perfection of soul and generosity of heart.⁸⁷

He was ordained priest in Amiens by Bishop Jean-François de Demandolx of that city, an "acceptable" anti-Napoleonic prelate, native of Provence and a family friend,⁸⁸ on December 21.

⁸⁴ See LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 363.

⁸⁵ "Very much in favour at the Quirinal, the Founder of the Oblates, Bishop of Icosia and Bishop of Marseilles was to enjoy complete confidence in Rome and profit from the highest patronage. The services which he formerly rendered, in the midst of critical circumstances and the reputation for militant ultramontanism which he enjoyed among the *zelanti* were to make him *persona gratissima*, one who was readily listened to and always favourably received. It was to make his future undertaking that much easier." (LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 371).

⁸⁶ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 315-317.

⁸⁷ LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 316.

⁸⁸ According to the custom of those days there was no big family celebration at that time, and there is no mention of any of family members travelling to Amiens and no question of Eugene travelling to Aix for the ceremony. The modern practice of home parish ordination is as much a result of better transportation and communications as it is a sacramental and liturgical statement.

1811.⁸⁹ In order to avoid being ordained by Cardinal Maury, Archbishop of Paris, a quite objectionable man and non-canonical appointee of Napoleon,⁹⁰ de Mazenod resorted to a ruse. Having worked it all out with Eugene beforehand, Bishop Demandolx wrote Eugene reminding him of a promised summer holiday visit that had been missed and inviting him to Amiens to fulfil his broken promise and, 'by the by,' be ordained at the same time. Young de Mazenod, by then a director of his own seminary from which M. Emery and the other Sulpicians had been recently banished, was able to accept the offer without being seen publicly as "avoiding" Cardinal Maury, his ordinary by French and canon law.⁹¹ This is a good example of the very astute political sense in the ordinand. This characteristic of de Mazenod would often surface and would be a quality his Congregation would always value in its leaders.

1.2.6. Return to Aix-en-Provence

After spending the following year as a director of Saint-Sulpice Seminary he declined several very good offers of administrative positions in the Paris and Amiens regions in order to return to Aix-en-Provence. His ministry there would be to the poor and the children as he had promised himself.⁹² He would not consider becoming a member of the metropolitan chapter as his clerical relatives had done, or entering the archdiocesan administration. He would be a priest of the poor. His family's social class was no longer important to him, though he knew it was important to other family members. He was also well aware that it would be the work of a lifetime, with God's grace, to control, if not eradicate, its influence in his own life.⁹³ It would be very difficult, if not impossible, for his mother to emotionally accept his rejection of her values and of his class. For many years she

⁸⁹ D. LEVASSEUR, *Toward a Synthesis*, vol. 1, p. 27.

⁹⁰ For more details and bibliographic references on this political appointee, see LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 481, endnote 25.

⁹¹ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 389-392.

⁹² See LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 403.

⁹³ See LEFLON, vol. 1, pp. 393-425.

would lament the loss of the prestige which her son could have brought her and the family as priest (even as the founder of a religious congregation), and as bishop of Marseilles. As the years went on she became less strident, if not more mellow.

1.2.7. The Deaths of His Parents

It was on the occasion of his uncle Fortuné's return to Marseilles in order to become its bishop¹⁴ that Eugene was also able to arrange for the return of his father, *le president*, and his other uncle, the naval captain. The three brothers landed on the docks of Marseilles from Sicily on December 27, 1817, joyously welcomed in person by Eugene and ignored by the Joannis clan, including Mme. de Mazenod, none of whom showed up.¹⁵ The senior de Mazenod had suffered a cerebral haemorrhage in 1815 and did not have long to savour his return from exile. The holy death of the founder's father occurred on October 10, 1820, at Marseilles, attended by his brother, Canon Fortuné, and his son, Eugene, who administered the last sacraments.¹⁶

For lack of any help from Madame de Mazenod, Canon Fortuné, who himself was extremely short of funds, had to borrow 500 francs to defray the expenses of his brother's last illness.¹⁷

On December 17, 1851, Mme. de Mazenod died at the age of ninety-two, ten years before her son's death. Eugene was with her at the end and his love for her and grief at her death were undeniable.¹⁸

1.2.8. Family Life: Conclusion

Eugene had never been able to bring his parents together except in his heart. The family spirit which was so lacking in his earthly family would be strongly emphasized by him as a necessary

¹⁴ Due to political manoeuvrings in Paris, Aix, Marseilles, and Rome, he would not be consecrated until 1823, after the death of *le president*. See LEFLON, vol. 2, pp. 199-241.

¹⁵ See LEFLON, vol. 2, pp. 64-86.

¹⁶ See LEFLON, vol. 2, pp. 196, 625-626.

¹⁷ LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 626.

¹⁸ See LEFLON, vol. 2, vol. 3, p. 287.

characteristic of his spiritual family. There is no doubt that his own family problems convinced him of the necessity of a strong family spirit within the Oblates. As to where he found the models for those missing family values and family spirit, again there can be no doubt: it was from his experience living within the Zinelli family in Venice and the Cannizzaro family in Sicily.

His concept of a living community, physically and spiritually united for the good of the apostolate, would be in the Rule and in the lived reality, even if some non-essential legal points had to be stretched. This concept, this spirit of the Rule, would be passed on to his followers and would permanently influence the Congregation. Just when his familial concept of community was in danger of becoming a faded memory, concretized in 19th century formulations, the Second Vatican Council called upon all religious to claim once again the charisms of their founders.

Even before the Missionaries of Provence were officially established, de Mazenod underlined, in a letter to the capitular vicars general of Aix, the aims of his group, emphasizing the necessity of a community spirit within it.¹⁰¹ All his life he strove to have the members of the Congregation, his "little family," value this community spirit. This was as close as his community could come to embracing the spirit of love of God and of fellow members which spiritually unifies and gives life to a natural family. Because of de Mazenod's own life history,¹⁰² community life, indeed community love, was a value which superseded the letter of the Oblate Rule, even though it was only through the spirit of that Rule that true community could be achieved.

In his own life, he poured out to his Oblate family a love that was unique. To his Oblate children he said from his deathbed,

All of you must certainly know that the good God has given me a heart of immense capacity and with it an immense power to love my children. When I have gone, you will have another to take my place of authority, who will esteem you according to your merit:

¹⁰¹ See DE MAZENOD, *Collection: Oblate Writings*, vols. 1-13, Rome, General Postulation O.M.I., 1978-1993, vol. 13, p. 3.

¹⁰² "From his cradle, he was History's child: a fortunate but fearful privilege which favored him with rich experiences but — such is the rule — experiences purchased at the high price of heartache and sorrow. Involved, thereby, in the drama of a time when so many things perished or came into being, he found himself astride two epochs whose mentalities, minds and hearts put them at odds with each other." (LEFLON, vol. 1, p. 425).

but will he love you as I have loved you? Never!¹⁰¹

With his dying breath, Eugene de Mazenod called for "Charity, charity, charity," from his Oblates, or, in other words, love for their brothers in community.¹⁰²

1.3. Historical Circumstances of the Introduction of Districts/District Superiors in the Oblates

1.3.1. France: 1816-1826

During the first years after the foundation of the Missionaries of Provence, the apostolate expanded beyond the strict preaching of parish missions. After two years of little growth, the founder was asked to expand beyond the Archdiocese of Aix. The Missionaries of Provence were asked to accept the shrine of Notre Dame du Laus in the Hautes-Alpes region in 1818. The suggestion was accepted the next year and the Society then had two houses. It was also necessary to have this second house administered by someone other than the founder, who was miles away in Aix. Father François-de-Paule-Henry Tempier,¹⁰³ the second person to join the Society, the founder's principal assistant and the future vicar general of Marseilles and of the Oblates, was chosen. The old monastery attached to the shrine would house the novitiate after Tempier took over as novice master from de Mazenod in 1820. A third house, in Marseilles, was added in 1821 and a fourth at Nîmes in 1825. Apart from the Marian shrine apostolate and the formation of their own members, the majority of the members still preached missions. A few worked in hospitals and prisons. De Mazenod continued to preach parish missions and to work with youth as he had since his ordination.¹⁰⁴

1.3.2. Importance of Community Life

1.3.2.1. In Article 1 of the Rule

¹⁰¹ LEFLON, vol. 4, p. 302, citing RAMBERT, vol. 2, pp. 695-696.

¹⁰² See LEFLON, vol. 4, p. 304.

¹⁰³ The spelling of this famous Oblate's name has been the bane of Oblate writers for years. *Paule* is French for *Paola* the Italian birthplace of his patron St. Francis, so called to distinguish him from his more famous compatriot from Assisi. *Henry* is the old French, which was still used in the area, for *Henri*. See CASSIDY, *Roots and Branches*, p. 9-10.

¹⁰⁴ See LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 1, pp. 57-64. See also LEFLON, vol. 2, pp. 153-160.

Living quarters were established from the onset for the men engaged in the apostolate. They would live in community and leave to carry out their various works of evangelization. However, the religious houses had a purpose beyond simple housing. They were places in which the Oblates were to nourish themselves spiritually, physically, and psychologically by living the common life, similar to brothers in the family home, in order that the apostolate be carried out. The common life was to be accomplished in various ways, and a number of these ways will be treated specifically further on. It is sufficient to note here the place in the Constitutions and Rules (1826) that is given to the twin concepts of community life and apostolate.¹⁰⁵ After stating the name of the Congregation, its place of origin and its members, Article 1 asserts that it is as "brothers living together as one" that the Congregation will undertake the primary apostolate of evangelizing the poor.¹⁰⁶ The substantial revisions undertaken in the experimental 1966¹⁰⁷ revision of the Constitutions and Rules leave this article substantially unchanged. At the time of this latter revision Brothers as well as priests are listed as being bound together in vows, and the place of origin is omitted; however, communal life still precedes the preaching of the gospel to the poor.¹⁰⁸ The present Constitutions and Rules, approved in 1982 and revised slightly in 1986 to conform to the 1983 Code, add, after the naming of the Congregation, the prescribed canonical statement that, "We are a clerical Congregation of pontifical

¹⁰⁵ Concerning the community life, Levasseur has this to say: "The community life of the young Congregation gradually gained strength. Nearly all the Oblates came from the south of France and from a modest social milieu. Not only was unity perfectly maintained, but the family spirit grew stronger. The General Chapters of this period held in 1826, 1831 and 1837, concerned themselves, often in great detail, with community life, prayer, poverty, obedience." (LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 1, p. 81).

¹⁰⁶ "Art. 1. Finis hujus parvæ Societatis Missionariorum Oblatorum Sanctissimæ et Immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ. Gallo-Provinciæ dictorum e Provincia in qua habuere initium, est primo ut coadunati sacerdotes sæculares, et ut fratres habitantes in unum, præcipuam dent operam pauperibus evangelizandis, virtutes et exempla Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi assidua imitatione prosequendo." (C. DE MAZENOD, *Constitutiones, regulæ et instituta Societatis Missionariorum oblatorum Sanctissimæ et Immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ*, P. Duval ed., Rome, Maison Général O.M.I., 1951, p. 26).

The expression "sacerdotes sæculares" was used at this time as members of institutes of simple vows were not as yet considered religious.

¹⁰⁷ Although there were a number of revisions of the Constitutions and Rules between 1827 and 1966, including the 1928 major revision done in response to the promulgation of the 1917 Code, the 1966 revision was the first one not to be directly based on the original de Mazenod document.

¹⁰⁸ After a hortatory introduction, Article 1 continues, "Cui Congregatio Missionariorum Oblatorum Sanctissimæ et Immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ pro sua parte respondere vult. Quapropter sacerdotes cum laicis coadunati, votis religiosi obligati, sicut fratres habitantes in unum, et in Christo Salvatore arctissime cooperantes, præcipuam dant operam pauperibus evangelizandis." (CC&RR, 1966, p. 6).

right.”¹⁰⁰ However, the phrase, “living together in apostolic communities”,¹⁰¹ (the current equivalent of the 1827 phrase, “brothers living together as one”), is now placed before the listing of members, the vowed life, or the apostolate.¹⁰² Such positioning and phraseology, consistent over the life of the Congregation, has an importance which could be described as “primacy of place.” An Oblate community life that is alive and well is a necessary means to achieve the primary ends of the Congregation, namely the salvation of its members and the evangelization of the poor.

1.3.2.2. In the Writings of the Founder

All founders of religious institutes require extraordinary contact with their new members. The spirit and charism of the institute is fragile and must be nurtured. For de Mazenod this task was simplified by a love of letter-writing fostered at an early age, and made necessary by the exile and breakup of his family. There are thirteen volumes of his personal letters published to date,¹⁰² as well as his diaries, homilies, retreat notes and many formal and business letters written as superior general or bishop to civil and ecclesiastical personages and functionaries. In his many writings are found his thoughts on community within the Oblates.

To Tempier, on August 12, 1817, while on a business trip he writes,

I am bored when I am separated from you and pine for my return. Nothing on earth is worth being kept from dwelling pleasantly in our holy house with such good brothers as yourselves. Never have I appreciated so much *quam dulce [sic] et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum* (Ps. 132). This strikes me all the more in that I see that it is not given to all communities to taste this happiness, harder to find than one thinks in this world below.¹⁰³

This community life was not just one of physical peace and tranquillity. The purpose of it, dating

¹⁰⁰ CC&RR, 1982, p. 15.

¹⁰¹ CC&RR, 1982, p. 15.

¹⁰² After a hortatory introduction and the canonical description, Article I continues, “We come together in apostolic communities of priests and Brothers, united to God by the vows of religion. Cooperating with the Savior and imitating his example, we commit ourselves principally to evangelizing the poor.” (CC&RR 1982/87, p. 15).

¹⁰³ de MAZENOD, *Collection: Oblate Writings*, vols. 1-13, Rome, General Postulation O.M.I., 1978-1993.

¹⁰⁴ DE MAZENOD, *Selected Texts related to the O.M.I. Constitutions and Rules*, B. RAYAPPU, trans., Rome, [Spedim Press], 1984, p. 355, quoting T. RAMBERT, *Vie de Mgr. Charles-Joseph-Eugène de Mazenod, évêque de Marseille, fondateur de la Congrégation des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, Tours, 2 vols., 1883, vol. 1, pp. 234-235.

from the days of the Missionaries of Provence, was to give the members the environment wherein they could grow in the spiritual life, the life of a religious.¹¹⁴ This life was to be learned initially in the novitiate community, an opportunity which would not present itself again during their Oblate life.

Let our novices be happy to live in their refuge.... My whole happiness after the work of our missions is to come and taste a little repose in the bosom of the family wherein everything edifies me, everything charms me. Love one another. Let all agree in maintaining good order and discipline by fidelity to the Rule, obedience, abnegation and humility. The Church expects you all to be a powerful aid in her distress; but be well persuaded that you will only be good enough to achieve something inasmuch as you advance in the practice of religious virtues.¹¹⁵

One of de Mazenod's principal lifetime preoccupations was ensuring that the missionaries in the foreign missions were not left alone without the support of a community. As early as 1844 he said in a letter to Father Honorat, in Canada, that,

I certainly have something to say about the sudden choice you have made of Bro. Laverlochère for the missions to the Savages.... It is not right to leave him on his own. And in that connection, I want to insist again that our Fathers not be sent alone into the missions. The Jesuit Fathers have just made it a rule that even in the missions of the Maduré, the Fathers must always go in pairs. It is my formal intention that you adopt this policy. It must only be set aside by dispensation and necessity.¹¹⁶

He re-emphasized this to Father Guigues in Canada in 1846 when he complained of the two Fathers who would be alone in the Red River area for a full year. He refused to consent to it and said to tell the bishops that this is the policy.¹¹⁷ To Father Séméria in Ceylon, in 1848, he writes:

What you must do is to insist with the Vicar Apostolic that he never separate you. You must not give way to contrary arguments that may be put to you. You must make it known that this would be in a way to do violence to your Institute, that you are absolutely obliged to walk about in pairs, and therefore it is more simple that you should be placed

¹¹⁴ "The Missionaries will divide their group in such a way that while some strive in community to acquire the virtues and knowledge proper to a good missionary, others are touring the rural areas proclaiming the word of God.

"When their apostolic journeys are over, they will return to the community to rest from their labours by exercising a ministry that is less demanding, and to prepare themselves through meditation and study for a more fruitful ministry when next called upon to undertake new work." (DE MAZENOD, "To the Capitular Vicars General, [at Aix]," in *Collection: Oblate Writings*, vol. 13, p. 3).

¹¹⁵ DE MAZENOD, to Father Courtès and the community of Aix, in *Selected Texts*, p. 356, quoting de MAZENOD, *Les Saintes Règles, expliquées d'après les écrits les leçons et l'esprit de M^{re} Charles-Joseph-Eugène de Mazenod*, A. YENVEUX, ed. (=YENVEUX), 2 vols. Paris, 1903; Ms. 7 vols., 1878-1903; vol. 5, p. 160; vol. 8, p. 68.

¹¹⁶ DE MAZENOD, *Selected Texts*, p. 358, quoting YENVEUX, vol. 1, pp. 98, 123.

¹¹⁷ See DE MAZENOD, *Selected Texts*, pp. 360-361.

together. It is essential that you should continue to demand that you be left in pairs. If there is only enough for one you must share what there is, but I can never agree that a subject be alone without at least one companion.¹¹⁸

The founder would have liked to insist that anything less than a regular community, right from the beginning, was unacceptable, but he was a realist. In 1845, he wrote to Father Guigues in Canada concerning establishing a mission with two Oblates,

I do not think our rule forbids this when one cannot do otherwise. Certainly I prefer that communities be established better but I will never blame you if, in order to take advantage of a favourable opportunity, you begin with a smaller number. This is practised in all Orders, especially in the beginning.¹¹⁹

Circumstances which allowed for the establishment of less than a full community was not to be an excuse for laxity in the following of the rule. In his "Instruction on Foreign Missions", 1853, de Mazenod leaves no room for doubt.

To whatsoever Missions in foreign countries they may have been sent, our Fathers will always bear in mind that they must be inflamed with a desire of perfection so much the more ardent the longer they are separated against their will, from the company of their brethren, and that they must be faithful to the duties of their religious state and to the exercises of Christian piety with a will so much the more determined, the more frequently they are deprived of the benefits of community life.¹²⁰

The founder, in his capacity as superior general, did not hesitate to inform the local ordinaries when their wishes contravened the rule on the aspect of community life, even when this was in the home missions of France. He writes, in 1856, to Bishop Dupanloup of Orleans, that he cannot agree to the Oblates being away from their house for nine months of the year.¹²¹ At a time when he had to turn down many other requests for men, he writes in 1858 to Bishop Joseph-Marie Bravi, coadjutor to the vicar apostolic of Colombo,

For the moment I ask only one favour of you: that I may be allowed to make up the number of Oblates in service in your Vicariate to four. I would further ask you to place this fourth one in a post near to that in which you have put Father Perréard. I am most concerned that the missionaries do not live too far away from each other. It is an advantage for them, and the people entrusted to their care benefit from it enormously. They keep up their fervour

¹¹⁸ DE MAZENOD, *Selected Texts*, pp. 362-363.

¹¹⁹ DE MAZENOD, *Selected Texts*, p. 359, quoting YENVEUX, vol. 7, p. 52.

¹²⁰ DE MAZENOD, *Selected Texts*, p. 366.

¹²¹ See DE MAZENOD, *Selected Texts*, p. 317.

through this mutual help and the souls of the faithful feel the effects of this.¹²²

Reconciling the will of the founder and the spirit of the rule regarding the necessity of a community base for the missionaries varied with the geographic area involved. Missionaries in western Canada were spread out over immense distances, while in Ceylon the distances were not so great and a type of clustering of the missions was naturally emerging. The spirit of the founder urged them to find a solution in the charity and zeal which he urged upon them with his dying words.¹²³ Even in this he had not left them without assistance. There might not be structures at hand to solve the problem readily, so they would have to be imaginative. In a pastoral letter of 1847 de Mazenod stated,

Charity includes everything; and in case of fresh needs, it even invents new means, if necessary.¹²⁴

1.3.3. Expansion: 1826-1851

It was not until after papal approval in 1826 that the Oblates moved into apostolates beyond those envisioned in 1816. In 1827 they took over direction of the major seminary in Marseilles, first offered to them in 1824 by Fortuné de Mazenod. They accepted to expand beyond mainland France¹²⁵ in 1834 when an offer of a major seminary and parish missions in Corsica was given by the bishop of Ajaccio. It began the next year.¹²⁶ In all of these apostolates there was a local Oblate community set up with a local superior and two assistants, *assessores*, which would to-day be called a council, all appointed by the superior general. Every local superior was required to write monthly to the

¹²² DE MAZENOD, *Selected Texts*, p. 374, quoting the diary of Bishop Séméria, copy Batayron, p. 355, in the Oblate General Archives, Rome.

¹²³ Cf. LEFLON, vol. 4, p. 304.

¹²⁴ DE MAZENOD, *Selected Texts*, p. 94.

¹²⁵ The house in Billens, Switzerland, purchased by de Mazenod in 1830 and sold in 1837, was not a house for apostolic work. It was there as a refuge in case the political situation in France deteriorated to such an extent that the Oblates had to flee for their lives. The memories of the Revolution and his exile would always be with de Mazenod. See LEFLON, vol. 3, p. 12.

¹²⁶ See LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 1, pp. 71-75.

superior general to update him as to the state of his house.¹²⁷ The same procedure was followed in all of the apostolates undertaken until 1851.

By that year the institute had become too widespread for a strictly unitary form of government to be efficient. In 1830 the Oblates showed their willingness to enter the foreign missions, hoping to follow the French armies to Algeria: politics prevented it at this time,¹²⁸ but the seed had been sown. The General Chapter of 1831 unanimously requested the superior general to send some members to the foreign missions. De Mazenod fully agreed. The next attempt was in the archdiocese of New York, but the Holy See, through Propaganda Fide, decided that the need was not great enough.¹²⁹ Finally, in 1841, the founder, having been consecrated titular bishop of Icosia in 1832¹³⁰ and successor to his uncle Fortuné in 1837,¹³¹ sent Oblates to the first foreign assignments. In May he sent his first English-speaking member, William Daly, to England to investigate the possibility of making a foundation in the British Isles,¹³² both for conversion of the English and as a possible stepping-stone to their colonies.¹³³

Between 1841 and 1851 the Oblates had opened houses and serviced mission areas in various parts of British North America, from Quebec in the east to Vancouver Island in the west. They were also working in England and Ireland (with the first Irish foundation coming only in 1856; Scotland would precede it in 1852). Works in the United States of America began in The Oregon Territory in

¹²⁷ See DE MAZENOD, *Constitutiones, regulæ et instituta Societatis Missionariorum oblatorum Sanctissimæ et Immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ*, P. Duval ed., Rome, Maison Général O.M.I., 1951, pp. 115-117, pars tertia, caput primum, §7, art. 12.

¹²⁸ The Oblates finally accepted it in late 1848 and sent missionaries there in early 1849, but eighteen months later the missions were closed: French politics once again. See LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 1, pp. 166-169.

¹²⁹ See LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 1, pp. 77-79.

¹³⁰ See LEFLON, vol. 2, p. 443.

¹³¹ See LEFLON, vol. 3, p. 3.

¹³² It was not till late in 1842 that the first establishment was actually opened, in Penzance, so the Canadian missions were actually established first. See LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 1, pp. 120, 133.

¹³³ See LEFLON, vol. 4, pp. 275-278.

1847 and Texas in 1849.¹³⁴ Ceylon,¹³⁵ a British colony, was accepted in 1847 and Algeria for eighteen months, 1849 to 1850. When Algeria was given up the Congregation accepted Natal, a British colony in South Africa, which was offered to them by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide in 1850; the missionaries did not actually arrive there till 1852.¹³⁶

During this period of foreign expansion the Oblates continued to spread across France, establishing themselves as far north as Paris and Nancy. By 1851 there were 119 Oblates, 26 of whom were brothers, working in that country.¹³⁷

1.3.4. Foreign Missions: Provinces and Vicariates of Missions

By the time of the 1843 General Chapter it was apparent to the founder that some fundamental changes had to be made to the Oblate Constitutions and Rules. There was no mention of the foreign missions, although the Congregation was already starting to head in that direction, and nothing concerning the running of diocesan seminaries. The regulations for participation in the general chapters were not practical for an expanding institute. All changes in these areas would be put off till the general chapter of 1850 except the frequency of general chapters.¹³⁸

Probably the most difficult change for the founder to accept at the 1850 Chapter was the establishment of provinces and vicariates of mission.¹³⁹ There was no question but that their time had

¹³⁴ Their work with the Mexican immigrants led to the extension of this mission into Mexico in 1858. This would be the last new foreign mission undertaken by de Mazenod in his lifetime. See LEFLON, vol. 4, p. 155.

¹³⁵ Ceylon changed its name to Sri Lanka in 1971. It had ceased to be a colony of Britain in 1948 when it became a self-governing dominion within the Commonwealth. This work will use whichever name was in use at time referred to in the text.

¹³⁶ See LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 1, pp. 118-178.

¹³⁷ See LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 1, p. 116.

¹³⁸ See LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 1, pp. 176-180.

¹³⁹ This term proved to be confusing on more than one level. A vicariate of mission was a territory set up by the Oblate congregation as a mission area not yet stable enough to be established as a province; its religious head was the vicar of missions. An apostolic vicariate was a territory set up by *Propaganda Fide* as a mission area not yet stable enough to be established as a diocese; its ecclesiastical head was the vicar apostolic. These two entities could, but need not, be geographically identical. The same person could, but need not, be both the vicar of missions and vicar apostolic. If the vicariate of missions became part of a province larger in area than the vicariate apostolic, or if the two vicars were different persons, then there were often jurisdictional difficulties. Sometimes both the Oblate and the diocesan clergy of the

come, but it was an emotional shock in some ways. The family was growing up and a certain independence had to be granted. Up till this time all obediences in the Congregation had been given by de Mazenod; every financial permission not within the competence of the local superior, granted by him. The institute was now too large, but even more, too dispersed in a era of slow and uncertain communications, for this to be either practical or good for the future growth and maturity of the members.¹⁴⁰

In the period between the opening of the foreign missions and the papal approval in 1853 of the acts of the 1850 General Chapter de Mazenod coped with the situation of long distances and poor communications by either appointing a "visitor" with strong executive powers or by delegating these powers directly to the superior of the mission territory.¹⁴¹ These faculties were normally spelled out in detail, but if there was no time it was done in broad strokes.¹⁴² In the General Chapter of 1850 there was no dispute over the necessity to decentralize the government of the Congregation.

"Since it would now be difficult for the superior general to supervise everything connected with the different houses of the congregation — their superiors, their members and their business affairs" — it was decided that the congregation would henceforth be divided "into provinces and vicariates," and that there would be a separate organization for the home and foreign missions. A province would require at least three established houses

apostolic vicariate became confused as to which superior was wearing what hat on which occasion. De Mazenod preferred that the two titles of vicar be held by the same person, an Oblate, for unity in direction within the same territory.

The Constitutions and Rules of 1966, *ad experimentum*, divided the Congregation into provinces and vice-provinces and eliminated any references to vicariates of missions and vicars of missions. As well, on July 7, 1967, the Holy See raised many of the apostolic vicariates in the world, including all in Canada, to the status of dioceses, thus removing another source of the confusion. See CASSIDY, *Roots and Branches*, p. 58. See also AAS, 59 (1967), p. 1115; *Annuario Pontificio per l'anno 1968*, Città del Vaticano, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1968, pp. 13-783; *CC&RR 1966*, CC, 166, 172.

¹⁴⁰ See J. PIELORZ, *Les chapitres Généraux au temps du Fondateur*, Ottawa, Éditions des Études Oblates, 1968, vol. I, pp. 225-305.

¹⁴¹ W. WOESTMAN, *A Clerical Religious Congregation with Brothers*, p. 68.

¹⁴² "... If I were in Marseilles I would get you all these faculties written specifically as I have for all the heads of distant missions. Since you will not have any official documents I shall make this present letter serve and it will be short.

"I give you for your mission in the territory of Natal and for the Séyhelles Islands if we take charge of them, all my powers as Superior General with the exception of the final admission of subjects, whom you will be able to admit to the Oblate community without the Congregation being bound to them in any way before I give my approval. In case, which God forbid, you were obliged for the gravest reasons to expel someone without being able to consult me first, you could nevertheless not release him from his vows.

"These are the only restrictions I am placing on the wide powers I am giving you. You are thus more than a Provincial, since I am confidently making you an *alter ego* as it were." (DE MAZENOD to Allard, October 21, 1851, in *Letters*, vol. 4, pp. 192-193).

and be assured of a revenue sufficient for its administration. A vicariate, on the other hand, would include only residences with a limited number of subjects and would be allowed a special type of administration in keeping with the difficulties arising from distances and places.¹⁴³

These changes did not change the monarchical system of government within the Congregation and the superior general retained control of the major levers of power. The local superiors in the provinces and vicariates were nominated by the provincial or vicar, but not without consulting the superior general whenever possible.¹⁴⁴ This would not hold up the efficient running of the apostolates while leaving the superior general the option of not approving a particular local superior, who would then cease to function, rather than having to be officially removed. The very fact of this possibility made it imperative that the provincials and vicars choose local superiors who had the qualities which would be approved.

The vicariates, because they were allowed "a special type of administration,"¹⁴⁵ did not all follow the same pattern of government. With the approval of the superior general different forms were approved, and if they proved advantageous, they might spread beyond the originating vicariate. De Mazenod realized that new forms would have to be not only approved but encouraged if the missionaries were to succeed in those territories so far from France, both in distance and in culture.

One would have to read all his correspondence with the missionaries in Canada, the United States, Ceylon, and Natal, to evaluate the outstanding role he played in this extraordinary expansion of his congregation. Rather restricted in the diocese of Marseilles, which was hampered by the burden of a long history, his innate dynamism was given free play on new soil. His concepts broadened and he became more liberal in his outlook; now less attached to a past as burdensome as it was rich, he was able at times to look farther ahead into the future.¹⁴⁶

This quality of the founder was taken up by those who followed him in his Oblate family, and they gradually let go of the more stifling points of 19th century style religious constitutions without losing all of the spice of the *Provençal*, which is their inheritance.

¹⁴³ LEFLON, vol. 4, p. 291 quoting Bishop de Mazenod's allocution to members of the chapter, August 26, 1850, in A.G.R., Reg. General Chapters, vol. 1, p. 83.

¹⁴⁴ "Superiores locales ad triennium nominantur a Provinciali aut missionum Vicario, non inconsulto Superiore generale, si res possibilis est." *CC&RR*, 1853, p. 125.

¹⁴⁵ *CC&RR* 1853, p. 125.

¹⁴⁶ LEFLON, vol. 4, p. 331.

1.4. Chapter Summary

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate were founded in Aix-en-Provence, France, in 1816 by Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod. From the beginning, with the issuance of voting rights to certain of the scholastics, de Mazenod showed that the institute would use the interpretation of law for the good of the community. The institute received pontifical approval in 1826. Eugene de Mazenod was the only son of a noble but poor paternal family which had married into a wealthy middle class maternal family a few years before the French Revolution. The marriage, as a loving union, did not survive its time of separation and exile and this was one of the problems that Eugene was never able to resolve. With little to build on from his negative experiences within his dysfunctional family, he turned to his positive experiences within the Zinelli and Cannizzaro families for his Christian family values. Later as a founder, this background left him with a conviction that a community life based on Christian family values was essential for his apostolic community. After his return, in 1802, to France and his mother (who had divorced and acquired the family holdings), Eugene went through a personal conversion, entered the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Paris in 1808 and was ordained in 1811.

When he wrote his first Rule, the community life was given a priority near the beginning of the first article. Over the century and a half since then that priority has retained a primacy of place in the first article. The importance of community was also shown in his writings and letters to the members of the institute and to their superiors and their bishops. If there was no possibility of community life the Oblates would, even must, leave. The Oblates expanded to the foreign missions and the institute was divided into provinces and vicariates of mission in 1850. These were in turn divided into canonically established houses plus dependant residences and posts or stations as units of local government. Among the missions accepted were those of the British colony of Ceylon. Each major mission area founded in the lifetime of de Mazenod would add its own distinct flavour to the Oblate heritage as a whole; for Ceylon that was to be district communities.

Chapter 2

CEYLON AND THE EARLY DISTRICTS

2.1. The Missions of Ceylon

In 1847, Bishop de Mazenod accepted to make a foundation at Jaffna, in northern Ceylon, an island off the south-east tip of India, and a British territory since 1815. This was done at the request of Bishop Bettachini of Jaffna, an Oratorian and coadjutor vicar apostolic to Bishop Gaetano of Colombo, in the south, who was also an Oratorian. Despite the fact that they were both Oratorians, there was much suspicion between these two, and their mutual animosity put the Oblates under great pressure a number of times. From the start, de Mazenod hoped the Oblate mission territory would eventually encompass the entire island.¹ This dream did not come to pass in a literal sense, as there would always be other religious institutes involved,² but the Oblates would become the most influential.

The first Oblate missionaries sent in 1847 by de Mazenod were the Italians, Father Étienne Séméria³ (superior), Father Ciamin, Brother de Steffanis, and the Irishman, Father Keating.⁴ The ecclesiastical intrigues in Ceylon over the next twelve years were as convoluted as any found among

¹ See LEFLON, vol. 4, pp. 167-171.

² See LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 1, p. 276.

³ Étienne Séméria was born in Ventimiglia, northern Italy, in 1813. He took vows as an Oblate in 1830 and was ordained priest in 1835. He was appointed titular Bishop of Olympia and coadjutor Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna on May 25, 1856. Ordained bishop by Bishop de Mazenod in Montolivet on August 17, 1856, he succeeded to the See of Jaffna on July, 26, 1857. He died in Marseille on January 23, 1868. See *Necrologium Patrum et Fratrum Congregationis Missionariorum Oblatorum B. Mariæ Virginis Immaculatæ*, Rome, General House, 1983, pp. 14, 297.

⁴ See LEFLON, vol. 4, p. 171.

European royal households of the Renaissance.⁵

The firm foundation of the Oblate presence in Ceylon would very much depend on the qualities of its first superior. At thirty-four he was already mature, virtuous, and a good religious, a veteran of the Corsican missions. De Mazenod, in his own forthright style, warned him:

Don't be deceived by appearances and think that all men are any better than they are. I love the simplicity of the dove, but I never like to separate it from the wisdom of the serpent."

Séméria was thankful for such advice as he was naturally slow to act and very patient. He did not demand immediate precision from Bishop Bettachini and was content to wait and see, learning from his experience, forming his own ideas and working out a long-term plan of action.⁷

Three more Oblates arrived in Ceylon in May 1849, and the bishop, Bettachini, wished to disperse them immediately among the thirteen "districts"⁸ of his vicariate apostolic. The superior opposed this decision for several reasons: Article 1⁹ of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules (among others); the well-known wishes of the founder; the common practice of the Congregation. However, Séméria did not absolutely forbid the practice since the need was so urgent, and even de Mazenod granted his permission, *post factum*, as long as the superior could maintain contact and control. Missionaries were sent by Bishop Bettachini two by two, so the letter of the Rule was followed, but they were dispersed over large areas, as each district to which they were assigned could be as large as a European diocese and contain up to fifty Catholic settlements.¹⁰ A pattern was established which Séméria would adjust to his own liking later.

⁵ See LEFLON, vol. 4, pp. 171-219. See also R. BOUDENS, "Bishop de Mazenod and Ceylon," in *Études Oblates*, 11 (1982), pp. 168-178; 12 (1893), pp. 312-322.

⁷ Bishop de Mazenod to Father Séméria, January 25, 1848, P.R., LM Séméria, in LEFLON, vol. 4, p. 174.

⁸ See LEFLON, vol. 4, pp. 171-175.

⁹ This is the first use of this term by Leflon. It refers to a geographical division of the vicariate and its use preceded the arrival of the Oblates on the scene. LEFLON, vol. 4, p. 180.

¹⁰ Cf. chapter 1, footnote # 106.

¹¹ See LEFLON, vol. 4, pp. 180-181.

2.1.1. Bishop Étienne Séméria, O.M.I.

In 1856 Étienne Séméria was consecrated as coadjutor bishop and succeeded Bishop Bettachini upon the latter's death the following year.¹¹ He took years to formulate a plan to restructure the management of the vicariate, waiting until he felt confident enough to submit it to the superior general.¹² It was not until 1861, the year of de Mazenod's death, that the apostolic vicariate of Jaffna was officially entrusted by *Propaganda Fide* to the Oblates. Séméria then became both the vicar of missions for the Oblates in the entire island, which he had been prior to being bishop, and vicar apostolic of the vicariate of Jaffna. He also gained the right to call upon the superior general for personnel for his entire mission vicariate.¹³ In that year there were 24 Oblates on the Island of Ceylon and the Oblates of the vicariate of Jaffna had six missions and two diocesan districts in their care.¹⁴

On December 5, 1861, Joseph Fabre, age 37, was elected the second superior general on the first ballot. A man of great administrative ability, he would be in office until his death in 1892 and it would be his task, and that of his council, "to establish the normal regular life which guarantees and perpetuates growth," after forty-five years of the charismatic leadership of Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod.¹⁵ The extended religious family of the founder would now have to maintain the spirit and characteristics of the Society which he had established.

Nadal in speaking to the fellow Jesuits of his day (the last years of Ignatius and beyond), stated that,

¹¹ See LEFLON, vol. 4., p. 188.

¹² "Assuredly, there was nothing brilliant about him, nor anything trenchant; his judgement, which was a sound one, was never erratic nor were his actions. *Chi va piano, va sano*. Unobtrusively, slowly, and quietly, he persisted in the course which, in all wisdom and conscience, he felt was the only good one. His quiet perseverance had never faltered." (LEFLON, vol. 4, p. 190).

¹³ See LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 1, p. 162. See also R. BOUDENS, "Bishop de Mazenod and Ceylon," in *Études Oblates*, 11 (1982), pp. 174-178.

¹⁴ LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 1, p. 166.

¹⁵ See LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 1, pp. 185-187.

In brief, the call to each religious institute has a specificity to it that is exemplified in the life and spiritual gifts of the founder. The founder thus exerts an exemplary causality upon the order that is considerably more than a proposal of a way of life. Something deeper, almost mystical is involved.¹⁶

The development and establishment of a new unit of local government and community – the district¹⁷ – within four years after the founder's death, would have been seen by Nadal, the Jesuit, as a sign that the charism of de Mazenod was alive and healthy in the Oblates.

2.1.2. The Apostolate and the Community

Bishop Séméria was not one to be rushed into dramatic changes in the apostolate. The missionaries were urged to take a long-range view and concentrate on building a firm base of believers. Séméria wanted the missionaries to learn from their experience and to give their ideas mature deliberation.¹⁸

It was a struggle to establish a local community base for the missionaries. Although they were in both the vicariate of Jaffna and the vicariate of Colombo there were such differences of culture, ethnic background and language¹⁹ that it was virtually impossible to have one interchangeable missionary area. The previous vicars apostolic, who neither liked nor trusted each other, had reinforced these differences for their own purposes: fundamentally that of control. The Holy See resolved some of the jurisdictional and boundary disputes, and the Oblates solved others.

¹⁶ J. O'MALLEY, "To Travel to Any Part of the World: Jerónimo Nadal and the Jesuit Vocation," in *Study in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 16-2 (1984), p. 5.

¹⁷ In his dying words to his beloved Oblates, de Mazenod called upon them to show "charity, charity, charity" among themselves. In his Pastoral Letter of 1847, found in DE MAZENOD, *Selected Texts Related to the O.M.I. Constitutions and Rules*, P. Sion, ed., Rome, Oblate General House, 1984, no. 72, he says, "Charity includes everything; and in case of fresh needs, it invents new means, if necessary."

¹⁸ See LEFLON, vol. 4, pp. 187-190.

¹⁹ The origin of the differences are lost in the mists of time. The island was populated originally by a tribe from the Indian sub-continent and there developed a natural antipathy to any and all tribes that tried to move onto the island thereafter. When both areas had become British Colonies, in 1796, the Colonial Office in London saw no problem in transporting Indian tea plantation workers from the mainland to the plantations of Ceylon. This disturbed the delicate balance between Tamil and Sinhalese that had existed for centuries. As in many former colonies in Asia and Africa, the lack of regard by the Motherland for tribal differences and territories, forcibly suppressed during the colonial era, surfaced once independence had been achieved and within decades exploded into a Tamil liberation movement in the 1970's and a full-blown civil war by 1983, still unresolved in 1997.

but even after the two prelates in question had passed on, there were, and are, real differences between these two areas that, to this day, have yet to be resolved.²⁰

The Oblates in the Jaffna vicariate had two home bases: the main city, where they were involved in either the apostolates or in mission bands working out of the urban setting; or the outlying districts of the vicariate, where they worked, two by two, in the mission stations. Bishop Séméria was aware that this situation did not foster the family spirit and local community life envisioned by de Mazenod. He instinctively decided to adapt the circumstances in order to resolve the community problem with the least possible disturbance to the apostolate, rather than resorting to radical solutions. He was the Oblate superior and also the ecclesiastical superior. A solution would have to be found that would satisfy both jurisdictions. The Constitutions and Rules of the Oblates allowed the vicariates of missions manoeuvrability in establishing their internal structure, provided that it was approved by the superior general and his council.²¹

2.1.3. Séméria and Fabre

Shortly after the start of Father Fabre's mandate as superior general, he began to correspond with Séméria regarding the vicariate's internal Oblate structure. The bishop proposed that the district structure of the vicariate,²² initiated by his predecessor, be paralleled by a new Oblate community structure. Each religious district would be a local community, treated like a house rather than like a group of residences each individually dependent on the vicar of missions. The head of this new structure would then be a local superior according to the Oblate Rule,²³ not just a director of a residence. This was a new idea and, with the input of the missionaries with experience in Ceylon,

²⁰ See LEFLON, vol. 4, pp. 199-219.

²¹ See *CC&RR*, 1853, Pars Tertia, Caput Primam, § VII, Art. II.

²² In his report to the General Chapter of 1861, written on the way to Marseilles, Bishop Séméria refers to the areas of his vicariate as "districts", implying his continued use of the titles used by his predecessor. See Séméria to Fabre, November 8, 1861, in *Missions de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, Marseille and Rome, Administration générale, 1862-1971, 339 nos. in 98 vols., 1 (1862), p. 191.

²³ See *CC&RR*, 1853, Pars Tertia, Caput Secundum, § I, Art. I-XXIII.

many details would have to be resolved. Séméria and Fabre both had the character and mentality to undertake and complete this task.

By 1865, four years after the death of the founder, the project had reached the final stages of approval. It was formally discussed by the general council on January 27, 1865, and, after further clarification, approved on December 1, 1865.²⁴

In a letter from Paris²⁵ during this discussion, dated March 13, 1865, the superior general said:

I thank you for your excellent idea regarding the regularization, as much as is possible, of the position of our Fathers who find themselves scattered in pairs in several different missions. I fully approve of your project to designate one locality to serve as a house, properly speaking, to two or three neighbouring residences and, to appoint a superior who will exercise the duties of a local superior regarding both the residences, and the resident fathers.²⁶

At this time he appears to be considering establishing one residence in each district which would serve as a quasi-house. However, he does request that Séméria and the latter's council continue the discussion, while taking his suggestions into consideration. Upon reaching an agreement, they were to report back to him.

Over the summer of 1865, Father Gabriel Salaün, O.M.I.,²⁷ a missionary of note, circulated

²⁴ See Archives of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, [=AOMI], Rome, Cons. Gén., vol. 2, p. 139 (Jan. 27, 1865); p. 185 (Dec. 1, 1865), as quoted in R. BOUDENS, *Catholic Missionaries in a British Colony: Successes and Failures in Ceylon, 1796-1893*, Immensee [sic], Nouvelle Revue de science missionnaire, 1979, p. 97.

²⁵ The general council had transferred the general house to Paris on June 25, 1862, after a series of profound disagreements with Bishop Cruice, de Mazenod's successor as bishop of Marseilles. See LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 1, pp. 188-189.

²⁶ "Je vous remercie de l'excellente idée que vous avez conçue pour régulariser le plus qu'il sera possible la position de nos Pères qui se trouvent dispersées deux à deux dans plusieurs missions. J'approuve pleinement votre projet de désigner une localité qui servira de Maison proprement dite à deux ou trois résidences plus voisines et dont le Supérieur aura à exercer vis à vis de ces résidences et des Pères qui y seront les fonctions de Supérieur local." (FABRE to Séméria, 13 mars, 1865, copy in Dossier Ceylan, Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa). This letter, as are most in this dossier, is noted as conforming to the original found in the Oblate Archives, General House, Rome. The transcriptions are noted as having been made in 1956 by some scholastics. According to a letter received from A. Kedl, O.M.I., general archivist, dated November 18, 1994, there is no Séméria correspondence currently on file in the general archives and its present whereabouts is unknown.

²⁷ Gabriel Salaün was born at Guipronvel (Finistère), a village of 323 inhabitants, in the diocese of Quimper, in Brittany, north-west France, on November 8, 1834. He took final vows as an Oblate on May 3, 1858 at the novitiate in Nancy and was ordained in Marseille, June 24, 1860. He left for his posting to Ceylon on 20 September that same year and died in Jaffna on May 10, 1874, in his fortieth year, (see Register of the Novitiate of Nancy, AOMI, Rome, p. 14. See

a memo with suggestions for, and comments on, this project. The memo contained adaptations to the concept of having a local superior in an area where community members do not all reside in the same building and who meet at specified times, as well as adaptations to the rules governing this situation.

In one of his undated memos from that period, entitled "Institution des Supérieurs de Districts," he summarizes the arguments as follows:

An Opportunity

In order to maintain the rule it is necessary to establish a superior, possessing authority and charged with responsibility, in each district.

Taking into consideration the distances involved, the differences in the regions and the considerable number of missionaries, the vicar of missions alone is not sufficiently able to maintain the rule without subordinates who share in his authority and his responsibility.

Nevertheless, the establishment of superiors of districts appears to be a simple application of our Rules which, in many places, grant the burdens of responsibility to prefects²⁸ or directors of a residence. It is sufficient to mention the passages where these rules oblige the prefects of residences to watch over the health of their subjects and to render an account of the state of their residences to the Vicar of Missions.

The objection that this institution of superiors of districts is liable to create difficulties in a country where there are already too many hindrances, is self-defeating when one sees that the institution concerned reduces, rather than amplifies, the number of existing difficulties and simplifies them.²⁹

In a memo dated July 13, 1865, located in the "Dossier Ceylan" immediately before the previous reference, Salaün is of the opinion that the power of these district superiors would be

also an as yet unidentified register of the first 2845 Oblates to take final vows. AOMI, Rome, p. 76).

²⁸ In many places in the correspondence of this era the word *préfet* is used interchangeably with the word *directeur* when referring to the Oblate in charge of a residence. Today only the word *directeur*/director is used.

²⁹ "Opportunité

"Pour le maintien de la règle il faut nécessairement établir dans chaque district un Supérieur investi d'autorité et chargé de responsabilité.

"Vu la distance des lieux, la différence des pays, le nombre assez considérable des Missionnaires le vicaire de Mission n'est pas à même de pourvoir suffisamment au maintien de la règle sans des subordonnés qui partagent son autorité et sa responsabilité.

"Au reste cette institution de Supérieurs de district me semble être une simple application de nos Règles qui en plusieurs endroits supposent des préfets ou directeurs de résidence chargés de responsabilité; qu'il suffise de mentionner les passages où ces règles obligent les préfets de résidence de veiller à la santé des sujets et de rendre compte de l'état de leurs résidences au Vicaire de Mission.

"L'objection que cette institution de supérieurs de districts est propre à créer de nouveaux embarras dans un pays [sic: probably *pays*] où on n'en a que trop est une objection qui tombera d'elle-même quand on verra que l'institution dont il s'agit au lieu de créer des embarras réduit le nombre de ceux existants déjà et les simplifie." (memo of Gabriel Salaün, O.M.I., "Institution des Supérieurs de Districts," in Dossier Ceylan, Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, undated, probably 1865, p. 1, copy marked "conforme à l'original conservé aux Archives de la Maison Générale, Rome").

delegated by the vicar of missions through a mandate.³⁰ In another, undated, memo entitled "Projet de règlement pour les districts des missions" he makes note of all the articles in the Constitutions and Rules that which would need to be modified, omitted, substituted, or left as is and he offers suggestions for the changes.³¹

In a letter dated September 7, 1865,³² Séméria writes to Fabre on this topic once again.

My Most Reverend and dearly beloved Father,

I have been meaning to speak to you for several months regarding the establishment of superiors in some of the districts of our vicariate, a concept which, according to us, would be beneficial in all respects. I have been further encouraged to address you concerning this project since you have already, in principle and in a general manner, chosen to approve it.³³

Again he reviews the various reasons behind the suggestion for the restructuring of the Oblate vicariate of missions in the vicariate apostolic of Jaffna. He then says,

Here then, my Most Reverend Father, is that which we believe we want to propose and submit to your examination and your decision.³⁴

He then speaks of the superiors as he sees them. He does not suggest changes to the Constitutions and Rules, or propose general regulations as did Salaün. Instead, he enumerates in twenty-two rather disjointed numbered paragraphs, and one very long rambling one, items that the district superior would handle, ones which were the responsibility of the vicar, items which were problematic. Finally, he concludes by saying:

³⁰ "4- La juridiction du Supérieur sera déléguée: avant d'entrer en charge le Vicaire de Missions devra le munir d'un mandat." (G. Salaün, Memo, 31 juillet, 1865, Archives Deschâtelets, Dossier Ceylan, marked "copie conforme à l'original conservé aux Archives de la Maison Générale, Rome").

The canonical implication of this opinion of the source of jurisdiction will be discussed later.

³¹ See Appendix 2 for the text of Salaün's circular memos.

³² The date on the letter actually reads "Jaffna le 1er 7bre 1865." This is interpreted as referring to 7=sept [i.e. septembre] rather than the seventh month, juillet/July. "Lettre au T.R.P. Sup. Général sur les futurs Sup. de District," in Dossier Ceylan, Archives Deschâtelets, p. 1.

³³ "Lettre au T.R.P. Sup. Général sur les futurs Sup. de District," p. 1.

³⁴ "Lettre au T.R.P. Sup. Général sur les futurs Sup. de District," p. 1.

But we leave behind these little details, which one can handle at an opportune time.³⁵

The very detailed method used by Séméria in his suggestions, rather than the method of laying down principles to be applied as cases arise, was not unique to the man. He was a man of his age, and the same could be said of him as was said of the founder of the Oblates:

...Bishop de Mazenod, like other religious founders and seminary directors of his day, multiplied the rules and regulations of his congregation; for in doing so he felt he could more surely prevent any dangerous infiltration of the modern spirit by imposing tighter restrictions upon his subjects.³⁶

2.1.4. Approval of Oblate Districts, 1865

The establishment of the district form of Oblate local community and government was begun as soon as the principles were approved by the superior general in council. This establishment was officially proposed to them on January 27, 1865, as follows:

Bishop Séméria, wishing to simplify the administration of his vicariate and to bring it closer to the spirit of our Holy Rule, proposes to divide his vicariate into districts. Each district will be entrusted to a "chef de mission," who will be the Superior of several missionaries, whom he will bring together from time to time either for retreat or to carry out any other details of our Holy Rule. The Council approves the Bishop's suggestion in principle, but it cannot make a final decision, considering that it is not sufficiently aware of the local situation.³⁷

The concept was given the necessary approval by the superior general in council on December 1, 1865, and it is noted in the minutes as follows:

Most Rev. Fr. General has read a regulation submitted by Bishop Séméria in order to organize the religious life of our fathers who are working on that island. He proposes to divide the vicariate into several centres and to name a superior for each centre: the superior will regularly bring together the fathers who work in his territory and he will hold in their regard the powers of a superior. In this manner, not only would the monthly retreats be

³⁵ "Lettre au T.R.P. Sup. Général sur les futurs Sup. de District," p. 4.

³⁶ LEFLON, vol. 4, p. 316.

³⁷ "Mgr. Séméria désirant simplifier son administration vicariale et la rapprocher de plus en plus de l'esprit de nos Stes. Règles, propose de diviser son vicariat en districts. Chaque district serait confié à un chef de mission, lequel chef serait Supérieur de plusieurs missionnaires qu'il réunirait de temps en temps, soit pour retraites, soit pour accomplir divers autres points de nos Stes. Règles. Le Conseil admet en principe cette proposition de Mgr. mais il croit ne pouvoir rien déterminer, vu qu'il n'a pas la connaissance suffisante de lieux." (Procès verbaux des conseils généraux de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie-Immaculée, vol. 2, p. 139.) See also R. BOUDENS, *Catholic Missionaries*, p. 97, footnote 99.

assured, but the "culpe" [chapter of faults] and conferences as well and, in short, no one will be without a superior. This regulation appeared imperfect in some details, but we commend this auspicious initiative. We understand more and more the necessity to regularize the religious life of our fathers in the vicariates, where the religious is frequently engrossed by many tasks and leads a regular life with difficulty. Thence also the necessity to regularise the temporal goods of the Congregation.¹⁸

Districts were thus permitted as instruments of local community and government in missionary areas where it was not practical to establish the traditional system of houses and residences.

Séméria's ideas were more acceptable because there was an existing ecclesiastical history of districts. The idea was radical only in its application to religious life, not in its essence.

It would be several years before the new system worked out its initial problems, and Bishop Séméria would not live to see it completed.

When Bishop Séméria, scarcely 54 years old, died in Marseille on January 23, 1868, it was self-evident that he would be succeeded by Father Bonjean as Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna. During Séméria's episcopate, the foundations were laid for renewed religious life. Séméria had also shown himself to be very concerned for the missionaries. For the advancement of the religious life, he had divided the vicariate into districts. A superior, appointed in each district, was to see that the prescriptions of the Rule were followed. ... He was very meticulous and perhaps he lacked, in a sense, a vision of the larger whole. ... In any event, he bore the care of the Christian community entrusted to him with excellence and laid the foundations for their further growth and expansion.¹⁹

¹⁸ "Le T.R.P. Général a lu un règlement que lui soumet Mgr. Semeria [sic] afin d'organiser religieusement le service que font nos pères dans cette île. Il s'agit de diviser le vicariat en plusieurs centres et de nommer un supérieur dans chaque centre: ce supérieur réunirait régulièrement les pères qui travaillent dans sa circonscription et jouirait à leur égard des devoirs des supérieurs. On pourrait obtenir ainsi que les retraits du mois, que les culpes et les conférences aient lieu et enfin chacun ne serait pas sans supérieur. Ce règlement paraissait défectueux, par quelques détails, mais on bénit cette heureuse initiative. L'on comprend de plus en plus la nécessité de régulariser la position de nos pères dans les vicariats, où souvent le religieux est absorbé par des devoirs multiples et s'accordant difficilement avec la vie régulière. De là aussi la nécessité de régulariser aussi la position temporelle de la Congrégation." (Procès verbaux, vol. 2, p. 185). See also R. BOUDENS, *Catholic Missionaries*, p. 97, footnote 99.

¹⁹ *Procès verbaux*, pp. 96-97. See also *Minutes of the General Administration*, General Archives, Rome, vol. 2, p. 139 (Jan. 27, 1865); p. 185 (Dec. 1, 1865).

2.1.5. Bishop Christophe Bonjean, O.M.I.⁴⁰

Bonjean, Séméria's successor as vicar, was an experienced missionary in Ceylon, when, as a diocesan priest, he joined the Oblates. An excellent administrator, like his superior general (Fabre), Bonjean restructured the vicariate for a more effective missionary effort.⁴¹

The three districts were replaced by five: Jaffna, Mannar, Puttalam, Chilaw, the fifth being the Vanni with Mullaitivu as the Centre. Each district was further subdivided into a number of missions. Bonjean planned still further divisions, but could only partly realize them.⁴²

In 1869, he issued a circular letter entitled "Règlement provisoire du district de Mannar & Mantotte."⁴³ This document contains thirty articles but is clear and concise, similar to Salaün's style rather than Séméria's discursive style. The regulations for a district superior were the same as those found in the Constitutions and Rules for any local superior, with some necessary adjustments because the entire community was in the same building only on occasion. The superior was mandated to visit the missionaries in their residences, and it is obvious that they were not to view the office as a sinecure. He was to act as district procurator⁴⁴ if there were not enough district members to have someone else take the job. However, above all, he was to be the father of his subjects, with not only their spiritual well-being at heart, but especially their health and medical needs.

⁴⁰ Christophe Bonjean was born in Riom, diocese of Clermont, France, in 1823. He did his seminary training at the Foreign Missions of Paris but, after ten years as a missionary at Coimbatour in Ceylon, wanted to join a religious community. He expressed this to Séméria in 1855, and it soon became obvious that this new recruit to the Oblates was a man of extraordinary personality, a man of original ideas, an unsullied view of the Church in Ceylon, and an enterprising spirit. He was named titular bishop of Media and vicar apostolic of Jaffna on July 28, 1868. Consecrated in Tours, France, by Archbishop Guibert, O.M.I., on August 28, 1868, he later became vicar apostolic of Colombo, Ceylon, on April 20, 1883, and archbishop on September 1, 1886. He died in Borella on August 3, 1892. See *Necrologium OMI*, 1983, pp. 109, 195, and R. BOUDENS, *Catholic Missionaries*, pp. 80-81.

⁴¹ See Appendix 6, Maps of Ceylon, for details.

⁴² R. BOUDENS, *Catholic Missionaries*, p. 111.

⁴³ See Appendix 4.

⁴⁴ At this time the terms treasurer, *économe*, and bursar were not in common use among the Oblates, although the office of procurator could be considered equivalent to these in most respects. In mission territories he would have special responsibility for central purchasing. Today, in the Oblates, the term is reserved for the office of procurator general who deals with the Holy See on behalf of the Congregation in most matters. The term *procurateur* was officially replaced by *économe* by the General Chapter of 1908, in response to the regulations contained in the *Normæ* of the Holy See. (see G. COSENTINO, "La IV^e édition des Règles et ses préparations" in *Études Oblates*, 11 [1952], pp. 225-238).

Art. 22 – The superior is entrusted particularly with the care of the fathers' health and of their material needs. He is to foresee wisely that none of the fathers is deprived of that which is necessary. Within the limits of religious poverty, he is to alleviate the suffering incurred through ill-health. Missionaries stationed further away could be furnished with frequently-used medical supplies. When a missionary gets sick, the superior is to seek medical help as soon as possible, move him, if necessary, to more comfortable lodging, and he will immediately notify the vicar of missions.⁴⁵

The approval of the concept of districts and district superiors as a form of local government within the Oblate Congregation and the promulgation of regulations for each district was followed by the naming of local superiors. In 1875, a circular for the vicariate of Ceylon lists Father Pouzin of the mission of Manotte Sud as superior of the District of Mannar, Father Gouret of the mission of Calpentyn as superior of the district of Puttalam, Father Lelons of the mission of Chilaw as superior of the district of Chilaw, and Father Pélissier of the mission of Trincomalie as superior of the Eastern district.⁴⁶

Within ten years of the establishment of this new form of local community government, it had become the accepted way of organizing the scattered missions of Ceylon, and it would spread from here throughout the Congregation.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ "Art. 22 - Le sup. est spécialement chargé de veiller à santé des Pères et de pourvoir à tous leurs besoins matériels. Il usera d'un sage prévoyance pour que aucun des Pères ne soit jamais privé de ce qui lui est nécessaire. Il accordera dans les limites de la pauvreté religieuse les adoucissements que les mauvaises santé démèneraient[.] Il pourra fournir aux missionnaires éloignés les médecines d'un usage plus fréquent. Dès qu'un missionnaire tombera malade, il lui procurera au plus tôt le secours de l'art, le fera transporter, s'il y a lieu, dans un logement plus commode et avertira sans délai le vic. des missions." (C. BONJEAN, "Circulaire: règlement provisoire du district de Mammar & Mantotte", Dossier Ceylan, Archives Deschâtelets, dated Jaffna, 24-2-1869).

⁴⁶ "Personnel du Vicariat de Ceylan en 1875", in Dossier Ceylan, Archives Deschâtelets.

⁴⁷ The spirit of innovation which was found in these missionaries of Ceylon continues today among the Oblates of Sri Lanka. The provincial of the Sri Lanka states that his men have questions, now that the running of the local dioceses had been given over to the local clergy. They wonder, "if we can play an effective role in updating the Church, providing the new thinking needed in Sri Lanka.... Can we take an independent stand on these issues and organize our own apostolate to face these current problems, or have we to be subordinate to the diocesan structure and maintain the status quo? This is an important question in the minds of our younger group of Oblates and an identity crisis for them...." ("OMI Information," [English], no. 326 [September, 1994], pp. 8-9).

2.2. The Spread of Districts to Other Territories According to the Official Personnels

The Congregation issued various provincial and vicarial personnels⁴⁸ during the lifetime of the founder, and even one Congregation-wide in 1854, but this latter remained an isolated case till 1880 when the first regular personnel appeared in response to a decree of the General Chapter of 1879.⁴⁹ From 1880 onwards, using these personnels, the spread of the concept of districts can be almost visually perceived.

2.2.1. Personnel, No. 1, 1880

In the first *Personnel* of 1880,⁵⁰ four provinces and seven vicariates of mission are listed. A partial listing of the vicariate of Ceylon is as follows:

- Vicariate of Ceylon

Vicarial Administration

- I - The District of Jaffna
 - The House of Jaffna (Novitiate and Scholasticate)
 - Dominique Pulciani, Superior
 - Mission of Colombogan
 - Mission of Valigame West
 - Mission of Valigame East
 - Mission of Point Pedro
 - Missions of Caits and the Islands
 - II - The District of Manaar-Mantotte
 - Mission of Manaar
 - Jean-Marie Le Lons, Superior
 - Mission of Pessalai
 - Mission of Mantotte-North
 - François Goures, Procurator
 - Mission of Mantotte South
 - III - The District of Puttalam (or Southern District)
 - Mission of Akareipattu
 - Jean Touzin, Superior

⁴⁸ Lists of Oblates giving their assignment, community and personal vital statistics as well as the various Oblate regions, provinces, houses, districts, residences, missions and stations depending on the type and era of the document.

⁴⁹ See G. COSENTINO, "Les Personnels de la Congrégation", in *Études Oblates*, 19 (1960), pp. 242-248.

⁵⁰ *État Général du Personnel de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, [=Personnel #1], [Paris, 1880], handwritten manuscript of 91 pages.

Mission of Puttalam
 Mission of Calpentyne
 IV - The District of Chilaw
 Mission of Chilaw
 Joseph Laclau-Pussac. Superior
 Mission of Vennapurai
 Mission of Maravilla
 Mission of Caimel
 Mission of Kurunégala
 V - Eastern District
 Mission of Trincomalie
 [No Superior appointed]⁴¹

This list reveals the existence of two types of districts in Ceylon: the district of Jaffna, composed of a house, with a superior, and attached missions; and the other districts, true districts with their own superiors, and not attached to a house.

In the same personnel, the vicariate of missions of Natal, Africa, is also divided into districts.⁴² However, every district that has a superior also has him listed as living in a house (*maison*) rather than in a residence, as with Ceylon. This is a variation on a theme that has continued to this day; not all applications of the concept of districts and district superiors are identical and many uses of the term are not legally correct.

⁴¹ See *Personnel # 1*, pp. 51-55.

⁴² Natal, in *Personnel # 1*, pp. 56-58, is listed, in part, as:

Vicariate of Natal

 Vicarial Administration

 I - District of Natal
 House of Pietermaritzburg, (Novitiate)
 Justin Barret, Superior
 Mission of D'Urban
 II - District of Orange
 House of Bloemfontein
 Jean Bompert, Superior
 Mission of Kimberley
 III - District of Basutoland
 House of Motsi-Ma-Jésu
 François Le Bihan, Superior
 Mission of St. Michael
 Mission of St. Joseph (Korokoro)
 Mission of St. Monica (Molapo)
 IV - District of Transvaal
 Mission of Pretoria [No Superior appointed]

2.2.2. Personnel, No. 2

État général de Personnel de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée, No. 2 - Février 1882, lists the vicariate of Ceylon as having the District of Jaffna, with its house, as well as Manaar-Manotte, Southern, Kurunégala and Eastern Districts. These latter four have their own superiors, including Kurunégala, which has only two members, counting the superior. The vicariate of Natal is divided as in 1880.⁵³

2.2.3. Personnel, Nos. 3 to 23

The third *Personnel* was issued in 1887 and the latest, number 23, in 1993. The number of districts within the Oblates steadily increased over the years until at the time of the 1993 General Chapter, one-quarter of the Congregation was living in districts.⁵⁴ This was not a steady increase and there were many factors, both within and without the Oblate community which influenced it. More details may be found in Appendix 7.

2.3. Ecclesiastical History of Districts

As seen earlier in this text,⁵⁵ the title 'district' was not an Oblate invention but was the title used by Bishop Bettachini for the intermediate divisions⁵⁶ of the apostolic vicariate of Jaffna when the Oblates arrived in 1847. Nor was it even the invention of that bishop. Such divisions, by one name or another, have a very ancient history in the diocesan structure of the Church. The concept is very old and it appears to be the model which the Oblates used from the start.

⁵³ See *Personnel*, # 2, 1882, pp. 56-64.

⁵⁴ *Acta Administrationis Generalis O.M.I.*, Romæ, Domus Generalis, 15 (1992), p. 187.

⁵⁵ Cf. chapter 2, footnote #8.

⁵⁶ Those divisions between a parish and a vicariate or diocese.

2.3.1. Diocesan Districts

Canon 217, § 1,⁵⁷ of the 1917 Code states that the territory of a bishop is to be divided into districts or regions, each consisting of a number of parishes. The possible titles of these divisions are not limited by the Code. Of the titles suggested, only “deanery” is commonly used in English today, as well as the term “district” from the first part of the canon. The priest in charge of such a division has had many titles over the years, the most common being dean, rural dean, vicar forane, or archpriest. The general law of the Church obliged such divisions for the first time in the 1917 Code.⁵⁸ However, the concept of such divisions can be traced to the early days of the Church.

Churches, as distinct from houses in which the eucharist was celebrated, were established outside of towns by the third century in Egypt, by the fourth century elsewhere in the east, and by the fifth century in the west. The more important churches received certain privileges (such as possession of a baptismal font), and the priest in charge of them had a higher dignity and precedence among his fellow rural priests. This was the origin of deans or archpriests. In the seventh century, with the emergence of very large dioceses, the major division of dioceses into archdeaconries was introduced and, in turn, their subdivisions were called deaneries or *archprêtres* in French. Such divisions surfaced for purely practical governmental reasons, due to the communication and travel problems of the day, rather from the imposition of an external written law. Particular councils of the

⁵⁷ “Episcopus territorium suum in regiones seu districtus, pluribus paræciis constantes, distribuat, qui veniunt nomine vicariatus foranei, *decanatus*, *archipresbyteratus*, etc.” (*Codex iuris canonici, Pii X Pontificis Maximi iussu digestus, Benedicti Papæ XV auctoritate promulgatus*, [=Codex 1917], præfatione, fontium annotatione et analytico-alphabetico ab Eñño Petro Card. GASPARRI auctus, Neo-Eboraci, P. J. Kenedy and Sons, Typographi Pontificii, 1918, p. 55).

⁵⁸ See *Traité de Droit Canonique*, publié sous la direction de R. NAZ, 2e éd. rev., Paris, Letouzey et Ané, 1955, vol. I, p. 513.

Middle Ages mention these divisions as do the Decretals of Gregory IX,⁶⁰ though they were never mandatory. The Council of Trent did not concern itself with deans or archpriests except to limit their powers partially.⁶¹

Gasparri cites a document of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars regarding some of the duties of an archdeacon as a source of canons 445 to 458 of the 1917 Code on vicars forane.⁶²

Throughout history, the purpose of the priest in charge of this intermediary division was to be one of the links between the bishop and his scattered clergy. He was to watch over the celebration of the liturgy, especially baptism and eucharist, the ecclesiastical records of the area, to see to the spiritual and physical health of the clergy, to see to their comfort in sickness and their proper burial in death, and to regularly report back to the bishop. These responsibilities were finally written out in canons 446 to 449 of the 1917 Code and only slightly modified in canon 555 of the 1983 Code.⁶³

2.3.2. Districts under *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*

The Roman Congregation, known simply as *Propaganda Fide*, founded by Gregory XV (1621-1623) on June 22, 1622, was established by the Bull *Inscrutabili*,⁶⁴ and was given jurisdiction

⁶⁰ Decretals of Gregory IX. 1. 1. Title XXIV, *De Officio Archipresbyteri*. Among others, he quotes the Council of Toledo, Pope Leo III, and the Synod of Ravenna. See *Corpus juris canonici*, ed. Lipsiensis secunda post Æmilii Ludouici Richteri curas ad librorum manuscriptorum et ed. romanæ fidem recognouit et adnotatione critica instruxit Æmilius Friedberg, Lipsiæ: ex officina B. Tauchnitz, 1879-1881, [Lipsiæ, 1928], vol. 2, pp. 154-155.

⁶¹ Cf. *Traité de Droit Canonique*, publié sous la direction de R. NAZ, 2e éd. rev., Paris, Letouzey et Ané, 1955, vol. 1, p. 513. See also F. WERNZ, *Ius canonicum ad Codicis normam exactum, opera P. Vidal*, editio tertia, Romæ, apud Ædes Universitatis Gregorianæ, 1943, vol. 2, pp. 906-909; A. BACHOFEN, *A Commentary on the New Code of Canon Law*, St. Louis, B. Herder Book Co., 6th ed., 1936, vol. 2, pp. 497-504; F. DELLA ROCCA, *Manual of Canon Law*, A. Bruce, trans., Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Company, [1959], pp. 221-222.

⁶² See *Codex 1917*, Liber secundus, caput VIII, De Vicariis foraneis, pp. 125-126. See also *Codex iuris canonici fontes*, [=Fontes], P. GASPARRI et J. SEREDI, (eds.), Romæ, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1926-1939, vol. 4, p. 721. See also S. C. Ep. et Reg., Lanacen., 17 apr., 1613.

⁶³ *Codex iuris canonici, auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus*, (= *Codex 1983*), Vatican City, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983. English translation, *Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition*, translation prepared under the auspices of the Canon Law Society of America, Washington, DC, Canon Law Society of America, 1983.

⁶⁴ *Iuris Pontificii de Propaganda Fide*, 7 vols., Romæ, ex Typographia Polyglotta S. C. de Propaganda Fide, 1888-1897, vol. 1, p. 1.

over "each and every matter, pertaining to the propagation of the faith throughout the world."⁶⁴ It was re-organized in 1908 by Pius X⁶⁵ and then later to make it conform to the 1917 Code.⁶⁶ It was renamed by Paul VI in 1967 as *Congregatio pro Gentium Evangelizatione*.⁶⁷ As with most other items, the 1917 Code bases itself on previous law. John P. Kelly states:⁶⁸

. . . (D)ioceses which are subjected to the S. C. of the Propagation of the Faith, since they are still missions, may have all or part of their territory without parochial division. This is called undivided territory, that is without designation of parochial limits.

In this undivided territory however, there does exist an imperfect division, that is, the territorial limits established by the Ordinary, within which the missionary exercises the care of souls. This was the law before the Code and remains so, today. Can. 1182 §2, speaks of the limits of the mission. The report, sent every five years, to the Sacred Congregation by the Bishops, Vicars, Prefects, and Mission Superiors subject to it, asks that the number of sections or *districts*⁶⁹ or other areas, into which the mission is divided, be given. . . . They are called mission stations.⁷⁰

As Kelly states, mission territories begin as undivided territories and are not to be established based on a diocesan model until all the necessary features are in place. This is a basic tenet of the Sacred Congregation, and has been taught since the publication, in 1659, of the document "Instructions for the use of vicars apostolic leaving for the Chinese Kingdoms of Tonkin and Cochin China."⁷¹ Before the newly evangelized country can become subject to the common law of the Church, it must be allowed a very supple organization, adapted to circumstances. In the beginning, it is sufficient, and advisable to start with a system of semi-parishes, prefectures, and apostolic

⁶⁴ *Iuris Pontifici de Propaganda Fide*, vol. 1, p. 2, n. 2.

⁶⁵ PIUS X, Constitution "Sapienti consilio," June 29, 1908, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (=AAS), 1 (1909), p. 12.

⁶⁶ *Codex 1917*, c. 252.

⁶⁷ PAUL VI, *Regimini Ecclesiae*, in AAS, 59 (1967), pp. 885-928, no. 81.

⁶⁸ KELLY, J., *The Legal Status of Mission Stations: an historical synopsis and canonical commentary*, Ottawa, University of Ottawa, 1953, typed manuscript. The equating of a mission station with a district is found in innumerable places in this thesis.

⁶⁹ Emphasis added.

⁷⁰ KELLY, *Mission Stations*, pp. 6-7.

⁷¹ See M. MARCOCCHI, *Colonialismo, Cristianesimo e culture extraeuropee: L'istruzione di Propaganda Fide ai Vicari apostolici dell'Asia Orientale* (1959), [Milan, 1980], Jaca Book, pp. 61-88.

vicariates. The wisdom of this 1659 document has been proven over the centuries.⁷²

In the 1922 Instructions following the promulgation of the Code, the S. C. of the Propagation of the Faith refers to 'districts' twice in chapter 2, *De constitutione missionis eiusque divisione ecclesiastica*.⁷³ There appears to be no restrictions in the 1983 Code limiting the use of districts to territories subject to the S. C. for the Evangelization of Peoples.⁷⁴

2.3.3. Uncertain Ecclesiastical Roots

Although, by nature of the office, a local religious superior has more power than a vicar forane, and his equivalent in mission stations, it is interesting to note the similarity in some of the responsibilities towards the clergy outlined in the mandate quoted above for the district superior within the missionary vicariate of Jaffna⁷⁵ and those found in the Codes. It would not be idle to speculate that the Oblates in Ceylon may have had access to similar nineteenth century diocesan mandates either from the bishops of Ceylon or from their homelands. They certainly did have access to the legislation and terminology used by the *S. C. de Propaganda Fide*, and had to use them in their reports. The Oblate missionaries did not invent the term 'district.' It was used in at least two areas of ecclesiastical government prior to Oblate use. However, to be more specific as to its roots would entail further research into this question, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

2.4. Districts in Religious Law

'District' as a form of local government in religious institutes is not found explicitly in either Code. It is an analogous term used by various religious congregations, sometimes officially

⁷² See R. DELAVIGNETTE, *Christianity and Colonialism*, J. Foster, trans., New York, Hawthorne Books, [1964], pp. 57-59. See also J. GUENNOU, "L'Instruction de 1659 aux vicaires apostoliques français," in *Les Missions Catholiques*, 73 (1959), pp. 77-79.

⁷³ SACRA CONGREGATIO DE PROPAGANDA FIDE, letter, April 16, 1922, caput 2, nos. 4 and 6, in AAS, 14 (1922), pp. 288, 289.

⁷⁴ *Codex 1983*, cc. 374, 515-516.

⁷⁵ Cf. Appendix 4.

sometimes not. It can designate a territory which cannot yet be erected as a province or define a group of provinces or even specify an unofficial or geographic area of an established province. There is no stipulated denotation of the term 'district.' Therefore, in order to clarify matters, the interpretation used in this work will be that found within the Oblate Constitutions and Rules and the acts of both the general administration and the administrations of the vicariates of missions.

There are no canons in either the 1917 or the 1983 Codes of Canon Law, within the sections on religious life, regarding districts or district superiors. However, in both Codes, there are canons which safeguard pre-existing proper laws which are not contradictory to the Code.⁷⁶ Moreover, the 1983 Code, in canon 586, specifically safeguards the autonomy of governance, discipline, and the entire patrimony as described in canon 578.

It is to be noted that the 1983 Code expands the concept of province with the addition of the phrase "or some part equivalent to a province."⁷⁷ This phrase allows the proper law of an institute to define this equivalent. In the Oblate Constitutions and Rules, this equivalent covers vice-provinces, thereby making their provincial a canonical major superior. This additional phrase also sets a precedent for a possible future evolution in the concept of 'house.'

2.5. Districts According to Oblate Pre-Code General Chapters

The Church has always recognized the authority of chapters, both general and provincial, in religious life. The Council of Trent presupposes their power when it states in its twenty-fifth session, chapters 1 and 22, that the reforms of the Council are to be implemented and enforced by superiors, in general and provincial chapters.⁷⁸ The Code of 1917 simply makes the general statement that superiors and chapters, according to the norms of the constitutions and common law, have

⁷⁶ *Codex 1917*, cc. 4, 5, 488 §1, 489; *Codex 1983*, cc. 4, 5, 587, 607 §2.

⁷⁷ *Codex 1983*, c. 620.

⁷⁸ See *Concilium Tridentinum, 1545-1563, Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent: Original text with English translation*, H. Schroeder, trans., St. Louis, Mo., B. Herder Book Co., 1941, pp. 217-218, 231-232, 487, 498-499.

dominative power over their subjects.⁷⁹ It was not until the Code of Canon Law of 1983 that, without using the expression "dominative power," the authority was made explicit in canon 631.⁸⁰ The general chapter is the supreme authority within each institute.

The Oblates have had thirty-two general chapters between 1818 and 1992, the next one being scheduled for Rome in 1998.

2.5.1. The 1893 General Chapter and Previous General Chapters

General chapters focussed solely on houses and residences⁸¹ up until 1893,⁸² when the general administration submitted, as requested, an outline of the distinctive characteristics of a regular house, an incomplete house, a residence, and a district.

A regular house is one which, constituted by a decree of the superior general, has:

- 1 - administrative autonomy as foreseen in the rule.
- 2 - a council composed of a superior and two assessors.
- 3 - which is made up of at least five members who are priests.

It is represented at a provincial chapter by the superior and one elected delegate. The decree of the superior general is drawn up in triplicate and kept in the archives of the three administrations: general, provincial and local.

An incomplete house is one which, constituted as above by a decree of the superior general, fulfils the first two conditions, but not the third. It is represented at a provincial chapter by the superior, but does not have the right to a delegate.

A residence, from now on, is also constituted by a decree of the superior general, is essentially deprived of administrative autonomy; it has neither superior nor council, but

⁷⁹ See *Codex 1917*, c. 501, §1. In clerical exempt institutes, superiors and chapters also have ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

⁸⁰ Can. 631 §1. "Capitulum generale, quod supremam auctoritatem ad normam constitutionum in instituto obtinet, ita efformetur ut totum institutum repraesentans, verum signum eiusdem unitatis in caritate evadat. Eius praecipue est: patrimonium instituti de quo in can. 578, tueri et accommodatam renovationem iuxta ipsum promovere, Moderatorem supremum eligere, maiora negotia tractare, necnon normas edicere, quibus omnes parere tenentur" (The general chapter, which holds supreme authority in the institute according to the norm of the constitutions, is to be so formed that, representing the entire institute, it should be a true sign of its unity in love. Its foremost duty is this: to protect the patrimony of the institute mentioned in can. 578, and promote suitable renewal in accord with this patrimony, to elect the supreme moderator, to treat major business matters and to publish norms which all are bound to obey.)

⁸¹ However, as early as the General Chapter of 1850, Father Séméria had questions about the status of the missions of Ceylon. Just what was their status both as a territory and the missions within that territory? See J. PIELORZ, *Les chapitres Généraux au temps du Fondateur*, Ottawa, Éditions des Études Oblates, 1968, vol. 1, pp. 256-259.

⁸² Districts established prior to this time were established by the authority of the superior general in council, rather than by the authority of the Constitutions and Rules.

only a director. It is attached to a house, properly speaking, and it relates to the superior of that house, unless it is placed directly under the jurisdiction of the provincial. In the first case the residence votes with the house to which it is attached; in the second, with those who are listed with them, usually their closest neighbour.

... In the foreign missions, our fathers are scattered great distances one from another, and they are not always able to form regular houses, complete or incomplete, nor similarly, residences properly speaking. They are in relationship, whenever possible, with the vicar of missions. They administer themselves according to the instructions which they receive from him, and they vote individually, and in writing, with the headquarters of the vicariate for the delegate of the vicariate to the general chapter. When communications permit, the vicariate is divided into *districts*, and each district is set up as a geographically dispersed community, comprising essentially a superior, two assistants and a small or large number of subjects. The headquarters of the district is in that case, according to its importance and its establishment, a regular house, an incomplete house, a simple residence, or a simple station itself. But there is always in a district, a superior and two assistants, in one place or spread out, to whom important matters are referred and who give their advice. Under the authority of a superior, all the missionaries of a district constitute only one community: they administer themselves according to the instructions which they have received, and if they are more than four in number, they have the right to be represented at a vicarial chapter, the same as regular houses, by their superior and a delegate: they vote at the headquarters of the district, by writing or otherwise.⁸³

This declaration of the General Chapter of 1893 was reviewed, refined, and made part of the *Acta Capitulum Generalium* of the General Chapter of 1898 under the title of *De conventu Provinciae et Vicariatus*.⁸⁴ The General Chapter of 1904 took the concept of districts, as a form of local government, one step further in its evolution as the result of a series of dramatic actions on the part of the French Government.

2.5.2. The Chapter of 1904 and the French Third Republic

The Third Republic of France was born in 1871 out of the political rubble left by the disastrous defeat of Napoleon III by Prussia. It would last until the equally humiliating defeat of France by Nazi Germany in 1940.

In its early years the Third Republic had many enemies, both real and imagined: the Catholic Church was considered to be among its enemies. Since the time of the great Revolution in 1789,

⁸³ G. COSENTINO, *Nos Chapitres Généraux*, Ottawa, Éditions des Études Oblates, 1957, pp. 133-134. For the full text in French, see Appendix 5.

⁸⁴ "Reg. P. III, Cap. I, §X," in COSENTINO, *Nos Chapitres Généraux*, pp. 160-161.

French Catholics had been, or at least had been perceived as, Royalists, if not in their politics, then at least in their sympathies. To the members of the Republican government, the Catholic Church was a power to be broken before it destroyed the Republic. The government focussed on the Church's major strength: education.

In the 1880's, under Premier Jules Ferry, the anticlerical government moved against the state-supported Catholic schools. All support was withdrawn, and religious instruction, and religious and clerical instructors were forbidden in state schools.

The first religious congregation was expelled in 1901 and the "Associations Act of 1901" was passed so as to limit other orders. The then Premier Waldek-Rousseau did not want to expel them all, but simply to regulate them. Parliament was expected to allow any orders, which remained apolitical, to stay. However, the Catholic pro-clericals involved themselves very vociferously in the elections of June, 1902, and lost. The premier, Waldek-Rousseau, was forced to resign. His successor, Émile Combes, was a fanatical anti-Catholic ex-seminarian. He closed all Catholic girls' schools within three weeks of taking office and, in July, 1902, gave the 3,000 remaining Church schools just eight days to close. Police enforced the law. By 1904, all the teaching orders in France were forced to leave their schools and holdings, and some even had to leave the country. As far as the laws of France were concerned, but of course not canon law, the religious institutes had been dissolved.⁸⁵

The Oblates were forced to leave France officially in 1904, when the General House in Paris was taken over on June 1.⁸⁶ That last day was very graphically described in *Missions* of that year by an author known simply as "J. C., o.m.i."⁸⁷

The 17th General Chapter met at the scholasticate in Liege, Belgium, from August 14 to

⁸⁵ See W. SHIRER, *The Collapse of the Third Republic: An Inquiry into the Fall of France in 1940*, Simon and Schuster, New York, [1969], pp. 70-73.

⁸⁶ See J. PIELORZ, "Chapitres Généraux de 1818 à 1986," in *Vie Oblate Lit.* 46 (1987), pp. 184.

⁸⁷ J. C., "Le T. R. Père Général Expulsé," in *Missions*, 42 (1904), pp. 188-192. *Personnel* #5, 1899, p. 5, lists only lay brother Joseph Candillon, not yet in final vows, with those initials and residing at the Paris General House. *Personnel* #6, 1904, p. 8, lists no one at the Liège General House with those initials.

September 1, 1904. It faced a number of problems, but the one which was the most perplexing was the question of the Oblate apostolate and government in the two French provinces.⁸⁸ Open educational apostolates had been closed and the structures of religious government were hidden, but various missionary and parochial apostolates continued in a very quiet way.

The *Oblate Personnels*, public and official documents, of this era simply did not list any Oblates in France, and their provincial administrations simply left blank the place for the names of officers within France.⁸⁹ It would not be until the publication of the *Abridged Personnel of 1936* that their names would publicly re-emerge.⁹⁰

Those Oblates who remained in France, in an underground capacity, did not need any external structure in order to carry on their apostolates, which could always be conducted alone or in twos and threes. The continuation of the religious community and Oblate life, however, was a different matter. The general administration and the Chapter of 1904 turned to the vicariates of mission for an answer and chose to imitate them by dividing the two provinces of France into districts for the purposes of local religious life and government.⁹¹ For local administration they were governed by a superior and two assistants for each district.⁹² Although these districts were not intended to be permanent, it became evident that the district, as a form of local community and government, was viable in provinces, urban areas, and within a well-established diocesan structure, and not just in a mission vicariate or territory.

⁸⁸ See COSENTINO, *Nos Chapitres Généraux*, p. 170.

⁸⁹ See, for example, *Personnel #6*, 1904, pp. 22-29, and *Personnel #7*, 1907, pp. 15-22.

⁹⁰ See *Personnel Abrégé No. 11 quarter., jan. 1936*, Rome, Maison Général, 1936, pp. 6-11. Abridged personnels are issued whenever the general administration decides that they are necessary or useful; they do not interfere with the numbering of the complete personnels.

⁹¹ The provinces of *France Midi* and *France Nord* were never suppressed canonically at this time; the parts which were in France were simply not mentioned in public documents. Many of the Oblates from these provinces went to Belgium, The Netherlands, Spain, Italy and Great Britain.

⁹² See COSENTINO, *Nos Chapitres Généraux*, pp. 171-172, 269.

2.5.3. General Chapter of 1908 (September 19 to October 24)

By 1908, the general house had moved to Rome and the administration of the Congregation had permanently left France. A major revision of the Constitutions and Rules was undertaken at this time in order to make them conform to the *Normæ* issued by the Holy See, a request the latter had issued on January 24, 1908.⁹³ The revision also incorporated the changes which were mandated by the General Chapters of 1904 and 1906.⁹⁴ The modifications to the Constitutions and Rules were approved by the Holy See on December 21 and the new edition was published in 1910. This edition contained the definitions of a house,⁹⁵ a residence,⁹⁶ and, as before, a district.⁹⁷ The main change to the definition of a district, of note here, is that it was no longer limited to vicariates of mission. After stating that residences, if possible in the circumstances, should be attached to houses,⁹⁸ the 1910 edition goes on to say in the next number:

If circumstances should not allow for some residences to be joined with a house

⁹³ See G. COSENTINO, "La IV^e édition des Règles et ses préparations," in *Études Oblates*, 11 (1952), pp. 227-229 and D. LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 2, p. 12. Levasseur gives the date of the letter from the Holy See as June 24, referring to Cosentino; however, Cosentino dates the letter January 24. As Cosentino quotes the entire decree of the Sacred Congregation of Religious in the original Latin, it is likely that his text contains the correct date. The *Normæ* referred to were those drawn up by the Sacred Congregation after the promulgation by Leo XIII of *Conditæ a Christo* on December 8, 1900, which, among other things, gave the status of religious to members of institutes of simple vows. These *Normæ* provided guidelines for the constitutions and rules of institutes which sought the approval of the Holy See as institutes of simple vows. The process of revision of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules was complicated by the fact that an interim change, which allowed the superior general's residence and the general chapter's location other than in France had to be approved. Only after these matters were settled would it be possible for a general chapter be called in Rome in order to implement the *Normæ*.

⁹⁴ See COSENTINO, "La IV^e édition des Règles et ses préparations," pp. 225-238.

⁹⁵ "Dicitur autem domus, quæ canonice ut talis erecta, a Superiore locali cum suo consilio regitur: completa nuncupatur si quinque saltem Sacerdotes annumerat; si minus incompleta" (However a house is so called when it is canonically erected as such and is governed by a local Superior and his council: it is called complete if it comprises at least five priests; if fewer, incomplete) (CC&RR, 1910, art. 542, trans. Rachel Mary Harrington, S.N.D.).

⁹⁶ "Dicitur residentia quæ licet canonice, ut talis, a Superiore generali de assensu consilii sui erecta, ob defectum tamen alicujus eorum quæ domum stricte dictam constituunt, sui juris non est. Director nominatur qui eam immediate regit" (A residence, though it has been canonically erected as such by the superior general with the consent of his council, nevertheless lacks something of the requirements which constitute a house in the strict sense and is not autonomous. A director is named who governs it immediately) (CC&RR 1910, art. 543, trans. Rachel Mary Harrington, S.N.D. and M. O'Reilly, O.M.I.).

⁹⁷ CC&RR 1910, art. 546.

⁹⁸ CC&RR 1910, art. 545.

in the aforesaid manner, care is to be taken that, with the approval of the superior general and the assent of his council, that these same residences unite among themselves so that under this union a district will be formed under the authority of a superior, who is called the superior of the district. Autonomous or self-governing⁹⁹ districts are either complete or incomplete according to what is said above concerning houses and have comparable regulations, unless concerning the assistants, who if they do not live with the superior, then should live not far away so that they may operate as a council, and they can easily intervene with their advice as often as there is need.¹⁰⁰

With the Holy See's approval of the 1910 edition of the Constitutions and Rules of the Oblates, districts as forms of local government became part of the approved proper law of the Congregation. The subsequent Codes, as will be seen below, allowed the existence of proper laws which were not contradictory to the Codes. Districts are not considered to be contradictory. Their evolution¹⁰¹ and application under the two Codes, later general chapters, and the Second Vatican Council will be dealt with later.

2.6. Parallels in Other Clerical Religious Institutes

As was stated earlier,¹⁰² de Mazenod used the Rule of St. Alphonsus as a guide when he wrote the Oblate Rule of 1826. That Redemptorist Rule, like that first Oblate Rule did not, understandably include districts as a division of local government. The current *Constitutions et Statuts de la Congrégation du Très-Saint-Rédempteur*¹⁰³ state in Constitution 135:

⁹⁹ The expression *sui juris* is not used here in the canonical sense of canons 613, 614, and 615 of the 1983 Code, hence the translation used. The autonomy referred to here is that of a house within a province of a congregation, not that of a Benedictine abbey or Poor Clare monastery.

¹⁰⁰ "Si adjuncta haud ferrent residentias aliquas alicui domui dicto modo conjugi, curandum est ut, approbante Superiore generali de assensu consilii sui, eadem inter se socientur, ita ut ex ipsis conflatur districtus sub regimine alicujus Superioribus qui superior districtus nuncupatur. Districtus sui juris sunt, et completi vel non completi, sicut supra dictum est de domibus quibus etiam quoad regimen aequiparantur, nisi quod assessores, si una cum superiore districtus degere nequant, non longe tamen commorentur, ita ut concilio, quotiescumque opus fuerit, intervenire facile possint" (*CC&RR 1910*, art. 546, trans. Rachel Mary Harrington, S.N.D.).

¹⁰¹ While using the same vocabulary, districts have evolved somewhat differently in Oblate areas where the personnel is growing versus areas where it is shrinking. This thesis will look at Canada and the United States where personnel is shrinking.

¹⁰² See chapter 1, footnote #19.

¹⁰³ *Constitutions et Statuts de la Congrégation du Très-Saint-Rédempteur* [=CSsR], [Romæ: le Gouvernement général], 1984.

A (Vice-) Province exists and works through communities grouped by "houses" or "residences" according to the needs of the apostolate and for the good of the local Church.¹⁰⁴

In the Statutes relating to the government and the apostolic community, it states, in Statute 092:

The members of the congregation who, by way of exception, live and work in isolation are obliged to belong to a local community, according to the preceding statute [i.e. house or residence], or at least to a Province, following the (vice-) provincial statutes.¹⁰⁵

The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus did not have the same sort of direct influence on the Constitutions and Rules of the Oblates. The impact was indirect, for the Oblates, as well as many other institutes, looked to the Society as an inspiration for post-Reformation clerical apostolic communities. Ignatius enumerates three types of dwellings: houses, colleges, and houses of probation. In his commentary, Ganss explains them as follows:

In the Constitutions, Ignatius used "houses" and "colleges" as technical terms. Houses (*casas, domus*) were dwellings intended chiefly for formed Jesuits who had completed their studies and were engaged in apostolic work while living exclusively on alms, whereas colleges (*colegios, collegia*) were dwellings which could possess fixed or regularly recurring revenues and were intended chiefly for students (*scolares, scholastici*) or professors.... Ideally, a house of first probation was to be separate from a house or college but related to it. But if necessary a portion of an existing Jesuit dwelling could be separated off and used for the first probation....¹⁰⁶

Those Jesuits who are called to an apostolate which takes them away from the established communities are to live in a very unique community, the world. This is especially true for those who are called to travel afar in response to an obedience under the fourth vow. Jerónimo Nadal, a Jesuit contemporary of Ignatius, and right-hand man of the founder when it came to explaining the Jesuit way of life, said in 1554:

¹⁰⁴ "Une (Vice-) Province existe et oeuvre par les Communautés, groupées en «maisons» ou en «résidences» selon les besoins de l'apostolat, pour le bien de l'Église locale." (CSsR, p. 65).

¹⁰⁵ "Les confrères qui, exceptionnellement, vivent et travaillent isolés doivent appartenir à une Communauté locale, au sens du Statut précédent, ou du moins à une Province, suivant les Statuts (vice-) provinciaux" (CSsR, p. 117).

In an interview with Douglas Stamp, CSsR, JCD., in Ottawa, ON, on November 4, 1994, it was ascertained that not even a tradition of the concept of districts as a form of local government exists, or has existed, to his knowledge, in the Redemptorists.

¹⁰⁶ G. GANSS, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus: Translated, with an Introduction and a Commentary by George E. Ganss*, St. Louis, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970, p. 76, footnote 8.

It must be noted that in the Society there are different kinds of houses or dwellings. These are: the house of probation, the college, the professed house and the journey – and by this last the whole world becomes our house.¹⁰⁷

In his commentary on Nadal, O'Malley says:

This statement is for the sixteenth century so unconventional in its formulation of mobility for ministry that one can only wonder why students of Ignatian spirituality have not called more attention to it. Nadal has added a fourth type of "house" to the three found in the *Constitutiones*, and he then equates that house with "the world." This formulation cannot be dismissed as a momentary lapse into hyperbole, for Nadal returns to the idea on a number of occasions with even greater insistence and elaboration.¹⁰⁸

If, therefore, there were needs of the apostolate which necessitated a variation on the theme of the canonical house, the Jesuits could be looked to for leadership and inventiveness. This spirit was also found in de Mazenod, no stranger to the works and spirituality of Ignatius, and was passed on to his successors.

The one pontifical clerical congregation which does mention districts explicitly in its Constitutions is the Society of the Divine Word (S.V.D.),¹⁰⁹ a missionary institute founded in Holland in 1875 by Blessed Arnold Janssen, a German priest exiled during the period of the *Kulturkampf*.¹¹⁰ Its Constitutions deal with districts as an accepted type of local community along with houses¹¹¹ and the references are similar to those found in the proposals for the 1998 Oblate General Chapter.¹¹² A glossary is appended to the S.V.D. Constitutions and it provides a working definition of 'district' and

¹⁰⁷ J. O'MALLEY, "To Travel to Any Part of the World: Jerónimo Nadal and the Jesuit Vocation," in *Study in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 16-2 (1984,) p. 6.

¹⁰⁸ O'MALLEY, *To Travel to Any Part of the World*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁹ The applicable sections of their *Constitutions*, glossary and *Handbook for Superiors* are found in the final sections of Appendix I.

¹¹⁰ See *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1909 ed., vol. 5, p. 54.

¹¹¹ *Constitutions of the Society of the Divine Word*, Rome, [Tipographia Istituto Salesiano Pio XI], 1983, pp. 124-128.

¹¹² POST-CHAPTER COMMITTEE ON STRUCTURES, "Revised Text of Part III of the Constitutions and Rules: Proposed for the 1998 General Chapter," [=CC&RR 1998, Proposed], a restricted document for consultation, photocopied, Rome, Oblate General House, October, 1996. See also Appendix 9 for the published 1997 text.

'district superior.'¹¹³ The section on districts and district superiors in the *Handbook for Superiors* is quite detailed. The handbook, as can be seen in Appendix 1, does not simply list what a district superior does differently but, rather, lists all his rights and duties including some of the major ones he shares with house superiors. The *Handbook* will be studied further when the thesis deals in its conclusions with proposed changes to the Constitutions and Rules to be submitted to the 1998 General Chapter.

In a review of the current literature and specifically of the non-Oblate Constitutions and Rules listed in Appendix 1, no other explicit references to districts or districts as vehicles of local government were found. Even the concept of some other local unit besides a formal house and residence was approached only once, in an oblique manner, in the Constitutions and Rules which were reviewed. The Resurrectionists in Article 144 of their constitutions state that:

The established religious house with its members constitutes the basic juridical unit in the Congregation. At least three members are required to establish a religious house. In case of necessity, the major superior, with the consent of his council, can group the members of two or more residences to form a religious house.¹¹⁴

This is a district, in the Oblate sense, except that it is still called a house. Oblate experience has shown, that there are subtle, but real, differences between how a district and a house are run, and that, therefore, they should continue to be distinguished at times rather than equated.

The Priests of the Sacred Heart (S.C.J.), a pontifical clerical congregation founded in France in 1878, state in their constitutions that the fundamental unit of government is the local community, which is established by a province.¹¹⁵ Their general directory does not speak of any distinctions within local communities except for filial houses, which have their own distinct canonical characteristics.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ *Constitutions, SVD*, p. 153. These definitions will be further explored when this thesis proposes a definition of a 'district.'

¹¹⁴ *Constitutions of the Congregation of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, Rome, [Resurrectionists], 1982, pp. 75.

¹¹⁵ *SCJ Rule of Life: General Directory*, [Rome, 1986], Constitution 2a, #115, p. 91.

¹¹⁶ *SCJ Rule of Life: General Directory*, #115.4, p. 90.

In their provincial directory, however, there is a division of local community called a "Territorial Community." It is identical to an Oblate district in all but name. The provincial directory foresees the difficulties inherent in such an entity more clearly than the Oblates do.¹¹⁷

The Oblates of St Francis de Sales (O.S.F.S.), founded in 1871 as a pontifical clerical congregation, are seriously considering the concept of district communities based on the Oblate (O.M.I.), model but have not as yet completed their proposal.¹¹⁸

The Claretians (C.M.F.), founded as a missionary congregation in 1849 by St. Anthony Claret, do not have districts as such, but neither do they restrict its members to houses. Emphasis is placed on the apostolic community as the true home of the missionaries, and little importance is put on the 'walls' of the house.¹¹⁹

It is a fact that virtually all apostolic institutes of religious life have to attend to members who are legitimately outside of established communities, for personal reasons, for the sake of the apostolate or of the community, all for various lengths of time. Each institute has its own way of dealing with this situation, and those institutes who address it informally are not mentioned in this work.

¹¹⁷ "The role of the Local Superior of a Territorial Community is the same as that defined for all communities; however, the reality that members live in various locations, and therefore of the absence of day-to-day community living with all members, may strain the clarity of that role. The effective exercise of that role requires the co-operation of all members in the territorial community, particularly in matters of communication and accountability. The following are some guidelines to clarify the role of the Local Superior in a Territorial Community:

- each member will communicate events that affect his life;
- each member will inform the Superior when he is ill so that appropriate care may be assured;
- each member will discuss with the superior a prolonged absence from the locale of his ministry: the definition of 'prolonged' will be the result of a community discussion;
- each member will forward his monthly financial community statements to the Superior, and to the Local Treasurer; each member will have his personal bank accounts in the name of the Priests of the Sacred Heart with the Superior or Local Treasurer as alternate signatory;
- before making major personal expenses from the community accounts, each member will discuss these with the Superior: the definition of 'major' will be the result of a community discussion" (*SCJ Provincial Directory, Anglo-Canadian Province*, Priests of the Sacred Heart, Toronto, 1996, art. 2, p. 25).

¹¹⁸ Based on interviews with a member of their Structures Committee when he visited Saint Paul University in 1995, and with Francis Morrissey, O.M.I., President of this committee, September 27, 1996, at Saint Paul University.

¹¹⁹ See *Documentos Capitulares*, Claretians, 18 Capitulo General, Barcelona, 1973, and J. LOZANO, *The Claretians: Their Mission and Spirit in the Church*, J. Daries, trans., vol. 1, Chicago, Claret Center for Resources in Spirituality, 1980.

2.7. Chapter Summary

When the Oblates arrived in Ceylon the apostolic vicariate of Jaffna had already been divided into districts based on a very old ecclesiastical model. The first Oblate superior and later vicar apostolic, Étienne Séméria, soon realized that the concept of house and residence, as used by the Oblates in France, had to be adapted in order for local community life to survive in this apostolate. Negotiations between Séméria and Fabre, the second superior general, lead to the acceptance of districts, nearly as autonomous as houses, as units of local community and government in missionary areas four years after the founder's death. This was not a digression from, but a legitimate development of, de Mazenod's wishes that community life be a paramount value among the Oblates.

A district was a local community, a self-governing unit of a missionary vicariate, established by the superior general in council, composed of a number of residences or smaller posts or stations, and governed by a superior with a council according to the mandate issued by the vicar of missions.

Districts slowly spread throughout the institute over the years. Its first major change came about because of the expulsion of the Oblates from France in 1904 and the use, by the Institute, of districts as the local unit of government during the period of persecution. The 1910 edition of the Constitutions and Rules no longer limited the use of districts to missionary areas and its approval by the Holy See made districts part of Oblate proper law.

Research has revealed that no other major clerical pontifical apostolic institute had districts before December 1, 1865, the date of the approval of districts within the Oblates. Since that time the Priests of the Sacred Heart (C.S.J.), have formulated a similar concept on a provincial level, calling it a 'Territorial Community.' The Resurrectionists (C.R.), have two types of houses, one of which resembles a district in some aspects and the Oblates of St. Frances de Sales (O.S.F.S.), are proposing districts, based on the Oblate (O.M.I.), model, to their next general chapter. The Society of the Divine Word (S.V.D.), is the only institute to have developed a fully-functional district system, one which is far more detailed than the Oblates' present or proposed system.

At the time of their establishment in the Oblate community, district communities and their superiors, although very much creatures of their age, were more than mere governmental structures. They were a legitimate means of preserving and nourishing the contemporary Oblate local

community life in the missionary areas of the apostolate in the period immediately following the death of the Founder. This structure remained intact with the promulgation of the 1917 Code of Canon Law, and was ready to undergo renewal at the time of the Second Vatican Council.

Chapter 3

THE LAW PRIOR TO THE 1983 CODE

3.1. Religious Life Prior to the Second Vatican Council

3.1.1. The Beginnings of Religious Life

De Mazenod's emphasis on community life within the Oblates was firmly based on the Church's tradition and legislation regarding the common life. Institutes of consecrated life, by their very nature, were founded as, and continue to be, social groupings. The first communities of the desert fathers were simply groups of men who had fled to the wilderness in order to escape both the Roman persecutions and the licentiousness of the city. These groups gradually took on certain forms and these forms were eventually gathered into written documents called Rules. According to St. Basil (331-379), the great lawgiver of Greek monasticism, the main advantage of monasticism over the solitary life was that in community there was a greater opportunity to practice charity towards one's neighbour.¹

3.1.2. Monasticism

Monasteries were mentioned, primarily in passing, in the early Councils of the Church. The Council of Ephesus (431) notes in its condemnation of Nestorius and his followers, that those condemned of that heresy "are not permitted to govern monasteries."² However, the first mention of the monastic life in the common law of the Church was in the canons of the Council of Chalcedon

¹ See A. VERMEERSCH, "Religious Life," in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1911 ed., vol. 12, pp. 750-751.

² *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, N. TANNER, ed., [=TANNER], original text established by G. ALBERIGO [et al.], in consultation with H. JEDIN, [London], Sheed and Ward, [Washington, DC], Georgetown University Press, 1990, 2 vols., vol. 1, p. 67. Cf. W. BRIGHT, *The Canons of the First Four General Councils of Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1892, pp. 157-165.

(451). In the fifth canon it speaks "against monks doing anything against the will of their own bishop, or founding a monastery [against his will], or taking on worldly concerns."³ But even in this example we see more of a similarity in terminology than in substance, with reference to modern monasticism.⁴ Since that time there have been innumerable references to the various forms of the religious life in the documentation and legislation of the Church. Although there are many forms now besides monasticism, all share characteristics common to religious institutes.

During the early Middle Ages, when the predominant form of religious life was monasticism, the only form of religious government was the local government of each monastery. This eventually changed with the centralizing reforms of Cluny in France. The Congregation of Cluny in the twelfth century grouped more than 200 monasteries under the authority of the abbot of the principal monastery.⁵ This Cluniac reform was the beginning of what is now known as 'exemption,' and was also the sowed seed of what would become the office of superior general: a superior who is above the local superior, and who is supreme within the institute.

3.1.3. The Mendicant Orders

The presence of heretics and the laxity of many churchmen in the latter years of the twelfth and the first part of the thirteenth century, gave rise to a number of reform movements within the Church. Of particular interest is the establishment of the Franciscans and the Dominicans, the first mendicant orders. It is not their emphasis on personal and communal poverty that is of interest here, but rather their governing structure, specifically that of the Franciscan provinces.

The mendicant orders present the appearance of a religious army, the soldiers of which are moved about by their superiors, without being attached to any particular convent, and recognize a hierarchy of local, provincial and general superiors. The order, or at least the

³ TANNER, vol. 1, p. 89.

⁴ See W. BRIGHT, *The Canons of the First Four General Councils of Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1892, pp. 157-165.

⁵ VERMEERSCH, p. 751. See J. CANU, *Religious Orders of Men*, P. Hepburne-Scott, trans., New York, Hawthorne Books, 1960, pp. 22-24. See also T. KARDONG, *The Benedictines*, Dublin, Dominican Publications, [1988], pp. 88-94.

province, takes the place of the monastery.⁶

The first mention of provinces as a level of government in the rule of St. Francis is in the second chapter of the second rule approved by the Bull of Honorius III in 1223.⁷ The term is introduced in line two,⁸ without any definition given at that point. The term was not used in the first rule of 1210. The terms 'province' and 'provincial minister' had come into use by 1217 when the size of the order made its division a necessity.⁹ The nature of the order made its division into monasteries, or such *sui juris* entities, inappropriate. Provinces, however, were geographic entities of great antiquity and a Roman term already in use within the Church.

3.1.4. Conciliar Legislation

During the period of the foundation of the first mendicant orders, the Fourth General Council of the Lateran was held in the last full year of the pontificate of Innocent III (1215). This Council was called to consolidate the reforms initiated by this pope and it undertook, among other things, to legislate stability in religious life. In canon 13 the Fourth Lateran Council decreed that:

Lest too great a variety of religious orders leads to a grave confusion in God's church, we strictly forbid anyone henceforth to found a new religious order. Whoever wants to become a religious should enter one of the already approved orders.¹⁰ Likewise, whoever wishes to found a new religious house should take the rule and institutes from already approved religious orders.¹¹

⁶ VERMEERSCH, pp. 751-752.

⁷ *Ordo Fratrum Minorum: Seraphicae legislationis textus originiales jussu Rmi ministri generalis totius Ordinis Fratrum Minorum in lucem editi [=Ordo Fratrum Minorum]*, Florence, ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1897, p. 47.

⁸ "Si qui voluerint hanc vitam accipere et venerint ad Fratres nostros, mittant eos ad suos Ministros provinciales, quibus solummodo et non aliis recipiendi fratres licentia concedatur" (*Ordo Fratrum Minorum*, p. 36.) (If anyone wishes to profess our Rule and comes to the friars, they must send him to their provincial minister, because he alone, to the exclusion of others, has permission to receive friars into the Order, *The Plan for Franciscan Living: the rule and general constitutions of the Order of Friars Minor*, [Pulaski Wis., English Speaking Conference of Provincials, 1974.])

⁹ J. MOORMAN, *A History of the Franciscan Order: From its origins to the year 1517*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968, p. 62.

¹⁰ These were the rules of Benedict, Basil, Augustine, and Francis.

¹¹ TANNER, vol. 1, p. 242. The Dominicans were the first major order to be founded after this decree: they adapted the Rule of St. Augustine, but have their own proper constitutions.

Nonetheless, there were still new institutes being formed, third orders being one type, and these were usually approved, initially, by the local bishop. There were also institutes of simple vows founded locally, which were not true 'religious' institutes because they did not have solemn vows.¹² One of the better explanations of the contradictions between the law and the practice is given both by R. McGrath and M.-D. Bouix. They both hold that the bishops regained their powers to found new institutes, which they had had from the time of the Council of Chalcedon till that of the Fourth Lateran, by reason of contrary custom.

This custom, with the tacit approval of the Holy See, superseded the laws of the IV General Council of the Lateran and the II General Council of Lyons on this point.¹³

The major theologians of the day agreed that, in order to be a religious, one had to be in solemn vows, a tenet which continued until the establishment of the Society of Jesus in the 16th century.

3.1.5. The Society of Jesus: Clerks Regular

The Society of Jesus was influential not only in setting a precedent by having its simple vows recognized and those who took them acknowledged as true religious,¹⁴ but also was critical in changing the notion of community through its very active apostolic missionary life. Community life could not be limited to living together in one physical house.¹⁵ Common life need no longer be based

¹² See M.-D. BOUIX, *Tractatus de iure regularium*, 2nd ed., Parisiis, Regis Ruffet et Sociis, 1867, 2 vols., vol. 1, p. 210.

¹³ R. MCGRATH, *The Local Superior in Non-Exempt Clerical Congregations: A Historical Conspectus and a Commentary* [=MCGRATH], Doctoral diss., Canon Law Studies, no. 351, Washington, DC, Catholic University of America Press, 1954, p. 5. See also M.-B. BOUIX, *Tractatus de iure regularium*, vol. 1, pp. 210, 326.

¹⁴ See *Fontes*, vol. 1, pp. 262-264. More information on this matter available in Gregory XIII's Constitution *Ascendente Domino*, 25 May 1584, in *Bullarum Diplomatum et Privilegiorum Romanorum Pontificum Taurinensis Editio*, [=Bull. Rom. Taur.], [24 vols.], Augustæ Taurinorum, 1857-1872, vol. 8, pp. 457-465.

¹⁵ J. FUTRELL, *Making an Apostolic Community of Love: The Role of the Superior According to St. Ignatius of Loyola*, St. Louis, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970, p. 41.

on shared physical accommodations but on a union of hearts and minds.¹⁶

3.1.6. Spread of Institutes of Simple Vows

The Council of Trent (1545-1563), focussed on reforming the abuses in the orders taking solemn vows rather than legislating for the few institutes taking simple vows.¹⁷ However, institutes of simple vows were neither forgotten nor welcomed. During the sixteenth century a number of these latter institutes arose.¹⁸

It is evident that Pope St. Pius V had very clear and definite views on Congregations of simple vows in which the members wore habits distinct from that of the secular clergy. He desired that they be suppressed and that they should not arise in the future.¹⁹

Pope St. Pius V, a Dominican and hence a member of an order with solemn vows, in his very first year as pope, issued a Constitution referring to women religious²⁰ and two years later one concerning men religious, *Lubricum vitæ genus*,²¹ in which he gave male members of institutes of simple vows twenty-four hours, "...*intra viginti quatuor horarum spatium*,"²² to join an established and approved order.

Over the next two centuries, congregations, institutes of no vows²³ or of simple vows, often

¹⁶ See H. ALPHONSO, "The Origin and Meaning of Jesuit Apostolic Community," in *Gregorianum*, 72 (1991), pp. 357-364.

¹⁷ See CONCILIUM TRIDENTINUM, Session 25, 3-4 December, 1563, *Decretum de Regularibus et monialibus*, in TANNER, vol. 2, pp. 776-784.

¹⁸ See MCGRATH, p. 7. See also S. SIPOS, *Enchiridion iuris Canonici*, [Pécs, 1926], p. 316.

¹⁹ MCGRATH, pp. 8-9.

²⁰ *Circa pastoralis*, 29 maii, 1566, in *Bull. Rom. Taur.*, vol. 7, p. 447-450.

²¹ See *Bul. Rom. Taur.* vol. 7, pp. 725-726.

²² *Bul. Rom. Taur.*, p. 725.

²³ St. Philip Neri, in 1566, in Rome, founded the Congregation of the Oratory whose members do not take vows. In France the same was done by Cardinal Bérulle in 1611, founder of the French Congregation of the Oratory. See VERMEERSCH, p. 757.

private.²⁴ grew slowly. Many congregations of simple vows went on to become ones of solemn vows,²⁵ while others continued to take simple vows.²⁶ Pius V's law gradually fell into desuetude and, by the end of the eighteenth century, *Lubricum vitae genus* did not present a significant hurdle.²⁷

3.1.7. The French Revolution

When the French Revolution erupted in 1789 one of the results, beyond the sufferings and even executions of individuals, was the loss of privilege by entire classes. The revolution spread beyond France and was succeeded by the imperial-dictatorship regime of Napoleon. This was a time of general insecurity within the European establishment. Stability was not helped by the dawn of the industrial revolution, whose influence would be just as important, if not more so, than any political revolution. A new nationalism had arisen, Germany and Italy would soon be born as nations, and colonialism emerged. Many politicians felt the Catholic Church had become irrelevant or was even considered an enemy to be overcome. The notion of established churches as political powers and landowners in continental Europe was on the wane, and all the institutions associated with them were either attacked or at least suspect. Some of the greatest, richest, and most powerful institutions of the Catholic Church were the orders, for centuries Europe's educators. To eliminate or, at least, control them was a primary goal of both the revolutionaries and the political masters of both the old and the new nations. Old orders were suppressed, their members exiled or dispersed, and the institutions denied, or given only limited, juridical existence. Where physical suppression and the use of force

²⁴ St. Vincent de Paul, when founding the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians), referred to the institute as secular and its vows were both simple and private. See VERMEERSCH, p. 757.

²⁵ Among others are: The Congregation of Clerks Regular Ministering to the Sick, SIXTUS V, Constitution *Ex omnibus*, 18 March, 1586, *Bull. Rom. Taur.*, vol. 8, pp. 669 sqq.; CLEMENT VIII, Constitution *Illius*, 21 September, 1591, *Bull. Rom. Taur.*, vol. 9, pp. 479-488; The Immaculate Conception Marianists, PIUS VI, Constitution *Ex debito*, 27 March, 1787, *Bullarii Romani Continuatio Summorum Pontificum* (19 vols. in 20, Prati, 1835-1857), vol. 9, 1782-1795.

²⁶ Two examples noted by MCGRATH, page 9, are the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, Benedictus XIV, Brief *Ad pastoralis*, 25 Feb. 1749 in *Bull. Rom. Taur.*, vol. 16, pp. 67-69, and The Congregation of the Passion, Clemens XVI, Constitution *Supremi apostolatus*, 16 Dec., 1769, in *Bullarii Romani Continuatio*, vol. 7, p. 71.

²⁷ See also C. ORTH, *The Approbation of Religious Institutes*, The Catholic University of America Studies in Canon Law, No. 71, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, 1931, pp. 60-64.

were not acceptable, the political doctrine of the separation of Church and state was sometimes implemented in order to either break the power of the Church or to prevent its establishment.

Whenever the Church has been faced with a problematic situation which cannot be fought and won through established means, she has always been able to turn to new and non-traditional means. As the monasteries were to the early Church, the mendicants to the Middle Ages, and the Society of Jesus to the counter-reformation, so the congregations of simple vows were to post-revolutionary Europe and America and the growing colonial empires. Each has contributed significant changes to the established order of religious life, community living, and the *vita fraterna*, but none have done away with what was there before. Districts as a form of local government began as the fruit of this process in one 19th century missionary institute.

The fact that the Church had been so against the proliferation of these institutes meant that, for a time, the civil governments ignored them in their anti-religious legislation. When the Church was faced with a question of survival in a rapidly changing world, she quickly shed her reluctance to approve institutes which she had heretofore frowned upon or worse.²⁸

These new institutes of women and men were able to undertake apostolates which were forbidden to the old orders. Eugène de Mazenod said as much to the members of his Congregation in the preface to his Rule in 1826, which is still retained in the current edition.

The Church, that glorious inheritance purchased by Christ the Saviour at the cost of his own blood, has in our own days been cruelly ravaged....

The sight of these evils has so touched the hearts of certain priests, zealous for the glory of God, men with an ardent love for the Church, that they are willing to give their lives, if need be, for the salvation of souls.

They are convinced that if priests could be formed, afire with zeal for men's salvation, priests not given to their own interests, solidly grounded in virtue - in a word, apostolic men deeply conscious of the need to reform themselves, who would labour with all the resources at their command to convert others - then there would be ample reason to believe that in a short while people who had gone astray might be brought back to their

²⁸ "The Holy See saw fit to issue decrees of commendation or approval for five Congregations from 1816 to 1820; for thirteen of them from 1820 to 1830; for eighteen from 1830 to 1840; for twenty-three from 1840 to 1850; for forty-two from 1850 to 1860; for three from 1860 to 1862, and for seventy-four from 1862 to 1865" (C. TYCK, *Notices Historiques sur les Congrégations et Communautés Religieuses du XIX^{me} Siècle*, [Louvain, 1892], pp. 293-323). See MCGRATH, p. 10.

long-unrecognized responsibilities.²⁹

3.1.8. District as Custom

The nineteenth century saw a continuation in the evolution of the notion of custom in the Church. Tradition, following scripture, is one of the ways in which God speaks to the Church.³⁰ Study of this topic from a canonical viewpoint shows that districts and district superiors were not true customs, *præter legem*, but simply on the way to becoming such³¹ in the period between their introduction in the Oblates in 1865 and their inclusion in the 1910 Constitutions and Rules,³² at which time they became proper law.³³

²⁹ CC&RR 1982/87, pp. 9-10.

³⁰ See M. ANDRÉ, *Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique*, Paris, Hippolyte Walzer, Libraire-Éditeur, 1888, 3 vols., vol. 1, p. 570c.

³¹ This method of proceeding was characteristic of many of the newly formed apostolic institutes and is based on a sound tradition of religious life going back at least to Ignatius Loyola if not Benedict. Although not unique to the Oblates, it is very well expressed by the 1982/87 Constitutions and Rules:

“71. United as brothers in one apostolic community we are all equal before God our Father who distributes charisms and ministries so that we can serve his Church and its mission. Our organizational structures, accordingly, are set up in function of that mission.

“Following the guidelines of the Constitutions and Rules, those in authority will make sure that the structures are flexible enough to evolve with our lived experience.”

³² “Si adjuncta haud ferrent residentias aliquas alicui domui dicto modo conjungi, curandum est ut, approbante Superiore generali, de assensu consilii sui, eadem inter se socientur, ita ut ex ipsis conflatur districtus sub regimine alicujus Superioris qui superior districtus nuncupatur. Districtus sui juris sunt, et completi vel non completi, sicut supra dictum est de domibus quibus etiam quoad regimen æquiparantur, nisi quod assessores, si una cum superiore districtus degere nequeant, non longe tamen comorentur, ita ut consilio, quotiescumque opus fuerit, intervenire facile possint.” (CC&RR 1910, Art. 546). Elsewhere in the CC&RR, when there is no difference in their functions or powers, house and district superiors are both referred to as local superiors.

³³ See CC&RR 1910, pp. 570-572.

3.1.9. The First Vatican Council³⁴

Preparatory commissions looked, as usual, at the renewal of the spirit of religious³⁵ life but, with the congregations of simple vows, the questions paralleled those asked about the orders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In a letter dated 6 June, 1867, Pope Pius IX, through the Congregation of the Council, asked the Catholic bishops of the world whether or not the number of congregations of simple vows should be allowed to increase, or whether those already in existence should be strengthened and no new ones permitted.³⁶

The question was never considered by the Council as the European revolutionary fervour lead to the fall of the Papal States to the Italian troops and the adjournment, *sine die*, of the Council by Pius IX. The only direct reply to this question was from the Bishops of France who said that the number of such institutes should be allowed to increase.³⁷ The Bishops of Belgium, by praising and encouraging such institutes, indirectly agreed with their French counterparts.³⁸

3.1.10. Documents of the Holy See: 1900 - 1917

After it became clear that the Council would not be reconvened, the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars undertook the study of the various problems and implications of the increasing number of congregations with simple vows. The Constitution *Conditæ a Christo*³⁹ issued by Pope Leo XIII on December 8, 1900, incorporated many of the rules which the Congregation and its Commissions had drawn up. However, this constitution was much more than a consolidation. For

³⁴ Opened December 8, 1869; adjourned October 20, 1870; not continued.

³⁵ At this time the use of the term 'religious' was limited to members of institutes of solemn vows. See also *Acta et Decreta Sacrorum Conciliorum recentiorum*, Collectio Lacensis, vol. 7, col. 675-678, and É. BERGH, "La vie commune" in *Revue des Communautés Religieuses*, 1945, pp. 133-141.

³⁶ See *Acta et Decreta Sacrorum Conciliorum recentiorum*, vol. 7, col. 1027-1028.

³⁷ See *Acta et Decreta sacrosancti œcumenici Concilii Vaticani*, 7 vols., Friburgi Brisgovia: Sumptibus Herder, 1892, vol. 7, col. 837b.

³⁸ See *Act et Decreta sacrosancti œcumenici Concilii Vaticani*, vol. 7, col. 876d-877a. See also MCGRATH, p. 10-11.

³⁹ See LEONIS XIII, PONTIFICIS MAXIMI, *Acta*, Romæ, ex typographia Vaticana, 1901, vol. 23, pp. 317-327. English language translation from LANSLOTS, *Handbook of Canon Law*, Appendix A, pp. 246-258.

the first time, the subjects are formally referred to by the Holy See as "religious congregations with simple vows."⁴⁰ There were now two legitimate, true, and recognized groups or classes of religious, those with solemn vows and those with simple vows. Further clarifications would come from the two *Normæ* noted below, the Codes of 1917 and 1983 as well as from the Second Vatican Council, but the pivotal question had been answered: members of congregations with simple vows were true religious and "the juridic character of Congregations, whether of papal or of diocesan approval, was accurately defined."⁴¹

In 1901, the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars issued a set of *Normæ*⁴² which outlined the procedures required for the approval of a new congregation by the Holy See. They did not have the force of law⁴³ but these norms, updated in 1921,⁴⁴ soon became a model and then 'almost' law through customary use, though, as Callahan states, "slavish uniformity...was never the aim of the Holy See."⁴⁵

This uniformity might not have been their aim, but handbooks such as Lanslots⁴⁶ leave very

⁴⁰ *Conditæ a Christo*, in LANSLOTS, p. 246.

⁴¹ MCGRATH, p. 22.

⁴² See SACRA CONGREGATIO DE RELIGIOSIS, *Normæ secundum quas S. Cong. Episcoporum et Regularium procedere solet in approbandis Novis Institutis Votorum Simplicium*, 28 iunii 1901. [Romæ, Typis C. Cong. de Propaganda Fidei, 1901].

⁴³ See MCGRATH, p. 11. See also F. CALLAHAN, *The Centralization of Government in Pontifical Institutes of Women with Simple Vows*, Romæ, [Typis Pontificiæ Universitatis Gregorianæ], 1948, pp. 69-70: on pages 44-47 he describes the *Methodus* of Bizzarri, which was the system of approval used by the Holy See prior to the *Normæ*. Cf. P. BASTIEN, *Directoire canonique à l'usage des congrégations à vœux simples*, 4e éd., Bruges, Ch. Beyaert, 1933, pp. 48-60.

It is interesting to note that McGrath, on page 22, slips and states that the *Normæ*, "...collected in a unified body all the laws [sic] which referred to the internal rule of congregations."

⁴⁴ See SACRA CONGREGATIO DE RELIGIOSIS, *Normæ secundum quas S. Congregatio de religiosis in novis religiosis congregationibus approbandis procedere solet*, Romæ, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1922.

⁴⁵ F. CALLAHAN, *Centralization of Government*, p. 70.

⁴⁶ D. LANSLOTS, *Handbook of Canon Law for Congregations of Women under Simple Vows*, 4th ed., New York, F. Pustet, 1920. The author states, p. 7, that his work is also applicable, for the most part, to male non-clerical institutes. It is also applicable to a lesser degree to clerical congregations and, being in English, was used by many clerics who were not too comfortable with the Latin texts.

little to the imagination.⁴⁷ Although this document was not supposed to be translated, Lanslots appends a translation of *Conditæ a Christo* to his book, as well as those of *Quemadmodum* of December 17, 1890, *Singulari Quidem* of March 27, 1896, and *Sacra Tridentina Synodus* of December 20, 1905,⁴⁸ which latter three were to be read yearly to the community.⁴⁹

3.1.11. The 1917 Code of Canon Law

With the promulgation of the Code of Canon Law in 1917, the status of all religious congregations and orders was further clarified, and the legal status of the non-exempt clerical congregations as true religious distinct from the orders and exempt congregations was now unquestionable: they were true religious.⁵⁰ As with so many other matters, the Pio-Benedictine legislation codified many items in various pre-existing apostolic documents, solved contradictions, filled in loopholes, and made some sense out of a myriad rules and regulations for both orders and congregations.⁵¹

Until this time there had been discussions among canonists as to the exact nature of the

⁴⁷ "[The *Normæ*] is a code of 325 articles describing with precision the pattern according to which constitutions must be framed.... They have no retrospective effect for congregations already approved, and in themselves they are not laws. They manifest, however, the wishes and recommendations of the Sacred Congregation, and anticipate the answer to controversies which may be submitted to it. For the solution of difficulties, they are of greater value than particular answers, and acquire by degrees the binding force of a law" [emphasis added], LANSLOTS, *Handbook*, p. 6.

⁴⁸ See LANSLOTS, *Handbook*, pp. 246-258, 275-292. The main French counterpart to LANSLOTS was the *Directoire* of BASTIEN, q.v.

⁴⁹ See LANSLOTS, *Handbook*, p. 279.

⁵⁰ See *Codex 1917*, c. 488, §1 and §7. Cf. MCGRATH, p. 22.

⁵¹ "Unfortunately, the new legislation had a number of grave defects which after a while began to come to light and to have an adverse effect in religious life and on the institutes themselves. The codifiers seem to have forgotten that they were legislating for a great number of institutes which were extremely different one from the other, even if they had the common denominator of the public profession of the evangelical counsels confirmed by vows and some form of common life. And they did not keep in mind sufficiently the tremendous effect of the law to make even and uniform all those things or persons who come under its action" (M. SAID, "The Present State of Reform of the Code Concerning the Section *De institutis perfectionis*," in *Studia canonica*, 8 (1974), pp. 213-235).

power exercised by superiors in non-exempt clerical institutes;⁵² in fact Larraona even suggested that major superiors of non-exempt clerical institutes could be understood to come under the term 'ordinary' in some cases.⁵³ That discussion had now ended.

As with all religious superiors, an Oblate local superior had dominative power over the members of his community, but, as the Congregation was not exempt, neither he nor the Oblate major superiors had any ecclesiastical jurisdiction by virtue of the law.⁵⁴

3.1.12. Conforming to the 1917 Code

Conforming to the new Code had less practical impact on the Oblates than might be expected because of the indults which had been granted by the Holy See⁵⁵ over the intervening years. The major superiors within the Congregation continued to exercise certain faculties not found in the Code, such as the issuance of dimissorial letters, by virtue of renewed pre-Code indults even though it was contrary to Canon 964, 4^o.⁵⁶

Begun during the General Chapter of 1920, it was not until the Chapter of 1926 that the Constitutions and Rules were completely brought into line with the 1917 Code.⁵⁷ Although much work had been done revising these Constitutions and Rules, in 1928 Archbishop Döntenwill, superior

⁵² J. CREUSEN, "Pouvoir dominatif et erreur commune," in *Acta Congressus Iuridici Internationalis*, Romæ: Apud Custodiam Librariam Pont. Instituti Utriusque Iuris, 1935-1937, vol. 4, pp. 181-192.

⁵³ A. LARRAONA, "De Potestate Dominativa Publica in Iure Canonico," in *Acta Congressus Iuridici Internationalis*, Romæ, Apud Custodiam Librariam Pont. Instituti Utriusque Iuris, 1935-1937, vol. 4, pp. 145-180.

⁵⁴ *Codex 1917*, c. 501, §1.

⁵⁵ *Circulaires Administratives des Supérieurs Généraux aux Membres de la Congregation des Missionnaires Oblats de M. I.*, Circ. 17, 29 June, 1866. All references to *Circulaires Administratives* will be styled *Circ.*, followed by the number of the circular and the date of issue. These indults were renewed on a regular basis by the Holy See until they were superseded by the publication of the Pontifical rescript *Cum admota* by Paul VI on 6 November, 1964. Cf. AAS, 59 (1967), pp. 374-375; translation in *CLD*, vol. 6, pp. 147-152.

⁵⁶ See S. WOYWOD and C. SMITH, *A Practical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, New York, Joseph F. Wagner, 1848, vol. 1, pp. 573-577, for a fuller discussion of the ordination of religious.

⁵⁷ See J. PIELORZ, "Les chapitres généraux 1818 à 1886," in *Vie Oblate*, 46 (1987), p. 187. See also D. LEVASSEUR, *History of the Oblate Congregation*, p. 165.

general, could say, "... nothing of the substance of our Venerated Founder's work was touched, but an attempt was made to bring about all the perfection of detail required by the present legislation of the Church, the needs of our Congregation and the desires of the majority of its members. . . ."⁶⁸ Not only was the spirit of de Mazenod intact, but so also was that of Fabre and his successors.

3.1.13. Prior Rights

The Code of Canon Law was intended to consolidate existing laws and not to change radically the legal structure of the Catholic Church. Hence Canon 4 states that,

Acquired rights, privileges and indults which have been granted by the Holy See to individuals or organizations up to the present time, if they are still in use and have not been revoked, remain in force unless they are explicitly repealed in the Canons of this Code.⁶⁹

In the same vein, Canon 6, number 1,⁶⁰ taken in conjunction with Canon 22,⁶¹ makes it clear that some non-universal ecclesiastical laws, such as the particular law of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, are not abolished except where there is a specific contradiction with the Code on a particular point.

The Constitutions and Rules of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, approved by the Holy See on September 7, 1910, was the proper law of the institute and included a number of

⁶⁸ *Circ. Adm.*, vol. 4, *Circ.* 140, 16 July, 1928, p. 116.

⁶⁹ "Iura aliis quæsitæ, itemque privilegia atque indulta quæ, ab Apostolica Sede ad hæc usque tempora personis sive physicis sive moralibus concessa, in usu adhuc sunt nec revocata, integra manent, nisi huius Codicis canonibus expresse revocentur." (*Codex 1917*, c. 4).

⁶⁰ "Leges quælibet, sive universales sive particulares, præscriptis huius Codicis oppositæ, abrogantur, nisi de particularibus legibus aliud expresse caveatur" (All laws, both universal and particular, which are opposed to the provisions of the Code are abolished, unless the Code explicitly rules otherwise in reference to some particular laws) (*Codex 1917*, c. 6, 1°).

⁶¹ "A more recent law given by the competent authority abolishes a former law, if the new law explicitly says so, or if it is directly contrary to the old law, or if it takes up and readjusts the entire subject-matter of the former law. A general law does not abolish laws for particular places or the statutes of inferior legislators, unless the contrary is explicitly stated in the general law, or the particular law is directly contrary to the new general law, as was pointed out in Canon 6, n. 1, in reference to laws existing before the Code" (Lex posterior, a competenti auctoritate lata, obrogat priori, si id expresse edicat, aut sit illi directe contraria, aut totam de integro ordinet legis prioris materiam; sed firmo præscripto can. 6, n. 1, lex generalis nullatenus derogat locorum specialium et personarum singularium statutis, nisi aliud in ipsa expresse caveatur) (*Codex 1917*, c. 6).

rules on districts and district superiors.⁶² The Congregation and its members therefore had an acquired right to districts and district superiors and this was recognized by Canon 4, as the Code did not explicitly abrogate the right. The General Chapters of 1920 and 1926 reviewed the Constitutions and Rules and brought them in line with the 1917 Code of Canon Law. The articles on districts and district superiors⁶³ were maintained and the revised text was approved⁶⁴ by the Holy See in 1928.⁶⁵ This last edition, the fifth, was the first to be approved most solemnly, *in forma specifica*, the entire text of the Constitutions and Rules being included in the text of Pius XI's Pontifical Brief "*Mirabili plane modo*" of May 21, 1928.⁶⁶

3.1.14. The Local Superior (1917 Code)

Since the first monasteries were formed, their rules have made provision for a local authority, a superior of some sort, by one name or another. The notion of religious superior is found in the 1917 Code and its predecessors and is therefore of ecclesiastical law. Since it is a necessary part of the vow of obedience, it can also be related to divine law, and, even more fundamentally, because of the social nature of human beings, it can be said to be a derivative of natural law.

The Code makes explicit few of the specific spiritual duties of the local superior, leaving it to the proper constitutions and rules.⁶⁷ The Oblate Constitutions and Rules stated that the place of the superior in the local community was to see that the rules of the Congregation were followed by the

⁶² *CC&RR 1910*, arts. 546, 597.

⁶³ *CC&RR 1928*: ejus constitutio et regimen, art. 435 n. 3, art. 516; in ordine ad capitulum provinciale, arts. 564, 566, 567; in ordine ad capitulum locale, arts. 564, 566, 569; potestas Superioris districtus, art. 516.

⁶⁴ COSENTINO, "Nos Chapitres Généraux," pp. 185-206.

⁶⁵ F. SANTUCCI, in his 1994 article "Districts as Expressions of Apostolic Community," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 53 (1994), p. 105, seems to date the introduction of 'districts' as units of government to this time, rather than to the earlier approval by Fabre.

⁶⁶ PIUS XI, *Mirabili plane modo*, in *AAS*, 20 (1928), pp. 341-344, and in *CC&RR 1928*, pp. 8-12 and 183-185; the intervening pages being the text of the Constitutions and Rules. Cf. also LEVASSEUR, *History of the Oblate Congregation*, p. 166.

⁶⁷ *Codex 1917*, cc. 508, 509.

members living there.⁶⁸ He was also responsible for overseeing the assigned apostolates of the local members,⁶⁹ their spiritual⁷⁰ and physical⁷¹ well-being and the upkeep of the physical house or residence.⁷² In these he was aided by his council and a treasurer;⁷³ a miniature of the organization of the government of a province or the Congregation.

3.1.15. Oblate Establishments

A house itself was a moral person⁷⁴ and could be established or suppressed only by a proper ecclesiastical and religious authority.⁷⁵ A religious house was a general term for the house (i.e. dwelling place) of an institute; it was a *domus formata*, a formed house, if there were at least six professed religious and, in the case of a clerical institute, four of the six had to be priests.⁷⁶ Another type of house was called a *domus non-formata*, which met most but not all of the criteria of a formed house, specifically as regards the number of priests and religious dwelling therein.⁷⁷

A residence, which was not specifically mentioned in the Code, was a dwelling for at least two members, which lacked qualities required for the erection of a house.⁷⁸ Single Oblates, living

⁶⁸ CC&RR 1928, art. 585.

⁶⁹ C&RR 1928, art. 587.

⁷⁰ See CC&RR 1928, arts. 270-286, among many others.

⁷¹ See CC&RR 1928, art. 349, among others.

⁷² See CC&RR 1928, arts. 588, 596, 597, among others.

⁷³ See CC&RR 1928, art. 592.

⁷⁴ See Codex 1917, cc. 497, §2; 100, §1.

⁷⁵ See Codex 1917, cc. 497, §1; 498.

⁷⁶ See Codex 1917, c. 488, §1. See also T. BOUSCAREN and A. ELLIS, *Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, third revised ed., Milwaukee, WI, Bruce Publishing Company, 1961, p. 228. See also CC&RR 1928, art. 512.

⁷⁷ See Codex 1917, c. 497. See also CC&RR 1928, art. 512.

⁷⁸ See CC&RR 1928, art. 513-515.

alone for the sake of the mission, lived in a 'mission', 'station' or 'mission station.' De Mazenod had considered such circumstances to be transitory and exceptional, and these solitary living arrangements were not mentioned in the early Constitutions and Rules. However, they have existed from almost the beginning of the foreign missions, and they were and are to be found in the various Personnels, from the first⁷⁹ to the current.⁸⁰

The head of both a formed and a non-formed house was a superior, with – at least in a formed house – a council.⁸¹ He was referred to in the Code as a "minor local superior"⁸² and by the Constitutions and Rules as a "local superior."⁸³

Residences were under the administration of a director whose powers and responsibilities could be limited by the provincial in council. The director did not have a council for support in the decision-making process, nor did he have those powers which were given to a superior to exercise with the consent of his council. He did not have a term of office and could be removed at any time. A residence could be attached to a house, be part of a district, or be subject directly to the provincial or vicar of missions.⁸⁴

3.1.16. District Superiors' and Residence Directors' Functions

After the approval of districts in 1865 there were few problems which arose in their application which could not be solved by logically applying, with prudence and fraternal charity, the general principles found in the various editions of the Constitutions and Rules. One problem which sometimes arose in various parts of the Congregation was conflict of authority between the superior

⁷⁹ See *Personnel #1*, 1880, p. 53.

⁸⁰ See *Personnel #22*, 1993, p. 117. St. Mary's Rectory in Dawson City, Yukon Territory, (St. Paul's Province), has been a station since 1898.

⁸¹ See *CC&RR 1928*, art. 592.

⁸² See *Codex 1917*, c. 505.

⁸³ See *CC&RR 1928*, art. 580 among others.

⁸⁴ See *CC&RR 1928*, art. 605, as well as arts. 513-516 and art. 604.

of a district and the director of a residence.

District and house superiors were not identical in their functions. Members of the Congregation were accustomed to living in houses where the local superior had full authority to run the community as the Rule provided. His authority covered all aspects of community life and the management of the physical house, except that which was reserved to higher authority. It was not the same in a district. The main difference was that the members of the district lived in different residences, and the various residence directors retained their responsibility for the proper functioning of the residences and their members without any interference from the district superior.

Conflict in this area grew until it became a concern which was referred to the General Chapter of 1953. It never resulted in a formal floor discussion but, at the suggestion of many of the capitulants, the superior general, Léo Deschâtelets, agreed to have his experts look into the matter and draw up an instruction clarifying the areas of authority of a district superior and a director of a residence.⁸⁵ This was done in 1954.⁸⁶

3.1.17. The Local Superior (1928)

Although the Constitutions and Rules of 1928 mention houses (both formed and non-formed), districts, and the superiors of each, they generally speak of “local superiors,” a term considered to be equivalent to the term “minor superior” which is used in Canon 505, §1 of the 1917 Code.

3.1.17.1. The Authority of the District Superior

The Oblate local superior, be he in a house or in a district, was always deemed to have authority in his own name, the basis being in the Code and the Constitutions and Rules, never as possessing merely delegated authority.

⁸⁵ This information was obtained in a private interview with one of the capitulants who was present.

⁸⁶ L. DESCHÂTELETS, *Principles Governing the Relationship Between the Superior of a District and the Directors of Residences*, [Rome, 1954], mimeographed, pp. 1-4. For the full text of this instruction, see Appendix 8.

Between the restricted sphere of authority of the local superior and the community-wide authority of the Superior General there is a vast difference. This difference, however is one of *degree*, not of *kind*.

From this it follows that the local superior is not merely an agent, or delegate, of his major superior. The authority of local superiors does not devolve upon them by virtue of delegation from higher superiors. It is conferred upon them *by law*, within the limits determined by their own Constitutions. The major superiors, according to the methods obtaining in different communities, designate the religious who is to hold the authority. But they do not confer that authority when they make that appointment to the superiorship.

Thus, by the simple fact of valid appointment or election, a local superior is vested with all the authority necessary for the proper discharge of his duties according to his Constitutions. Since the power attached to his office comes from law, it is proper power (dominative or jurisdictional), not merely vicarious. In other words, the superior thus invested with authority acts in his own name, not merely as the mouthpiece, or vicar, of his major superior.⁸⁷

The Oblate Constitutions and Rules never make a distinction between the nature of the authority of a district or a house superior. All local superiors have the same sort of authority, while only its extent can be limited by regulation.

Although the local superior is a true superior, he himself comes under the authority of the provincial, and the provincial under the superior general. This does not mean that the general principle of law does not apply, namely that the local superior has relative autonomy in his office. All it means is that the local superior is immediately responsible to the provincial, the provincial to the superior general, and the superior general to the pope. The local superior is not immediately responsible to the superior general.⁸⁸

In the military, this would be referred to as the proper 'chain-of-command', and there has to be a serious reason to go outside it.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ HESTON, E., "Some Aspects of Government in Religious Communities," in *The Jurist*, 10 (1950), p. 37.

⁸⁸ See HESTON, "Some Aspects of Government," pp. 37-38.

⁸⁹ See HESTON, "Some Aspects of Government," p. 38.

3.1.17.2. Subsidiarity: Individuals and District Superiors⁹⁰

What has been said above concerning the chain-of-command among the levels of superior is also applicable to the relationships between the individual religious and the various levels of superiors and *vice versa* as is stated in the Code.⁹¹ Creusen, commenting on this principle, which is now commonly known as the principle of subsidiarity, states:

The perfect observance of this principle regarding the authority of superiors requires that religious should not have recourse to the higher superior for matters which pertain to the local superiors. In most institutes the rule requires that one should not appeal to the higher superior from a decision given by his subordinate without having examined during prayer whether such an appeal is well founded and without honestly declaring the motives given by the lower superior to justify his decision. St. Ignatius Loyola who held obedience in such high esteem also recommended to the higher superiors not to intervene without grave reason in the affairs which belong to their subordinates.⁹²

The reason for this is simple. Each and every level of authority in a well set-up society has enough to do without interfering in the matters proper to lower levels of authority. This is true in civil society, in business, and in ecclesiastical affairs, and should be true also in the government of religious life.

In order to provide major superiors with the leisure and the opportunity for more perfect over-all supervision of their provinces or their local houses, canon 516, §3, forbids them to take over, except in unusual circumstances, and even then only provisionally (*sic*), the office of steward or treasurer of their respective administrations. With still greater reason, they should refrain from taking for themselves authority over the multitudinous details involved in the administration of the various provinces or houses subject to them.

Hence, religious are to be trained not to have recourse to higher superiors for matters falling within the competence of their immediate superior, local or provincial. The converse of this principle would demand that higher superiors, in turn, should respect the authority of their lower superiors, and should not interfere in their respective

⁹⁰ An excellent article on subsidiarity, tracing its roots from the reaction of German thinkers to the claims of the modern liberal state, has been written on this subject. It is often said that the expression entered the Church with the Encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* of Pius XI, but its lineage can be traced to the contents of the encyclicals of Leo XIII. The article follows the principle of subsidiarity up to, during and after the Second Vatican Council. See J. KOMONCHAK, "Subsidiarity in the Church: the State of the Question," in *The Jurist*, 48 (1988), pp. 298-349.

⁹¹ "Supremus religionis Moderator potestatem obtinet in omnes provincias, domos, sodales religionis, exercendam secundum constitutiones; alii Superiores es gaudent intra fines sui muneris" *Codex 1917*, c. 502 (The superior general has authority over all the provinces and houses and over all the members of the institute; but he must exercise it as prescribed by the constitutions; the other superiors have authority within their charge) trans. in J. CREUSEN, *Religious Men and Women in the Code*, Milwaukee, Bruce Publishing Company, [1940], 4th ed., p. 45.

⁹² CREUSEN, *Religious Men and Women*, pp. 45-46.

administrations, except in the cases and in the degree permitted by their Constitutions. Their right of vigilance confers no right of arbitrary interference."⁹³

There are no recent works which have been found to contradict these principles, even though the style of governing has evolved a great deal since the Second Vatican Council.

3.1.18. The Status of a District as a Moral Person⁹⁴

Whether or not a district was also a moral person under the 1917 Code⁹⁵ is a question that is not answered by the Code. They are not mentioned as moral persons in the Oblate Constitutions and Rules. It appears that the general administration has always required the same processes to be followed regarding a formed house and a district regarding its establishment, governance and dissolution, except for residency and the requirement that the vicar of missions or the provincial was responsible for approving its statutes,⁹⁶ a rule which is still in the 1982/87⁹⁷ Constitutions and Rules.⁹⁸

A possible case for districts being moral persons can be made based on the arguments of John P. Kelly regarding mission stations. He states:

⁹³ HESTON, "Some Aspects of Government," p. 39.

⁹⁴ The 1917 Code used the term "moral person," while the 1983 Code used the term "juridic person," when the two Codes treat the equivalent concept.

The 1917 Code never explicitly defined a moral person; however, G. Michiels constructed a definition using a number of different canons: "A moral person is anything in the Church, distinct from a physical person (material cause: c. 99), which, for a religious or charitable purpose (final cause: c. 100, §1) has been constituted by public authority (efficient cause: c. 99) into a subject capable of rights and obligations (formal cause: c. 99 together with c. 87)" (G. MICHIELS, *Principia generalia de personis in Ecclesia: commentarius libri II Codicis Juris Canonici canones praeliminares 87-106*, Tornaci, Desclée, 1955; English translation in J. A. DOYLE, *Civil Incorporation of Ecclesiastical Institutions: A Canonical Perspective*, JCD dissertation, Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1989, p. 3).

⁹⁵ See *Codex 1917*, c. 100 §1

⁹⁶ As is seen in Appendix 4.

⁹⁷ The Constitutions and Rules of the Oblates were updated in stages following the call of the Second Vatican Council. The XXX General Chapter completed this work and the text was approved by the Holy See on 3 July, 1982. Following the promulgation of the new Code in 1983, a few changes in the Constitutions and Rules became necessary, but nothing touching the matters covered in this thesis. The necessary changes were made by the XXXI General Chapter and approved by the Holy See in 1987. For practical purposes, this edition of the Constitutions and Rules will be referred to in this thesis as *CC&RR 1982/87*. Within the Congregation, it is known simply as the *CC&RR* of 1982.

⁹⁸ "Residences and districts are governed by their particular statute, determined by the Provincial in Council." *CC&RR 1982/87*, R. 8.

[I]f the law regards some institution as capable of rights and obligations that institution is a moral person by the law itself.⁹⁹

The obligation to care physically for the individual Oblates of a district was given to the district superior¹⁰⁰ and he necessarily needed to have the financial powers to carry this out. Also, responsibility on the spiritual level was certainly given to the district superior. Therefore, one could argue, indirectly, that districts are moral persons.

On the other hand the responsibility for the upkeep of the residences was specifically removed from the district superior, and he did not have the authority to assign the members of residences to various ministries, as was seen above. Finally, it is simply not the custom within the Oblates to treat a district as a moral person, in the same way as a formed house is treated.¹⁰¹

3.1.19. Constitutional Amendments of 1953

Because of continuing confusion within the Congregation, on September 30, 1960, Léo Deschâtelets issued Circular 213¹⁰² which repeated articles of the Constitutions and Rules amended by the 1953 General Chapter, and which had also promulgated changes approved by the Sacred Congregation of Religious in 1951.¹⁰³ These changes gave the Congregation's authorities permission to set up vicariates without the prescribed number of formed houses and residences¹⁰⁴ and to appoint superiors and directors to establishments that did not have the prescribed membership to be made

⁹⁹ J. KELLY, *The Legal Status of Mission Stations: an Historical Synopsis and Canonical Commentary*, Ottawa, the University of Ottawa, 1953, pp. 134-135.

¹⁰⁰ See Appendix 4.

¹⁰¹ This subject will be considered again under the 1983 Code.

¹⁰² *Circulaires administratives des Supérieurs Généraux aux membres de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de M. I.*, vols. 1 & 2, Paris, Typographie Privée O.M.I.; vols. 3-8, Romæ, Domus Generalis, 1887-1971, vol. 6.

¹⁰³ See "De regimine religioso constituendo in stationibus missionalibus," (Prot. 6638/51), October 2, 1951, in *Commentarium pro Religiosis*, 32 (1953), pp. 165-168.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *CC&RR 1928*, Art. 512 bis.

houses or residences.¹⁰⁵ These new types of 'houses' and 'residences' were in actuality merely referred to as 'stations' prior to this. Apropos to this the circular letter states:

It is understood, however, that such a grouping together of stations will follow the normal pattern of Districts governed by District Superiors. Hence article 516 which requires that districts be made up of residences is amended or added to. Article 605 *bis* grants us full freedom to proceed accordingly and we feel this to be all to the advantage of our religious life.

While these two articles have principally in mind our mission territories, according to the texts themselves, they might also apply to the erection of Provinces, houses and residences where the same conditions obtain thereby not allowing for strict application of Articles 509-516 of our Holy Rule.¹⁰⁶

Now the Congregation had provinces, vice-provinces, vicariates, formed houses, unformed houses, quasi-houses, residences, quasi-residences, stations, and districts. It was confusing to some in the general administration and to most of the members of the Congregation. The Holy See was approached by the Oblates, and by most other orders and congregations in the world, to approve a host of minor and major changes so that the various Constitutions and Rules would be in line with the Code, the *Normae*, and the innumerable rulings, guidelines, interpretations, and opinions of the Sacred Congregation for Religious. It was time for a change before all sank under the weight of the regulations.¹⁰⁷

3.2. Second Vatican Council and Contemporary General Chapters

3.2.1. The Calling of the Council

On January 25, 1959, Pope John XXIII made three announcements: a synod for the diocese of Rome, an ecumenical council, which would take the name "Second Vatican Council," and a revision of the Code of Canon Law.¹⁰⁸ The winds of change were not aimed solely or even principally at religious life, but *aggiornamento* would bring profound changes to religious life as much as to any

¹⁰⁵ Cf. CC&RR 1928, Art. 605 *bis*.

¹⁰⁶ *Circ.* 213, p. 4, in vol. 6.

¹⁰⁷ See F. O'CONNOR, *Witness and Service: Questions about Religious Life Today*, New York, Paulist Press, [1990], p. 34.

¹⁰⁸ See AAS, 51 (1959), p. 68.

other institution within the Church. Inspired by the prophetic call of Pope John XXIII and guided by his successor, Pope Paul VI, religious life would now enter an era of renewal and updating, culminating in the promulgation of the revised Code of Canon Law by Pope John Paul II.

3.2.2. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)

At the start of the Second Vatican Council, religious life was active and growing, or at least stable, in most areas of the Church.

At the Council itself, at least on October 11, 1962, there were thirty-three Oblates as Council Fathers.¹⁰⁹ Thirty-one archbishops and bishops and one cardinal, Thomas Cooray, O.M.I., of Colombo, Ceylon [Sri Lanka], and Léo Deschâtelets, O.M.I., in his capacity as Oblate superior general were members.¹¹⁰ Oblates served in lesser capacities, such as Joseph Rousseau who served as secretary for the Preparatory Commission for Religious,¹¹¹ as well as a number of others.¹¹²

While a number of conciliar documents had a bearing on religious life, two are of special note: *Lumen gentium*,¹¹³ chapter VI, and *Perfectæ caritatis*.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ D. LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 2, photograph, p. 320.

¹¹⁰ He, along with the superiors general of non-exempt clerical religious congregations or societies with at least 1,000 members, had been called to the Council by John XXIII with full deliberative vote, cf. c. 223, § 1, 4°.

¹¹¹ X. RYNNE, *Letters from Vatican City: Vatican Council II (First Session): Background and Debates*, New York, Farrar Straus & Company, [1963], p. 42.

¹¹² "Missions des Oblats de Marie Immaculée," 299 (Décembre, 1960), in the section entitled "Actes du Saint-Siège," lists eight other Oblates who were appointed to various commissions preparing for the Council.

¹¹³ See VATICAN II, Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen gentium* (=LG), 21 November, 1964, in AAS, 57 (1965), pp. 5-67, Chapter 6, *De religiosis*, pp. 49-53, translated in A. FLANNERY, ed.(=FLANNERY), *Vatican Collection: vol. 1: Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, rev. ed., Northport, Costello, 1992, pp. 350-423, Chapter 6, "Religious," pp. 402-407. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of conciliar and post-conciliar documents are from FLANNERY, vol. 1 and from *Vatican Collection*, vol. 2: *Vatican Council II, More Post Conciliar Documents*, Northport, Costello, [1982].

¹¹⁴ VATICAN II, Decree, *Perfectæ caritatis* (=PC), 28 October, 1965, in AAS, 58 (1966), pp. 702-712, in FLANNERY I, pp. 611-623.

3.2.3. *Lumen gentium*: Chapter VI - "Religious"

Basically a theological and doctrinal document, *Lumen gentium* makes no actual references to the details of community living, though it simply states as a fact, "... religious life [is] lived in solitude or in community."¹¹⁵ The Council Fathers present religious life as a divine gift¹¹⁶ to, and part of, the Church. At the same time, since it is a prophetic instrument of the Lord within the Church, it is subject to the hierarchy without being part of the hierarchical structure.¹¹⁷ There is a tension built into the relationship which would hopefully lead to a dynamic renewal of both the Church and religious life rather than to a static stand-off between them.

3.2.4. *Perfectæ caritatis*

Issued nearly a year after *Lumen gentium*, the conciliar decree *Perfectæ caritatis* is founded on the principles of the previous document. It called for and laid out, as guidelines, the general principles of a fundamental renewal of religious life, to be undertaken in detail by each institute.¹¹⁸

The renewed structure and life within each institute was to be based on a foundation of three pillars: the Gospel, the heritage of the institute, and their adaptation to contemporary society.¹¹⁹ The third number of this decree

... mandates the adaptation of the life, prayer, work and government in all institutes in order to recognize members' needs, to be aware of cultural circumstances, and to respond more fully to apostolic exigencies.¹²⁰

The decree emphasises in number 15 the importance of the common life within the institute as

¹¹⁵ "... variæ formæ vitæ solitariæ vel communis," *LG*, no. 43 in *AAS*, 57 (1965), p. 49.

¹¹⁶ This gift, unique to each institute, is usually referred to as the 'charism' of the institute.

¹¹⁷ For a synopsis and commentary on this chapter consult E. McDONOUGH, "*Lumen gentium*'s Chapter 6: Religious," in *Review for Religious (=RfR)*, 52 (1993), pp. 927-932.

¹¹⁸ See E. McDONOUGH, "The Conciliar Decree *Perfectæ caritatis*," in *RfR*, 53 (1994), p. 143.

¹¹⁹ See *PC*, no. 2 in *AAS*, p. 703; FLANNERY I, p. 612.

¹²⁰ McDONOUGH, *Perfectæ Caritatis*, p. 143.

expressed in prayer, in the sharing of the same spirit, in living together, and in sharing each other's burdens.¹²¹

Although *Perfectæ caritatis* does identify the common life as one of the basic elements of religious life, it does not specify how that common life is to be lived out. The Council does not rule out specific types of community which are true to an institute and to the thinking of the Council.¹²² The next steps in renewal were up to the individual institutes according to norms to be set by the Holy See.

3.2.5. *Motu proprio, Ecclesiæ sanctæ*

In 1966, Paul VI issued the *Motu proprio, Ecclesiæ sanctæ*,¹²³ and in Part II provided the norms for the implementation of *Perfectæ caritatis*. In number 1 of the document, he clearly placed the responsibility for implementing the reforms called for by the Council on the institutes themselves. Within each institute, general chapters are to be called not only to make the necessary changes in proper law, but also to foster spiritual and apostolic vitality.¹²⁴ In section V of Part II, referring to *Perfectæ caritatis*, number 15, the *Motu proprio* says that,

In institutes dedicated to apostolic activities, community life must be encouraged by all possible means and in ways suitable to the vocation of each institute. It is of the greatest importance that the members should establish a fraternal life in common (*commercium fraternum*), as a family united in Christ.¹²⁵

¹²¹ See MCDONOUGH, *Perfectæ caritatis*, p. 143.

¹²² See MCDONOUGH, *Perfectæ caritatis*, pp. 146-147.

¹²³ PAUL VI, *Motu proprio, Ecclesiæ sanctæ* (= *ES II*), 6 August, 1966, Part II, "Normæ ad exsequendum decretum SS. Concilii Vaticani II, *Perfectæ caritatis*," in AAS, 58 (1966), pp. 775-782, in FLANNERY I, pp. 624-633. Once more E. MCDONOUGH, in *R/R*, 52 (1994), pp. 303-309, in an article entitled "Norms for Renewal and Reflections on its Progress," writes succinctly on this topic.

¹²⁴ See *ES*, in FLANNERY I, pp. 624-625.

¹²⁵ *ES II*, no. 25, in FLANNERY I, p. 629.

3.2.6. The General Chapter of 1966¹²⁶

3.2.6.1. Preliminary Work

The work of the General Chapter of 1966 was the result of many years of preparation within the Congregation, not just from out of the thrust of the Second Vatican Council.

The 1947 General Chapter felt that it was good to make certain changes in the text of the Rules which had not been revised since 1926. The 1953 General Chapter asked for a new edition of the Rules and established a Commission to prepare the same for the next General Chapter. The 1959 General Chapter wanted a more far-reaching revision than the one that had been prepared and undertook to do this itself. After one month and a half, however, it had to leave to a post-Chapter Commission the task of continuing this work and consulting the whole Congregation and preparing a text of the Constitutions and Rules that was to be submitted to the next Chapter.¹²⁷

This Commission worked on its tasks during the years of the Council and immediately afterwards. In its labours the Commission attempted to fulfil three tasks in the manner called for by the Second Vatican Council. The first was "to isolate the basic constitutional elements in the Constitutions and Rules from those which are secondary and transitory."¹²⁸ This was accomplished through several drafts of the proposed revision of the Rules which omitted useless details and divided the remainder into Constitutions, which were fundamental and relatively unchangeable, and Rules which, although important, would be subject to change over the ensuing years.

The second was to submit these proposed changes to the entire Congregation, through a consultation. The first draft was composed following the guidelines laid down by the General Chapter of 1959, while the second was drawn up in light of both the comments on the first draft as well as the developments which were taking place at that very moment in the Second Vatican Council. The Chapter of 1966 rejected this second *Textus revisus* as a basis for its deliberation and

¹²⁶ The general reference for the sections on the XXVII General Chapter (1966) is: *Constitutiones et Regulæ: Congregationis Missionariorum Oblatorum Sanctissimæ et Immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ, a Capitulo Generali XXVII exaratae*. Romæ, [The General House], 1966. Latin and English edition.

¹²⁷ LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 2, p. 317.

¹²⁸ *The Congregation Renewed: a Reading Guide for the Constitutions and Rules: Introduction and Commentary*. Rome, The General House, 1968, p. XII.

composed a completely new text.¹²⁹

The third task was that of retaining all of the truly basic norms through which the Founder's charism has been passed on to the present generation, while restating the fundamental principles in the light of today's understanding of Scripture and the theology of Vatican II.¹³⁰

The Oblate Congregation has been blessed with many gifts in its charism and, according to the authors of *The Congregation Renewed*, the first one of them was, "... the grace of being able to see and to evaluate the realities of the contemporary world."¹³¹ Using this charism, and the mandate of the Second Vatican Council, the members of the 1966 General Chapter began the task of revising the Oblate Constitutions and Rules, a task which would not be completed until the Constitutions and Rules of 1982/87. Even then, in keeping with the spirit of *The Congregation Renewed*, there would always be the necessity of continually updating the Constitutions and Rules.

3.2.6.2. The Constitutions and Rules, 1966, *ad experimentum*

3.2.6.2.1. Apostolic Community¹³²

Article 5 of the Constitutions states that, "... the members are gathered together into apostolic communities. They will rejoice when they find themselves in one another's company, but will nevertheless willingly accept having to live alone even for prolonged periods, if necessary, in the

¹²⁹ Levasseur states that in the capitulants' judgement the revised text was "inadequate," *Toward a synthesis*, p. 317. W. WOESTMAN, in *The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate: A Clerical Religious Congregation with Brothers*, 2 ed., Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1995, pp. 98-100, refers to it as a rejection by the capitulants. This latter opinion is also supported by the anecdotal reports to their provinces of those who were capitulants. The final text approved by the Chapter bears little resemblance to the *Textus revisus*.

¹³⁰ *The Congregation Renewed*, p. XIII.

¹³¹ *The Congregation Renewed*, p. 8.

¹³² Care must be taken when studying this concept. Neither the Second Vatican Council nor the 1966 Oblate General Chapter invented the local apostolic community. Called different things over the centuries, active religious institutes always strove to have structures which facilitated both their religious life and their apostolates. The era under study here was one of renewal of pre-existing structures rather than one of creation of new and startling innovations, no matter how it appeared to those who were living through it. Those who feel that apostolic community as found in local Oblate districts residences and houses was a creation of the 1960-1970's are simply a century too late in their calculations. The revitalization of pre-existing structures under the influence of the Spirit as manifested in the Second Vatican Council and carried through by the succeeding general chapters will have to be credit enough for this generation.

service of the gospel.”¹³³ If what unites the Oblates is the mission, then whatever forms community must take in order to enable this, will be established.

For us the «community» consists above all in «looking together in the same direction», for the work of God will not wait. «Community» means cooperation: charity and obedience are to be lived in a manly fashion – in the fashion of «viri apostolici». («Vir» in Latin connotes someone of mature age, a man of character, courage, merit). These two virtues will find their principal expression in the exercise of our apostolate, rather than in a style of domestic relationships and regulations which are more or less niggling and old-fashioned....

The apostolic community is just the opposite of gregariousness. It presupposes a considerable personal liberty within a strong organization in which each has his proper role to play. It is based both on the promptness and daring of individual initiatives, as well as on the firmness of obedience to the superior and of relationship with the group. In this whole enterprise, the community remains also the focal point of a charity, as rugged as it is outspoken, between all those who work together in view of the common aim.¹³⁴

When Constitution 5 speaks of living alone “if necessary, in the service of the Gospel,” that is not to be taken as an excuse to flee community. Community is still such a high priority that this is given as the only acceptable reason for “legitimizing a situation which is itself abnormal.”¹³⁵ Santucci sees in the commentaries of this time a real ambivalence in the attitude of the Congregation towards those living in districts. They were only slowly realizing that there was far more to community life than living under one roof.¹³⁶

3.2.6.2.2. The Role of the Superior

In this revision of the Constitutions and Rules, the constitutions outline, in the section concerning the vow of obedience, the roles of all superiors, from general to local.¹³⁷ The superior is given a stature and an importance which are uniquely his. His role is:

considered as that of a spiritual father who seeks to give, with his own proper authority, the

¹³³ *CC & RR, 1966*, art. 5, p. 8.

¹³⁴ *The Congregation Renewed*, pp. 75-76.

¹³⁵ *The Congregation Renewed*, p. 78.

¹³⁶ F. SANTUCCI, “Districts as Expressions of Apostolic Community,” in *Vie Oblate Life*, 53 (1994), pp. 107-108.

¹³⁷ “The servant of his brothers and the bond of unity between them, the Superior will diligently try to discover in each of them the workings of the Holy Spirit, and will endeavour to promote their mature development in the freedom of the children of God. The common good will be his primary concern in governing.” *CC&RR, 1966*, art. 35, p. 15.

directives which best correspond to the workings of the Spirit in the heart of the subject, in no wise diminishes the reality of obedience, so much so that one or another of the parties concerned may experience the dynamics of Christ's pascal obedience, which trod the rough road of a radical deprivation, unto death and even death on the cross.

[The subject's] dialogue with the superior has nothing in common with idle chatter, or a mere exchange of opinion; it will closely resemble a genuine spiritual exercise performed with a deep faith.... No one is in a better position to discern the voice of God when he calls than the one directly concerned. Religious profession, moreover, is not simply an offering made by the religious, it is likewise a commitment made by the community.... This involves an inevitable dialogue which is bound to be profitable, between the community, each of its members, and the superior. He in turn, ever attentive to individual inspirations, will nevertheless have the common good as his «primary concern in governing», since he has been constituted as «the servant of his brothers» and must be the guide and the «bond» of the entire group.¹³⁸

The role of the superior, far from being denigrated by the revision of the rule, was enhanced and given a deeper spiritual meaning. There was no way that the role of any superior could be reduced to solely that of an animator, and the first among equals. If one received the title of superior, then this was to be his role, his ecclesiastical office.

3.2.6.2.3. Renewal of the Apostolic Community

The canonical idea of religious common life being lived in one house and around one table, primarily based on the vow of poverty and with characteristic uniformity, had been a concept which, in the nineteenth century, greatly influenced the evolution of the common life in newly founded institutes.¹³⁹

The teaching of the Council provides a different concept. L[umen] G[entium], speaking of religious families, uses the expression «fraternal association in the militia of Christ» (n. 43), in enumerating the advantages which the community offers its members. More significant still is the development at P[erfectæ] C[aritatis], [number] 15: this has been called «one of the pivotal points of the entire Decree: one of the places where the spirit of the Council has most penetrated and where we see the strongest assertion of the essentially ecclesial dimension of religious life».

«Community Life» is there presented as «a sharing of the same spirit», following the «example of the primitive Church in which the multitude of the believers were of one heart and one mind». The religious community is a mystery, in the midst of the Church-Mystery: it is a sacrament, thus at once a reality and a sign, of the unity of believers in Christ. It proposes by its style of life and activity to render visible and perceptible that unity which

¹³⁸ *The Congregation Renewed*, p. 144-145.

¹³⁹ See *The Congregation Renewed*, p. 152.

the Church works in the world and towards which the People of God constantly tends.

This is why a.42, marking a clear break with a legalistic concept of common life, stresses the fact that an Oblate belongs to his community because of his effective solidarity with its life and activity – despite the fact that the group may be dispersed and only rarely able to gather under the same roof and sit around the same table— through the bonds of this obedience and deep love.¹⁴⁰

The members of the General Chapter of 1966 asked that Rule 88, which expanded upon Constitution 42, be studied and commented upon by those capitulants who lived in mission territories. They were referred to the circular letter of de Mazenod, issued on March 19, 1850, wherein he showed that he realized that flexibility had to be built into the communities in mission territories.¹⁴¹ It was accepted that an updated utilization of the concept of 'districts' within the Congregation was one of the ways to renew community life within the Oblates as required by the Second Vatican Council.¹⁴²

3.2.6.2.4. The Spirit of Government: The Role of Superiors

The Constitutions in articles 116, 117, and 118 emphasize that superiors at all levels should "seek only to serve". The authors of *The Congregation Renewed* quote Tillard on the two types of activity of the superior in the service of the community. The first is the most important; the second less so.

His essential activity, radically irreplaceable, is that of intermediary between the will of the Father and of the fidelity of the brethren to their vocation. This is an activity of the spiritual order, which primitive religious tradition regarded above all as that of master and guide, to be exercised within the fraternity of the members. In this the superior always has the final decision, even when he has previously consulted, listened to others, initiated discussions; the *second activity*, much more subordinate, is the concrete organization of the common life, a certain administration of goods, and of the common activities.¹⁴³

All of the superiors in the Oblate Congregation have that first, radically irreplaceable, activity

¹⁴⁰ *The Congregation Renewed*, pp. 152-154, emphasis added.

¹⁴¹ See *The Congregation Renewed*, p. 162.

¹⁴² "The Superiors will make every effort to reunite regularly the missionaries of a given district so as to enable them to find renewed strength in a community life shared with their brothers" (CC&RR, 1966, R. 88, p. 81).

¹⁴³ *The Congregation Renewed*, pp. 243-244, emphasis added.

of spiritual leadership. However, only district superiors are, for the most part, uninvolved at this time in major responsibilities of the second category, while house, provincial, and general superiors run the risk of becoming overburdened by the minutiae of organization, administration of goods, and of scheduling.¹⁴⁴ This division can only become problematical if Tillard's two activities are reversed in importance, at least in the minds of those involved. If the province as a whole, or even just its leadership, looks upon superiors as important only in as much as they have control over finances and structures of one sort or another, then district superiors run the real risk of being considered as inconsequential. If the superior acts as a spiritual father who strives to give his directives according to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the subject, then he has a true authority that supersedes that which is based on responsibility for physical things.¹⁴⁵ Yet he can not ignore the physical needs of his subjects. It is in an appropriate balance of the two activities that a superior best achieves his end.

A province must realize that there will be some changes in its structures if it wants to adapt to modern conditions. A provincial must have groups of prudent advisors to assist him so that he may reach enlightened decisions. One of these groups has always been the local superiors; the Second Vatican Council and the 1966 Constitutions and Rules restate this old truth for modern times. If they, the local superiors, are ignored as a group, then, apart from a lack of use of this collective wisdom, there is a possibility of the arbitrary exercise of power. There is, in the interaction of local and major superiors, each with their own points of view, each with their own responsibilities and resources, the hoped-for result of avoiding the double danger of centralized authoritarianism and local ineffectiveness.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ "Some superiors are tempted to avoid facing the real problems which beset their community, losing themselves instead in an endless round of administrative minutia. Foresight and decisiveness are needed to give the community clear directives. Dialogue, yes. But in every discussion of policy and orientations, there comes a time when discussion should cease and decisions be taken," *The Congregation Renewed*, p. 277.

¹⁴⁵ See *The Congregation Renewed*, pp. 243-260.

¹⁴⁶ See *The Congregation Renewed*, pp. 261-262.

3.2.6.2.5. Constitutions and Rules for Local Superiors

In Rules 220 to 231 the 1966 Constitutions and Rules put some flesh on the bones of articles 203 to 206 of the Constitutions. The first duty of the local superior is to promote authentic fraternal charity; the second is to organize and direct the community's apostolate; the third is to provide for the meetings and gatherings necessary for the good governance and spiritual growth of the members.¹⁴⁷

Article 169 simply states that, at the level of local government, there are houses, residences, and districts,¹⁴⁸ while Article 203 affirms that:

The district Superior is named with the consent of his council. Should it seem necessary, he may be appointed for an indefinite period. His function is similar to that of the Superior of a house; the Provincial, however, will more accurately define his rights and duties, taking into consideration the circumstances of place and ministry.¹⁴⁹

The Congregation Renewed notes that, traditionally, district superiors have two terms of three years each, just as house superiors. However, as they are not 'local' in the canonical sense, they could be appointed for a longer time.¹⁵⁰ This interpretation has not survived the test of time and is not found in later revisions, but has been suggested again in the proposals for changes to the Constitutions and Rules to be presented at the 1998 General Chapter.¹⁵¹ District superiors were not local only in the sense that they were not superior of one house, but rather of all the Oblates in a defined area. Even so, a defined area is commonly called a locality and, in post-classical Latin, the root word, *locus*, meant both a religious house and a district.¹⁵²

Article 203 and its corresponding commentary both state that provincials and provincial

¹⁴⁷ See *The Congregation Renewed*, pp. 292-293.

¹⁴⁸ *CC&RR 1966*, p. 48.

¹⁴⁹ *CC&RR 1966*, p. 58.

¹⁵⁰ *The Congregation Renewed*, pp. 293-294.

¹⁵¹ "CC&RR 1988, Proposed," R95a, p. 12.

¹⁵² See R. LATHAM, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources*, London, published for The British Academy by The Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 280.

councils will not neglect to determine more precisely the specific statutes for each district and district superior. That is repeated again in the 1982/87 Constitutions and Rules¹⁵³ as it was from the very beginning.¹⁵⁴

Article 205 basically tells the local superior to do his work, use his authority, refer to the provincial in serious and unusual cases, and to keep in contact and collaborate with his fellow local superiors. An emphasis on the prudent and efficient use of authority with an obvious reference to subsidiarity is found in the commentary.

Superiors have all the authority needed for the ordinary government of their community. It will serve the best interests of the Institute and of the apostolate if they shoulder their burdens and use the authority given them to work out solutions to their problems, with the help of the community, instead of referring all matters of whatever kind to higher authority.

«Close contact» with the provincial will be maintained, usually by means of regular reports on council meetings, and on the state of the community and its work. «Serious or unusual decisions» should be prepared on the local level, and referred to higher authorities for review, confirmation, or permission as the case may require. The cooperation of all superiors is needed for problems of the Province as a whole.¹⁵⁵

This is putting into Oblate practice the admonition given by the Second Vatican Council when it said in *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, “superiors at every level should be given appropriate faculties so that useless or too frequent recourse to higher authorities may be avoided.”¹⁵⁶

3.2.6.2.6. The District Council

Articles 207 and 208, and Rules 232 to 234 speak of the local council and its role. On a local level, only a formed house, a district and a residence-which-is-the-equivalent-to-a-house are required to have a council, while others, such as a non-formed house or a residence, may have one.¹⁵⁷ Once again, a district is treated as the equivalent of a formed house, except for the geography of each

¹⁵³ CC&RR 1982/87, R. 86.

¹⁵⁴ See Appendix 4.

¹⁵⁵ *The Congregation Renewed*, p. 294.

¹⁵⁶ *E.S. II*, 18, in FLANNERY I, p. 628.

¹⁵⁷ *The Congregation Renewed*, p. 303.

specific situation.

Article 208 and Rule 232 deal with a situation which is arguably as old as religious institutes, and will possibly still be problematic as long as religious institutes are composed of fallible human beings. "Why are local councils only called upon to discuss financial matters?" The Commentary states it thus:

The Council deliberates with the superior on all important matters connected with a) the ministry, b) the religious apostolic life, and c) the temporal affairs of the community. In the past some have complained that the only matters submitted to the local councils were financial matters, in which the superior needed the consent of the Council to act validly. If this complaint is well-founded, it would seem that the phrase of E5¹⁴⁸ (no. 592): «all the business of any importance concerning the house or district» was construed very narrowly indeed. The new constitutions explicitly enlarge the scope of the local Council.¹⁴⁹

This does not give any power to the council to decide on matters which are the prerogative of the superior, simply the right to discuss, advise, and give, or withhold, consent when called for by law.¹⁵⁰

The importance of these two short articles and rules is greater for districts than for houses. In houses, there are at least financial matters to discuss at council meetings. In districts, there may not be even those, unless the province has given to the district superior the task of approving certain budgets or certain financial permissions. In many ways, under the 1966 Constitutions and Rules, the district council had a greater amount of time to discuss the ministry and religious-apostolic life of the members than had the house council.

3.2.6.2.7. The Community as Extraordinary Council

The concept in the 1928 Constitutions and Rules of an ordinary and extraordinary council, of an inner and an outer group, specifically on a local level was dropped, and a meeting of the entire community was substituted for the latter council, for some purposes. As a special gathering, it is to

¹⁴⁸ E5 refers to Edition 5a of the Constitutions and Rules issued in 1928.

¹⁴⁹ *The Congregation Renewed*, p. 303.

¹⁵⁰ See G. NEVILLE, *The Religious Superior's Council in the 1983 Code of Canon Law*, Doctoral diss., Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1988, pp. 210-215. Although this work deals mainly with general and provincial councils, it can be applied to local, hence district, councils in principle.

serve as a type of bonding mechanism and as a pooling of community wisdom. It was not envisioned as a decision-making body. When in Articles 210 to 212 the Constitutions deal with this, they speak of them as "community meetings," and as such they have continued to be known.

They are to be called to discuss, under the leadership of the superior, the broader problem of the local community and even of the wider community, the province, and the Congregation.¹⁶¹ The aim is to "foster collective and responsible cooperation in the ministry, apostolic-religious life, as well as in the problems of finance and expenditure."¹⁶²

Even more than for formed houses, these meetings are essential for district communities, and the preparation for them would be one of the main tasks of the district council. Community meetings, when they are district meetings, are the principal means of bonding the group into a community. This is the skill that is specifically at the heart of the charism necessary for a district superior, distinct, at least in a hierarchy of values, from that necessary in a house superior. With no physical building to bring the members together on a daily basis, it is the community meeting which must accomplish this task. This meeting must embrace all of the facets of community life and concentrate them into a short period of time. There must be time for prayer/eucharist, reflection, discussion, problem solving, recreation, and, last but not least, a meal. The superior and his council must be able to plan and carry out these gatherings in such a way as to keep the members interested, enthusiastic, and looking forward to the next one. If they are not successful, the community will disintegrate because of the centrifugal force of the disparate ministries, the scattered residences, and the lack of containment offered by one physical house. This is in no way disparaging the need for a house superior to have the skills necessary to form a healthy community; it is, rather a question of degree. Just because the district superior, under the 1966 Constitutions and Rules, did not always need the skills of a money manager, it did not mean that it was therefore easier to find an Oblate with the qualities necessary to be a good district superior; it was often more difficult.

¹⁶¹ See *The Congregation Renewed*, p. 314.

¹⁶² *The Congregation Renewed*, p. 314.

3.2.6.2.8. Minor Divisions of the Congregation

The simplicity of the early days of the Congregation in France had first given way to the divisions necessary to a missionary institute and then to the overly complicated ones which followed the *Norma* and the 1917 Code. The 1966 edition of the Constitutions and Rules attempted to go back to simpler divisions, while realizing that the Congregation was still expanding in certain areas.

There were two classes of houses: formed, with at least six professed religious, with four of these being priests; and non-formed, which was lacking one or other of these qualifications.¹⁶³

Districts remained and were defined as:

... a group of residences, stations or persons. It is established by the Superior General with the consent of his Council. It is governed by a district superior, under special norms, as well as the provisions of common law that apply to the case (*CC&RR 1966*, a. 170, 2^o; R 194).¹⁶⁴

It would therefore also take a similar act of the superior general with the consent of his council to suppress a district.¹⁶⁵

There were also residences and stations for lesser numbers of Oblates, which could be on their own within a province or attached to a house or a district, depending on the specific circumstances.

3.2.6.3. End of the First Phase of Vatican II Renewal

The first phase of renewal was completed with the promulgation of the experimental Constitutions and Rules of 1966. The Oblates would now undergo a number of years of implementation, looking for what worked and what did not, attempting to put the Second Vatican Council's spirit of renewal into their apostolates.

Many other changes had great influence on the Congregation since that time, and therefore

¹⁶³ See *The Congregation Renewed*, p. 320.

¹⁶⁴ *The Congregation Renewed*, p. 321.

¹⁶⁵ See *Codex 1917*, c. 102, §1.

also had an influence on the structures of the local community. In 1965 there were 7,605¹⁶⁶ members, the high point; by 1970 it had declined to 7,330 members,¹⁶⁷ and by December 31, 1996, to 4,844.¹⁶⁸ Those who left the Congregation tended to be younger, and due to this factor and due to fewer entrants, the average age of the personnel who remained increased rapidly. It appeared that the aging process had accelerated and, from the perspective of a middle-aged member of such a province, it had. By the mid-1990's it was quite possible for an Oblate in his late 50's or early 60's to be in the younger half of his province. This was not so in every province but was generally so in the provinces of the industrialized world. It did not happen everywhere at the same time but, over the three decades since 1966, it did so in most areas of the so-called 'First World.'¹⁶⁹ The Oblates were not unique in this as it was a phenomenon found in almost every part of the Catholic Church in the First World.

Though by nature and training a conservative man, Léo Deschâtelets was an extroverted and dynamic leader and never ceased to push the Congregation on the road of renewal. Even before the call of the Council for religious institutes to seek out and return to the charism of their founder, he commissioned Jean Leflon, an eminent French Church historian, to write the definitive biography of de Mazenod.¹⁷⁰ He called two Extraordinary General Councils, 1967 and 1969, in which some of the provincials of the world joined with the General Administration in this process of renewal.¹⁷¹

3.2.7. The General Chapter of 1972

In the General Chapter of 1972, Richard Hanley was elected superior general for a six year

¹⁶⁶ "AROMI," January 1965, p. 1. See also D. LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 2, p. 459.

¹⁶⁷ "OMI Information," 40 (February, 1970), p. 1.

¹⁶⁸ "OMI Information," 353 (February, 1997), p. 1.

¹⁶⁹ See LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 2, p. 318-319.

¹⁷⁰ LEVASSEUR, *Toward a synthesis*, vol. 2, pp. 322-323.

¹⁷¹ See *CC&RR 1966*, R. 154 for the membership of the Extraordinary General Council. For other examples of the changes to date in administrative structures see *Administrative Norms and Faculties: Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate*, Circular Admin. no. 235, 25 March, 1967.

term, and Fernand Jetté his permanent vicar general. Richard Hanley resigned after two years, and left the Congregation for personal reasons. He was succeeded by F. Jetté (1974-1986). Both men were leaders in the renewal movement within the Oblates.

3.2.7.1. Administrative Structures Renewed

The 1972 General Chapter completely restructured the general council, general administration, general chapter, provincial structures, and even elements of local communities. It states:

Structures, far from seeking to hinder freedom of persons and the expression of life, have as their end the furthering of these values by guaranteeing their communitarian dimension: interpersonal relations, mutual acceptance and help, collective action etc. This is even more important in the case of a reality like the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, which is both a family and an organized apostolic group within the Church. Structures, being at the service of life, should evolve at the same rhythm.⁷²

Thus was outlined the first of the three main principles of this General Chapter, the primacy of life. The second was the primacy of mission. Structure exists only to facilitate mission. "It is important that at all levels of the government of the Congregation the aim or end to which we were ordained, namely the evangelization of the poor, be primary."⁷³ A third principle, applied throughout, was subsidiarity, which was a means to achieving decentralization without sacrificing unity.

3.2.7.2. Subsidiarity in Administrative Structures

Far from limiting their concept of the application of the principle of subsidiarity to the higher levels of the Congregation, the Chapter called for its application at all levels, even to the local community. The local communities, house, district and residence, were called upon to take their rightful place in the administration.

Decentralization both in government and in administration is to be pursued as a desirable goal. This follows from the priority given to life over structures, and from the principle of

⁷² *Administrative Structures: Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate*, [Rome, General House, 1972], p. 1.

⁷³ *Administrative Structures*, p. 7.

pluralism. The starting point of government and administration is the local Oblate community, living the gospel already at work in the world according to our missionary outlook.

What we have in mind by *decentralization* is the wise and consistent application of the principles of subsidiarity, not the giving of so much autonomy to the provincial level that the Congregation becomes a federation, nor deciding issues for the whole Congregation in certain privileged geographical centers.

By subsidiarity we mean that decisions are taken on the level where they can best be made in a responsible manner, due consideration being given to the actual situation. This does not mean that decisions are always made on the lowest level. It does mean that they are taken at a level as close to the base as is consistent with responsible planning and government. In this way a healthy pluralism is ensured.⁷⁴

To deny to local district communities the authority to do little else besides deciding when to have their own meetings is to deny the true applications of both the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of pluralism.

The governmental process should start from living apostolic communities, fully recognized and respected in their relative autonomy, and then move upwards. The higher levels should be in close communion and communication with the lower. The governmental process itself should call for the authority and service of the central government with its administration and service, capable of firm, effective leadership, capable of animation, inspiration and coordination, and whose task is to provide for the unity of the Congregation in its life and mission. In this manner, the dangers of fragmentation and dispersion can be avoided. Furthermore, at least in matters of general policy, each level of government is accountable to those it serves, and should open itself to periodic review by them, in order to ensure as great a unanimity of mind and heart as possible.⁷⁵

The only change to the experimental 1966 Constitutions and Rules which this General Chapter made involving local communities was to remove any options with regard to the local superior and bursar keeping the community informed of the financial situation and future projects of that community: the community must be informed.⁷⁶

3.2.8. The General Chapter of 1974

This Chapter had, first of all, to face the fact of the Superior General's departure, after less than two years in office, and to revive the aching hearts within the community.

⁷⁴ *Administrative Structures*, pp. 8-9

⁷⁵ *Administrative Structures*, pp. 9-10.

⁷⁶ *Administrative Structures*, p. 40.

For the 1974 General Chapter, as with that of 1972, structures had to be subservient to the aims of the Congregation. In fact, far from hindering freedom of expression of life within the Congregation, proper structures help by guaranteeing the community aspects of life within the Oblates. However, structures were not immutable, but, “being at the service of life, should evolve at the same rhythm.”¹⁷⁷

Although administrative structures were divided into government, administration, and services, they all had to be suitably decentralized. By decentralization they meant the “wise and consistent application of the principles of subsidiarity.”¹⁷⁸ Government and administration had, as its beginning, the local community, and built up from there, as the previous Chapter had first said. There was not to be so much autonomy within the provinces that the institute became a federation, nor so much on one level that the institute appeared to revolve around certain specific places, be that the general house or the provincial house.¹⁷⁹

After an initial fifteen page letter¹⁸⁰ from the capitulants, the Chapter document goes on to repeat the changes in administrative structures adopted by the 1972 Chapter, with very few adjustments, mostly grammatical; none involving local communities. Those matters which the Chapter of 1972 had decreed would be dealt with at the ‘next’ General Chapter, were put off again, to be dealt with at the ‘next General Chapter,’ specifically prolonging the experimental period of the 1966 Constitutions and Rules.¹⁸¹

3.3. Chapter Summary

3.3.1. Prior to the Second Vatican Council

De Mazenod’s emphasis on community life was firmly based on the Church’s tradition and

¹⁷⁷ *Acts of the General Chapter: 1974*, Rome, O.M.I. [General House], via Aurelia, [1974], p. 23.

¹⁷⁸ *Acts of the General Chapter: 1974*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁹ See *Acts of the General Chapter: 1974*, pp. 23-28.

¹⁸⁰ See *Acts of the General Chapter: 1974*, pp. 7-21.

¹⁸¹ See *Acts of the General Chapter: 1974*, p. 41.

laws regarding the common life. From its beginnings in monasticism, through the mendicants, the apostolic orders, to the spread of institutes of simple vows, the common life has evolved and grown, sometimes in spite of the Church's regulations, until it is seen now as a constitutive element of religious life, that non-hierarchical gift of God to the Church.

In the period leading up to the promulgation of the 1917 Code and shortly thereafter, the Holy See issued a number of documents, *normæ*, which strictly regulated the internal workings of institutes of simple vows. The 1917 Code of Canon Law put order into the centuries of laws and regulations affecting religious institutes, and there was now no question but that the members of institutes of simple vows were true religious. The Oblates updated their Constitutions and Rules in accordance with this Code, but there was no suggestion that they ought to remove the notion of districts and district superiors from their proper law, which was now protected by the Code. The Constitutions and Rules of 1928 were approved by Pius XI *in forma specifica* and they contained articles regulating districts and district superiors. The latter was considered to be a local superior, inferior to the superior of a canonical house, but higher than that of a director. He was the holder of an office which was that of minor superior.

3.3.2. The Second Vatican Council Until 1974

By the 1950's the Congregation was ready for the renewal to be called for by the upcoming Second Vatican Council. The Oblates were finding that the existing system was cumbersome and the mission was suffering.

The Second Vatican Council breathed a renewed life into the Oblates as it did to the entire Church. The call of the Council to renew the life of the Congregation in light of the charism of the Founder and the traditions of the institute were heeded. The General Chapter of 1966 issued an experimental revision of the Constitutions and Rules in light of this call to renewal. Districts and district superiors remained in the institute, but the emphasis with all local communities switched from their role as a division of local government, to which most of them had degenerated, to their role as an active apostolic community, the backbone of the Congregation, their original role. All local

communities and all local superiors were to put this renewed emphasis into practice, and it was soon noted that provinces around the world were rediscovering the advantages of renewed district communities. Renewed districts became a real option for the Oblates, not only in missionary areas, because of the continued isolation of some members, but also in provinces where there were no longer the large traditional institutions which had been the main centres for the Oblate apostolates over the preceding century. The next stage would be the revision of the Code of Canon Law and the corresponding revised 1982/87 edition of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules.

Chapter 4

THE REVISED CODE AND THE NEW RULE (1982/87)

4.1. Moving Towards the Revised Code: The 1977 Draft

Over the next eight years, the Oblates, along with many other institutes, worked towards renewed constitutions and rules. At the same time, the Church was preparing the revision of the 1917 Code of Canon Law.¹ On February 2, 1977, the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of Canon Law presented its draft of the canonical legislation for institutes of consecrated life.²

It is the current members of a religious community who use the past as a tool to interpret their present situation, so that the future becomes a sign to be interpreted in the present, through a shared vision. Members of religious institutes must continuously reinterpret their institute.³ They cannot be set in the interpretations of the past, but must use them to move into the future. This was to be part of the philosophy of the revision process.

This was not the situation following the issuance of the infamous *Normæ* of the early part of the century and of the first Code which was:

... related to a plethora of regulations and dispositions of a particular time, which, in the context of today's very different cultural and social conditions now appear obsolete or irrelevant in practice. It is not surprising that changes are now called for in those dispositions and regulations which are no longer of relevance: the concentration on fiddling detail, the ideology of exemption and the juridical consequences thereof ...to name but a few.⁴

¹ See J. FOX, "A General Synthesis of the Work of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law" (=J. FOX, *Synthesis*), in *The Jurist*, 48 (1988), pp. 800-840.

² Cf. M. SAID, "Particular Law of Institutes in the Renewal of Consecrated Life", in *RiR*, 36 (1977), p. 935.

³ See J. BRACKEN, "Community and Religious Life: A Question of Interpretation," in *RiR*, 31 (1972), pp. 736-737.

⁴ J. WALSH and L. HUGHES, "Canon Law and Religious Life: The draft of the new Law for Institutes of Consecrated life," translation and commentary, in *The Way, Supplement*, 33 (Spring 1978), p. 14.

In the principles guiding the revision of the Code with respect to the laws for religious, the second principle states that the common law must be of "positive help to the companions of the Institute of consecrated life in capitalizing on their spiritual inheritance, that is, the Institute's special character, goals and sound traditions."⁶ In short, common law ought not to involve itself with excessive details.

The third principle flows from this. Constitutive principles of the consecrated life need precision of definition and clarity of expression. "At the same time they must safeguard a genuine flexibility when it comes to legislating about matters of discipline, since directives will require easy adaptation to diverse situations and exigencies in the Church and in the Institutes themselves."⁷ There must be a distinction made between those 'constitutive' principles which are immutable and unchangeable in their substance and which can change only in their external formulation, and 'disciplinary norms' which must contain a radical ability to adapt as need be. If not, the existence and activity of institutes will become rigid and embittered.⁸

Community life, in the sense of *vita fraterna in communi*, is itself such a constitutive element in religious life, and its external expression has varied from institute to institute and from century to century. Can the same thing be said for the concept of a religious house: is it a constitutive element? It would seem not, as it has changed over the centuries, and is merely a means to an end, not an end in itself. If a district, as a characteristic Oblate governmental structure, is able to achieve the same end – community life – then it is also merely a means to an end and, as one which has been approved by the Church, a legitimate one. The revised Code then cannot be interpreted as forbidding such a disciplinary norm, one which was rooted in the early history of the Institute, unless it specifically does so. However, even if living in one physical 'religious house' is not a constitutive element of religious life, there had not yet been brought forward a suitably clear yet flexible legal term to take

⁶ *Communications*, 2 (1970), p. 171. See also WALSH and HUGHES, "Canon Law and Religious Life," p. 16.

⁷ *Communications*, 2 (1970), p. 171. See also WALSH and HUGHES, "Canon Law and Religious Life," pp. 36-37.

⁸ See *Communications*, 2 (1970), p. 172. See also WALSH and HUGHES, "Canon Law and Religious Life," pp. 36-37.

the place of "religious house."

4.1.1. Subsidiarity as a Principle of Revision

The principle of subsidiarity, not a new concept by any means, was to be given a heightened profile in the revision process.¹ L. Örsy has defined, or rather, explained the principle of subsidiarity thus, "'A superior organ should never take over the function of an inferior one, but should only subsidize its strength when necessary'... or less technically, 'Each person should be left to do his job fully: his superior should not interfere unless the common good imposes it.'"¹⁰ Örsy goes so far as to say that, "There is no good government without an honest respect for the so-called principle of subsidiarity."¹¹

The *Normae* of 1921, at least in their application, stressed the central power of the Church and left little individuality to the constitutions and rules of the institutes of religious life.¹² In the proposed legislation the canons often defer to the proper legislation of the institute.¹³ This can be seen from the first one, draft Canon 1, §2, to the last one, draft Canon 122, §2, which both refer to the

¹ The distinctions between the "common life" and "living together under one roof" are at the heart of major sections of the doctoral thesis of M. GALLAGHER, *The Common Life: An Element of Apostolic Religious Institutes of Women*, Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1995, especially pages 69 to 87. Her study can be equally applied in many areas to institutes of men.

¹⁰ An excellent canonical and historical study as applied to religious is to be found in an article by G. LESAGE, "Le principe de subsidiarité et l'état religieux," in *Studia canonica*, 2 (1968), pp. 99-124. A more general study is that of T. GREEN, "Subsidiarity During the Code Revision Process: Some Initial Reflections," in *The Jurist*, 48 (1988), pp. 771-799, and, by the same author, "The Canon Law Society of America and the revision of the Code: Historical Reflections and Continuing Concerns," in *The Jurist*, 53 (1993), pp. 1-21; 'subsidiarity' on p. 7, note 23, and p. 18, note 59. The most recent work on this subject is R. HARRINGTON, *The Applicability of the Principle of Subsidiarity According to the Code of Canon Law*, Faculty of Canon Law, Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1997.

¹¹ L. ÖRSY, "Government in Religious Life" in *The Way, Supplement*, 2 (May 1966), pp. 105-106.

ÖRSY, "Government in Religious Life," p. 105.

¹² See M. SAID, "Particular Law of Institutes in the Renewal of Consecrated Life" in *RtR*, 36 (1977), p. 930.

¹³ See W. LUSH, and HUGHES, "Canon Law and Religious Life," p. 19.

proper law of the institute.¹⁴

It would be natural, then, for such distinct and characteristically Oblate governmental structures as districts to be found in the Oblate Constitutions and Rules.

4.1.2. The 1978 Reports and Revisions and the 1980 Draft

After the Pontifical Commission sent out the 1977 draft, it received numerous responses and, starting in 1978, met to discuss them and to prepare the 1980 draft.¹⁵ It quickly became obvious that there must be a legal precision inserted into the canons, if they were to be at all acceptable. In the discussions of June 19 and 20, 1978, it became clear that the term *domus*, omitted in the preparatory drafts, would have to be reinserted into the text.¹⁶ If it was not, the law would be too vague.

The 1980 draft¹⁷ still has the element of subsidiarity prominently displayed as before. However, there is a new draft Canon, 507, which gives the authority of law not only to the constitutions and rules, but also to the traditions of the institute as well.

Canon 507 – The mind and plans of the founders sanctioned by competent ecclesiastical authority concerning the nature, end, spirit and character of the institute, as well as its sound traditions, all of which constitute the patrimony of the institute, are to be faithfully preserved by all.¹⁸

This draft canon actually gave life to the principle of subsidiarity. This is made even more explicit by draft Canon 514 which would cover such concepts as Oblate districts as a form of local government when it says:

¹⁴ Even the 1917 Code had similar wording in Canon 488 referring to a religious as one who lives in a society, approved by legitimate ecclesiastical authority, *secundum proprias ipsius societatis leges*.... The difference was that the first Code then went on to place so many details in the universal law that not enough of importance was really left for the proper law. One cannot say that the principle of subsidiarity was followed.

¹⁵ See J. FOX, *Synthesis*, pp. 815-817.

¹⁶ See *Communicationes*, 10 (1978), pp. 168-171. See also WALSH and HUGHES, "Canon Law and Religious Life," pp. 36-37.

¹⁷ PONTIFICIA COMMISSIO CODICI IURIS CANONICI RECOGNOSCENDO, *Schema Codicis Iuris Canonici (=Schema II)*, [Vatican City], Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1980. See also *Codex recognitus (Schema), Liber II, De Populo Dei, De institutis vitae consecratae, Ready reference for the 1980 schema of Canons on Institutes of Consecrated Life*, prepared by E. McDONOUGH, Columbus, OH, Springs Press, 1980.

¹⁸ *Schema II*, p. 124.

Canon 514 (1) – A just autonomy of life especially with regard to government is recognized for each institute, whereby they enjoy in the Church their own discipline and can preserve their patrimony intact, as mentioned in c. 507. ”

Draft Canons 535-542, all speak of a religious “house” in the legal sense of the term but the draft Code neither defines the term nor distinguishes among various types of houses.²⁰

4.2. The General Chapters of 1980 and 1986

The first of these two General Chapters on December 3, 1980, unanimously accepted (110 votes out of 110) the new text of the Oblate Constitutions and, by a vote of 109 out of 110, the text of the Rules. The Constitutions and Rules were then presented to the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes. Some changes were required, and then the official decree was issued approving the Constitutions on July 3, 1982.²¹

However, there were a few changes necessitated by the promulgation of the new Code in 1983 and these were incorporated by the General Chapter of 1986. These changes to the Constitutions and Rules of 1982 were voted in by the 1986 General Chapter and, in the case of the Constitutions, were approved by the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes on August 29, 1987.²²

In order to keep the chronology consistent in this thesis, the discussion of both of these editions of the Constitutions and Rules will be done at the same time in the section dealing with 1987, the year of the definitive approval of the text by the Holy See as being in conformity with the revised Code of Canon Law.

²⁰ *Schema II*, p. 125.

²¹ *Schema II*, pp. 131-132.

²² SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO RELIGIOSIS ET INSTITUTIS SECLARIBUS, Prot. n. M. 29-1/82 in AAG 6 (1982), p. 12. See also F. JETTE, *The Apostolic Man: A commentary on the 1982 edition of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules*, Rome, General House, 1992, p. 13.

²³ SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO RELIGIOSIS ET INSTITUTIS SECLARIBUS, Prot. n. M. 29-1/87 in AAG 10 (1987), p. 27. See also “Changes to the Constitutions and Rules as Approved by the General Chapter of 1986,” an eight page insert to the 1982 Rule book sent to every Oblate in the world by the general administration in late 1987.

4.3. The 1983 Code of Canon Law

4.3.1. Mind of the Legislator

The revised Code of Canon Law was promulgated on January 25, 1983, and came into force on the first day of Advent that same year. Paul VI had called for a new way of thinking, *novus habitus mentis*, with regard to the new law, and so it was with regard to the section on religious life.²³ However, those who looked for a completely radical and ultra-liberal document were as disappointed as those who looked for an ultra-conservative document. The text resembled the 1980 draft far more than it did that of 1977. Thankfully, it was not detail-clogged like the 1917 Code. Once again the traditional wisdom, *in medio stat virtus*, was implemented.

4.3.2. The Legislation

Part III of the Code is entitled "Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life," with Section I devoted to institutes of consecrated life. Title I is entitled "Norms Common to All Institutes of Consecrated Life." The first canon, in its second paragraph, continues to follow the principle of subsidiarity of the draft legislation by emphasizing that although the institutes are canonically established by competent ecclesiastical authority, vows or other bonds are taken, "in accordance with the laws of their own institutes."²⁴ That principle continues to be honoured in the approximately one hundred canons of this Part, and the myriad details of the one hundred and ninety-four canons of the 1917 Code are not reintroduced.

²³ R. CASTILLO LARA gives an excellent summary of the way in which this section evolved in his "Réflexions sur le nouveau Code: les instituts de vie consacrée," in *Le Bulletin U.I.S.G.* 63 (1983), pp. 5-14.

²⁴ See JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution, *Sacrae disciplina leges*, January 25, 1983, in AAS, 75-2 (1983), pp. vii-xiv.

4.3.2.1. Subsidiarity

Canons 578²⁵ and 586, §1,²⁶ which have no equivalent in the 1917 Code,²⁷ give to the proper law of the institutes the just autonomy necessary to preserve their charisms, traditions, and unique ways of life.²⁸ What was only alluded to in the past was now explicitly stated in the Code. The expression “proper law” would now be used to indicate the law governing specific canonically established institutes and their members, while “particular law” could continue to be used solely for laws governing specific places,²⁹ such as dioceses.

Districts, as specific units of community and religious government within the Oblate Congregation, continued to have a sure canonical foundation. As part of the Oblate Constitutions,³⁰ they could not be removed from the Constitutions nor from the Oblate way of life without the explicit consent of the Holy See, according to c. 587, §1 and §2. If, on the other hand, they had simply been part of the Rules, they could have been substantially modified by a general chapter.

²⁵ Can. 578: “Fundatorum mens atque proposita a competenti auctoritate ecclesiastica sancita circa naturam, finem, spiritum et indolem instituti, necnon eius sanæ traditiones, quæ omnia patrimonium eiusdem instituti constituunt, ab omnibus fideliter servanda sunt” (The intention of the founders and their determination concerning the nature, purpose, spirit and character of the institute which have been ratified by competent ecclesiastical authority as well as its wholesome traditions, all of which constitute the patrimony of the institute itself, are to be observed faithfully by all).

²⁶ Canon 586, §1: “Singulis institutis iusta autonomia vitæ, præsertim regiminis, agnoscitur, qua gaudeant in Ecclesia propria disciplina atque integrum servare valeant suum patrimonium, de quo in can. 578” (For individual institutes there is acknowledged a rightful autonomy of life, especially of governance, by which they enjoy their own discipline in the Church and have the power to preserve their own patrimony intact as mentioned in can. 578).

²⁷ *Codex iuris canonici, auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II, promulgatus, fontium annotatione et indice analytico-alphabetico auctus*, Città del Vaticano, Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1989, pp. 163-164, acknowledges no correspondence with the 1917 Code. Neither does the Navarre-Saint Paul Annotated Code, in its “Tables of Correspondence,” p. 1472, nor the CLSA Commentary, in its “Table of Corresponding Canons,” p. 1054.

²⁸ See J. BEYER, *Le droit de la vie consacrée: commentaire des Canons 573-606: normes communes*, Paris, Tardy, 1988, pp. 80-83.

²⁹ It is interesting to note that statutes for districts in the Oblate CC&RR are correctly referred to as ‘particular statutes’ because they are applied to a place, not a person.

³⁰ CC&RR (1982/87), C. 38, 77, 88, 91.

4.3.2.2. Religious Life: Canon 607

The theological base for religious life is given in the first paragraph of this canon.³¹ The second paragraph states that religious life is a society, not a solitary calling, and contains two elements, “public vows” and “*vitam fraternam in communi ducunt*,” both of which are undertaken according to the proper law of the institute. The third paragraph notes that the public witness proper to each institute includes a characteristic separation of the religious from the world.³²

Regarding this canon M. Gallagher writes:

The first sentence of the second paragraph is of particular interest: it complements c. 602 and places the *vita fraterna* within the context of religious life.... Not only does c. 607 appear at the very beginning of the section on religious institutes, it stands alone, providing the context for the reading of later canons. The members are called to live the *vita fraterna*, that is, the life of brothers or sisters, that fundamental relationship referred to earlier. The how of the *in communi*, or of the “in common” is left to later canons and to the institute’s own proper law.³³

4.3.2.3. *Domus* or House – Generic

In c. 608³⁴ the Code reiterates the long-standing norm that religious are to have a life in

³¹ See J. BEYER, *Le droit de la vie consacrée: commentaire des Canons 607-746: instituts et sociétés*, [Paris], Éditions Tardy, [1988], pp. 9-11.

³² Can. 607, §1: “*Vita religiosa, utpote totius personæ consecratio, mirabile in Ecclesia manifestat conubium a Deo conditum, futuri sæculo signum. Ita religiosus plenam suam consummat donationem veluti sacrificium Deo oblatum, quo tota ipsius existentia fit continuus Dei cultus in caritate.*” §2. *Institutum religiosum est societas in qua sodales secundum ius proprium vota publica perpetua vel temporaria, elapso tamen tempore renovanda, nuncupant atque vitam fraternam in communi ducunt.* §3. *Testimonium publicum a religiosis Christo et Ecclesiæ reddendum illam secumfert a mundo separationem, quæ indoli et fini uniuscuiusque instituti est propria*” (Religious life, as a consecration of the whole person, manifests in the Church a wonderful marriage brought about by God, a sign of the future age. Thus religious bring to perfection their full gift as a sacrifice offered to God by which their whole existence becomes a continuous worship of God in love. §2. A religious institute is a society in which members, according to proper law, pronounce public vows, either perpetual or temporary, which are to be renewed when they have lapsed, and live a life in common as brothers or sisters. §3. The public witness to be rendered by religious to Christ and to the Church entails a separation from the world proper to the character and purpose of each institute).

³³ M. GALLAGHER, *The Common Life: An Element of Apostolic Religious Institutes of Women*, pp. 76-78.

³⁴ Can. 608: “*Communitas religiosa habitare debet in domo legitime constituta sub auctoritate Superioris ad normam iuris designati: singulæ domus habeant oratorium, in quo Eucharistia celebretur et asservetur ut vere sit centrum communitatis*” (A religious community must live in a house legitimately constituted under the authority of the superior designated according to the norm of law; each house is to have at least an oratory in which the Eucharist is celebrated and reserved so that it truly is the center of the community).

common.³⁵ The 1983 Code, however, does not go into great detail as did the 1917 Code. A house is not defined and types and other distinctions are not made. A house, in this generic sense, is the physical structure(s) which is necessary, traditional, and mandated by the institute's constitutions and rules so that the members may live out the fraternal life called for in c. 602. It is an accommodation, rather than a specific structure. Such accommodation may be owned or rented, multi-unit dwelling or single family dwelling, one street address or a number of dwellings within a specified geographic area, several formal houses existing within one physical structure;³⁶ all come under this heading.³⁷ The *domus* of c. 608 is the locale where the *vita fraterna* of c. 602 takes place, and as such includes the Oblate district community.³⁸

As with the previous canon, there is ambiguity in the use of terminology here and there should more properly be a different term used for the generic *domus*, meaning a dwelling place lawfully constituted, and the specific *domus* meaning a canonically established permanent residence.

4.3.2.4. *Domus* or House – Specific

Canon 609, §1, of the 1983 Code sets forth the elements necessary for the establishment of a house (similar to the characteristics of the formal house found in the 1917 Code), and most

³⁵ Many excellent articles on the subject of this and the next canon have been written from both the canonical and community viewpoints. Two of the best from the canonical viewpoint are S. HOLLAND, "'Religious House' According to Canon 608," in *The Jurist*, 50 (1990), pp. 524-552, and E. McDONOUGH, "Common Life and Houses," in *RfR*, 52 (1993), pp. 462-468.

³⁶ Résidence Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, the former Scolasticat St-Joseph building begun in 1885, of Province St-Joseph of the Oblates contains: Résidence Duvic, established as a formal house in 1971; Résidence Emmaüs, a residence set up in 1977; Résidence Roy, established as a formal house in 1959; Résidence Villeneuve, established as a formal house in 1967. See *Personnel* #22, (1993), pp. 95-97.

³⁷ "The point of the canon [c. 608] is not that a community live in a house rather than in a trailer, or in an apartment, or in a cave. The point is that every religious community, wherever it lives, in whole or in part, has a law that says who its superior is and how it is accountable to this superior" (J. HITE, S. HOLLAND and D. WARD, (eds.), *A Handbook on Canons 573-746*, Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, [1985], p. 65).

³⁸ In its commentary on Canon 608, *The Canon Law, Letter and Spirit*, p. 335, states: "The canon prescribes that a community of religious is to live together in a 'house'; yet that 'house' is not to be identified necessarily with a particular abode, e.g., several 'houses' may exist in one large edifice; several small residences may be united as one 'house' provided that their proximity permits the fulfilment of the other requirements of the canon, i.e., access to the superior, celebration and reservation of the Eucharist."

importantly, provides it with juridic personality.

The only textual way to distinguish between the two uses of the noun *domus* is in the verbs used in conjunction with them. Canon 608 speaks of the type being lawfully constituted (*legitime constituta*) and c. 609, §1, speaks of the type being established or erected (*eriguntur*). It is this lack of precision that should be remedied in the next revision of the Code. However, the use of two different verbs in the two canons is certainly not inadvertent. In reply to the suggestion that the word *erecta* should be used in c. 608, the same as in c. 609, the 1981 Commission replied, "The text remains as it is because the intention is to have the more general term applied."³⁹ This opinion, although quite common, is certainly not universal.⁴⁰

4.3.2.6. "House" in Subsequent Canons

The religious house is referred to in a number of later canons and it must be determined in each case whether or not the canon applies to districts also. Canon 610 (usefulness and provision for members) would apply to districts, as would c. 611, 1^o and 2^o, (life and works proper to the institute). On the other hand, number 3^o, (the right to have a church) would not sensibly apply to the entire district, but rather to an individual residence within the district, if such was appropriate. In c. 612, the internal governmental changes referred to would appear to cover districts; therefore, for example, the switching of a residence from one district to another would not need the consent of the diocesan bishop.

³⁹ "Maneat textus, quia intentio est ut verbum magis generale adhibeatur" (PONTIFICIA COMMISSIO CODICI IURIS CANONICI RECOGNOSCENDO. *Relatio complectens synthesim animaverstonum ab Em.mis atque Exc.mis Patribus Commissionis ad novissimum schema CIC exhibitarum cum responsionibus a secretaria et consultoribus datis*, (Patribus Commissionis stricte reservata), [Città del Vaticano], Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1981) p. 143, in a question referring to can. 535 of the 1980 schema. See also, M. O'REILLY, *Consecrated Life: Norms*, private class notes, Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1992, p. 340, and HOLLAND, "'Religious House' According to Canon 608," in *The Jurist*, 50 (1990), pp. 545, 548.

⁴⁰ Re: c. 607, "A life in common, which is understood not only as being incorporated into a society as a member, but also as including all that living in community, in the same house, and under a common discipline entails" (CAPARROS, E., M. THERIAULT, and J. THORN, [eds.], *Code of Canon Law Annotated: Latin-English edition of the Code of Canon Law and English-language translation of the 5th Spanish-language edition of the commentary prepared under the responsibility of the Instituto Martín de Azpilcueta*, Montréal, Wilson & Lafleur Limitée, 1993, p. 426).

In fact, the division of an entire province into districts,⁴¹ rather than into houses and satellites, is an internal governmental matter and is not within the jurisdiction of the local ordinary.⁴² There would seem to be no reason stemming from the universal Code for a district not to be able to cover more than one diocese, as the district is an internal matter and the apostolate is responsible to the local ordinary of the place where the residence of the responsible Oblate is located and not the place where the district superior is located.⁴³ Since the time of Léo Deschâtelets, superior general, district superiors have been specifically and explicitly forbidden to interfere in either of the running or the apostolates of individual residences, although such was implied from the very beginning.⁴⁴ However, it certainly would be sensible for each bishop to know where the local superior for a district, involved in an apostolate in his diocese, resided; good manners need not be legislated.

Canon 616, §1. (the suppression of an established house) does not apply to districts as they are not established according to the norms of c. 609, §1.⁴⁵

Canon 621⁴⁶ (what units make up a province) would appear to apply to districts as well as

⁴¹ The canonical implications for the province will be dealt with under c. 621.

⁴² Cf. *Administrative Directory*, Rome, Casa Generalizia OMI, 1985, p. 42. In fact it was never necessary to seek the permission of the local ordinary or of the Holy See, even under the 1917 Code. In Circular 235 of 1967, *Administrative Norms and Faculties*, the Superior General, Léo Deschâtelets, outlined what was required to set up and suppress a district; of particular note are the following:

“Art. 78 For the canonical establishment of a district the procedure outlined in art. 73 [establishment of a house] (except as regards the permission of the Local Ordinary and of the Holy See **which is not required**) must be followed with appropriate changes, especially as concerns:

1. **The Purpose:** Description of the proposed District specifying:
 a. the number, name and address of the Residences or Stations to be included in the District;
 b. the Residence in which the Superior is to reside.”

In Article 79, concerning the suppression of a house or of a district, the circular also notes that the consent of the local ordinary is required only for a house.

⁴³ See chapter 5, section 2.19 and chapter 6, section 6.6.1.1.

⁴⁴ Cf. Appendix 8.

⁴⁵ *CC&RR 1982/87*, C. 88, R. 87.

⁴⁶ Can. 621 “Plurium domorum coniunctio quæ sub eodem Superiore partem immediatam eiusdem instituti constituat et ab auctoritate legitima canonice erecta sit, nomine venit provinciæ” (The grouping of several houses under the same superior which constitutes an immediate part of the institute and which has been canonically erected by the legitimate authority is called a province).

houses. The emphasis in the canon is on viable local communities rather than established houses; some Oblate vice-provinces do not have three established houses and some provinces have an established house with only one person resident there, just to fulfil the letter of the law.

Although the Code does not say whether these are constituted houses of c. 608 (therefore including districts) or erected houses of c. 609 (and excluding districts) and the major English commentaries do not allude to the distinction.⁴⁷ it is understood by the Oblate Constitutions and Rules (1982/87)⁴⁸ as be erected houses, not districts.⁴⁹ On the other hand, the Constitutions and Rules of the Redemptorists simply state that a province must have a minimum of five communities with fifty members.⁵⁰ The Constitutions of the Society of the Divine Word simply states that, "the province consists of several local communities within a given geographical area...."⁵¹

If there is a difference in the meaning used for the word used for *domus* in c. 608 and in c. 609, then it is obvious that a province could be comprised of districts. If a province is made up almost exclusively of districts it is the height of legalism to require it to have houses without enough members to have even a council, simply to fulfil the law.⁵² The 1998 revision of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules will be called upon to address this point.

Canon 629 (concerning the place of residence) applies to district superiors as well as house

⁴⁷ See: *Code of Canon Law Annotated*, pp. 431-432; *The Canon Law Letter and Spirit*, p. 342; *A Handbook on Canons* 573-746, pp.77-78; *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, p. 477; M. O'REILLY, *Consecrated Life: Norms*, p. 360.

⁴⁸ C. 78 - "A Province is an organic unity comprising at least three houses and provided with sufficient personnel, revenues and other requisites for its stability and development."

⁴⁹ When the Oblate CC & RR wishes to include houses, districts, residences and stations under one heading it uses the term "local community," for example in CC. 87-89.

⁵⁰ 088 - "On n'érigera pas une Province à moins qu'elle ne compte au minimum cinq communautés et cinquante membres, et qu'elle n'ait son autonomie économique" (*Constitutions et Statuts de la Congrégation du Très-Saint Rédempteur*, pp. 115-116).

⁵¹ *Constitutions SVD*, art. 627, p. 116.

⁵² St. Peter's, Canada, has three houses: one of which has one resident member and one of which has two resident members (1996-97).

superiors. It simply applies to the geographic area and not to the house.⁵³

Canon 634, §1, states that houses are juridic persons. Are Oblate districts juridic persons? If they are, they have to fulfil the canonical requirements.⁵⁴ No answer is given by the Constitutions and Rules. The weight of the arguments would seem to be no. Houses can only be suppressed by the superior general in council (R. 87); districts can be suppressed by the provincial in council (R. 87). Houses have the right to own property, a right granted by this canon and by Constitution 123, which states that this right can be limited by the provincial in council. On the other hand, a district can only own property if given that right by provincial statute.⁵⁵ As a unit of government, a district can administer property owned by the province.

Canon 647, §2, states that a valid novitiate must take place in a house. This can be in a house of either the c. 608 or c. 609 type, but the very nature of a district as a geographic area, and the needs of a novitiate house as expressed in the law and elsewhere make it obvious that a district cannot be established as a canonical novitiate, while a novitiate can be established within a district.

Canon 665⁵⁶ (religious are not to be absent from their community without permission) applies to the district in the same way as a house, *mutatis mutandis*. It is with this canon, and the laws which preceded it in time, that the concept of the Oblate district properly applied, has right from its

⁵³ See P. COGAN, "Absence of Local Superior from House," in *Roman Replies and CLSA Advisory Opinions*, 1994, Washington, Catholic University of America, 1994, pp. 112-113. He gives a sensible and up-to-date opinion.

⁵⁴ See *Codex 1983*, cc. 113-116.

⁵⁵ *CC & RR 1987*, R. 142. "The special statute of Delegations, districts, or residences will determine whether they have the right to own property."

⁵⁶ Can. 665, §1: "Religiosi in propria domo religiosa habitent vitam communem servantes, nec ab ea discedant nisi de licentia sui Superioris. Si autem agatur de diuturna a domo absentia, Superior maior, de consensu sui consilii atque iusta de causa, sodali concedere potest ut extra domum instituti degere possit, non tamen ultra annum, nisi causa infirmitatis curandæ, ratione studiorum aut apostolatus exercendi nomine instituti. §2. Sodalis, qui e domo religiosa illegitime abest cum animo sese subducendi a potestate Superiorum, sollicite ab eisdem quærat et adiuvetur ut redeat et in sua vocatione perseveret" (§1. Observing a common life, religious are to live in their own religious house and not be absent from it without the permission of their superior. However, if it is a question of a lengthy absence from the house the major superior for a just cause and with the consent of the council can permit the member to live outside a house of the institute, but not for more than a year, except for the purpose of caring for poor health, for the purpose of studies or of undertaking an apostolate in the name of the institute. §2. Members unlawfully absent from the religious house with the intention of withdrawing from the power of their superiors are to be solicitously sought after by them and aided to return and persevere in their vocation).

beginnings in Ceylon, striven to achieve the *vita fraterna*⁴⁷ without the superfluous legalistic details which can hamper the apostolate. Living in a specific residence in a district is as much in accordance with the prescriptions of this canon, as is living in a specific room in a house. M. Gallagher sees the problem in this way:

The first sentence of the canon establishes the main premise: the obligation of members to reside, *habitant*, in their own houses and to observe the common life, *vitam communem servantes*. The permission of the superior is required for them to reside elsewhere, *nec ab ea discedant*. There are several elements in this canon, but the one most relevant to our discussion of the common life is the last part. For reasons of the apostolate exercised in the name of the institute, a major superior, with the consent of her council can authorize a member to live outside a house of the institute for longer than a year. It is the implementation of that particular norm that causes some concern both among Church officials and among members of institutes where this practice occurs. It raises a question regarding the first part of the canon: *vitam communem servantes*, how is the common life understood and observed in such cases?⁴⁸

The answer for an Oblate is that if and when the concept of an Oblate district is properly implemented, the needs of the apostolate can necessitate many 'moves' within a district without the necessity of the formal authorizations called for by this canon coming into play. The *vitam communem servantes* exists within the district and, as such, the district is the basic unit of the community.

It is on this point, the active community life and fraternal living within the district, that the energies of the members, their local superior, and major superiors must be concentrated. If there is no dynamism here, then the religious life of the Oblates in the district is a farce.

4.3.2.7. Summary: Houses and Districts

The 1983 Code did not make any fundamental changes to the concept of religious house; it simply eliminated many of the details included in the 1917 Code. It did this with a clearer understanding of the Second Vatican Council's call for the implementation of the principle of

⁴⁷ *Vita fraterna* as a constitutive element in Oblate local apostolic communities is noted here. However, its real importance as the spiritual life of the district community, and what makes it unique in that milieu, is best left to a study in the area of spirituality.

⁴⁸ M. GALLAGHER, *The Common Life*, pp. 84-85.

subsidiarity, referring the user to the proper law of the institute in question for specific details. As such, the new Code did not affect the Oblate districts, which continued to rely on the Oblate Constitutions and Rules for their existence and regulation.

4.3.3. Local Superiors

The local superior envisaged by the 1983 Code in Canon 608 (and elsewhere), is the same for a formed house as for a district.⁵⁹ *mutatis mutandis*, saving those things mentioned in the Circular Letter of Léo Deschâtelets in 1954⁶⁰ and in the Constitutions and Rules (1982/87).⁶¹ There is little difference between the superior as dealt with here and in the previous legislation.⁶²

In the Code, the laws concerning all superiors and councils are dealt with in cc. 617 to 630. Those which are applicable to local superiors, including Oblate district superiors, are readily interpreted as such. For our purposes, cc. 617-619 are to be noted, for they make it clear that all superiors hold an ecclesiastical office and their authority comes from God and from the law: it is neither vicarious nor delegated but proper and ordinary. Applications, even extraordinary and serious ones such as in c. 703, are also available for use by district superiors. It is also clear in the Oblate Constitutions and Rules (1982/87) that the governance of a district is in the hands of a true superior while that of a residence is not. A residence is under a director.⁶³

⁵⁹ The only occasion on record of the Holy See questioning the nature of a district superior came in 1986 when the Procurator General applied to the Holy See for an indult for a Brother to be a district superior in St. Peter's Province, Canada, as is called for in Rule 90. The Holy See asked whether or not the superior of a district was a local or a major superior, and was assured that it was local and not major. From a 1994 interview with Fr. Michael O'Reilly, O.M.I., former procurator general.

⁶⁰ See Appendix 8.

⁶¹ These latter will be specifically dealt with below.

⁶² See *Code of Canon Law Annotated*, pp. 431-432.

⁶³ C. 77: "Members of the Institute live community in different ways. Some live in canonically established houses entrusted to a Superior. Others live in residences entrusted to a Director. Still others live alone because of the mission. In this latter case, they are either united in a district under the responsibility of a Superior, or assigned to a house or residence."

4.4. The 1980 and 1986 General Chapters and the 1982/87 Constitutions and Rules

As with all recent Oblate General Chapters, a committee had been struck by the previous chapter, 1974, to prepare appropriate documents for the next one. For this 1980 Chapter, it was specifically a proposed text of the "Constitutions and Rules of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate" which was to be prepared by the revision commission.⁶⁴ This Commission presented its report in July of 1979.⁶⁵

4.4.1. Preparation of the Proposed Text (1979)

The 1974 Chapter described the Commission's task as being:

The composition of a text of the Constitutions... *which will take the 1966 text as its starting point and basis:*⁶⁶ which will also use the previous texts, especially those of the Founder, as important reference and source material; and which will also reflect the 1972 and 1974 Chapter documents.⁶⁷

This Chapter was mindful of the problems which had arisen in preparing for the 1966 General Chapter, when a proposed text bore little resemblance to the needs of the capitulants, having been written in a so-called 'back room' without 'grass-roots' input. It therefore called upon the Commission to justify its proposed text and to invite all Oblates to cooperate by sending in suggestions for both content and methodology. It was to start by having all Oblates, through provincial study groups etc., reflect on their present life in community in the light of the experimental

⁶⁴ The Commission was made up of the following Oblate priests: Marius Bobichon, 55, France and Sri Lanka, missionary and scripture professor; Jean Drouart, 68, France, general administration; Ruben Elizondo, 44, USA, missionary in Mexico and Paraguay and formator; Theobald Kneifel, 37, Germany and South Africa, missionary and formator; Michael O'Reilly, 62, Ireland, canonist and procurator general; Frederick Sackett, 63, USA, canonist, general administration, Sri Lanka, formator; Paul Sion, 53, France, Laos, philosophy, executive-secretary of the commission; Alexandre Taché, Canada, International Scholasticate-Rome and Chile, professor of philosophy, canonist, formator, president of the commission. See A. TACHÉ, "Constitutions and Rules O.M.I." (Proposed Text), Presentation, an insert into the "Proposed Text," 1979.

⁶⁵ *The Constitutions and Rules of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate: Proposed Text Prepared by the Revision Commission for the General Chapter of 1980, (=Proposed Text, 1980), Rome, 1979, p.[9].*

⁶⁶ Emphasis added.

⁶⁷ *Presentation*, p. 2.

Constitutions and Rules.⁹⁸ Such communication was to continue throughout the entire process. The whole Congregation was consulted between July, 1975, and December, 1976, and about 24% of the members replied either individually or through group responses. Between January, 1977, and July, 1979, a new text was composed, translated, sent out to the entire membership for criticism, revised, translated, and sent out once again.⁹⁹ The result was a text that was familiar to all and, for the most part, acceptable.

Religious communities throughout the Church were seeking new ways to live community and trying, more or less successfully, new forms of fraternal living. One advantage which the Oblates had was that they already possessed an approved format of living, that is, districts, which had never been cast in stone and which had been evolving since its first approval more than a hundred years previously.

4.4.2. The Proposed Texts and the 1980 Text

The commission correctly read the mood of the Congregation and what it already had was preserved and enhanced. The proof of the success of the preparatory commission can be seen when the two texts are compared: there were no widespread changes. For the purpose of this thesis only

⁹⁸ In his 1980 article entitled "1980 Constitutions and Rules Project: Principles underlying the Drafting of the Revised Text" in *OMI Documentation*, no. 97/80, p. 6. Alexandre Taché says, regarding the place of community in the revision process:

"At the time of the 1975-76 questionnaire, this point had given rise to many remarks and to lively controversies. The reflections of the time, borne of very concrete situations, revealed two main currents of thought: the present renewal of community life expressed in various forms, on the one hand, and on the other a crisis of community life due to the transformations of recent years, in which communities of a traditional type often find themselves diminished because of new ministries which require that men work separated from the community.

"Particular mention was made of the danger of atomization and, consequently, of the need for frequent fraternal encounters, for broader forms of community, more adapted to the needs of the modern apostolates, in which 'community of mind and heart' is still most important....

"The project maintains the perspective of seeking to be traditional and supple at the same time.... It brings out its familial and traditionally hospitable character, but it does not want to specify new forms of community life: it remains open on this point."

⁹⁹ See "1980 Constitutions and Rules Project," pp. 1-8.

the texts mentioning 'districts' will be compared.⁷⁰

4.4.2.1. Apostolic Community⁷¹

1979
Chapter Three
The Apostolic Community

35. [Theological and spiritual base]

36. Obedience and charity bind us together, priests as well as Brothers, keeping us interdependent in our lives and missionary activity, even when, dispersed for the sake of the Gospel, we can benefit only occasionally from life in common.

R. 28. Each community, whether a house or a district, will adopt a program of life and common prayer best suited to its purpose and the ministry of its members.

If an Oblate must live apart, he will meet regularly with the other members of his community, to share with them and strengthen the bonds of unity. He will customarily seek every occasion to bring others whom he can gather more easily — priests, religious and lay persons — together with him in prayer.

1980
Section Three
The Apostolic Community

37. [Theological and spiritual base]

38. Obedience and charity bind us together, priests and Brothers, keeping us interdependent in our lives and missionary activity, even when, dispersed for the sake of the Gospel, we can benefit only occasionally from life in common.

Each community, whether a house or a district, will adopt a program of life and prayer best suited to its purpose and apostolate. Once set up, such a program is entrusted to the vigilance of the superior; regular meetings will be held to praise and thank the Lord, to assess the community's life, to renew its spirit and strengthen its unity.

The 1980 text presumes that the members will ordinarily live in community, either a house or a district; living alone is not considered to be a norm. The section which mentions 'district' has been moved from the Rules to the Constitutions, indicating its fundamental importance. Its position in the first Constitution after the foundational one of this section (C. 37), as in the Code, also indicates its relative importance. As well, the fact that it is part of the Constitutions means that only the Holy See can remove or fundamentally alter it. It is not the prerogative of the general chapter to do so, even though they are the ones who would most probably suggest any change.

In his commentary on the 1982/87 Constitutions and Rules, Fernand Jetté, the superior

⁷⁰ In the actual text of the CC&RR of 1979 and 1980/87, the Constitutions are simply numbered, while the Rules are preceded by the letter 'R' and a number. The Constitutions come at the beginning of each division, the Rules at the end. The numbers do not correspond to each other.

⁷¹ Below: column 1, *Proposed Text*, 1980, C. 36, p. 45, R. 28, p. 49; column 2, *CC & RR 1982/87*, C. 38, p. 47.

general at the time of its composition, states:

It is worth pointing out a distinction made in the second paragraph: concretely, the local community will be either a "house" or a "district." Already in the preceding *Constitutions* there was talk of "districts." But today among us this reality can have a greater role to play. What is understood by "district" is explained in the *Administrative Directory* (Rome 1985 nn. 166-170):

Districts are composed of isolated Oblates or of the members of residences. A district has its own particular statute (RR. 86. 142). It has its own superior and council (C. 77) whose authority is likened to that of the local superior of a house, with whatever qualifications or modifications may be made in the particular statute of the district (no. 166).⁷²

4.4.2.2. Spirit of Government

Although it does not mention the term 'district,' the section of the Constitutions and Rules opens with an article which embodies its spirit and is entitled, "Organization: The Spirit of Government."

71. United as brothers in one apostolic community we are all equal before God our Father who distributes charisms and ministries so that we can serve his Church and its mission. Our organizational structures, accordingly, we are set up in function of that mission.

Following the guidelines of the Constitutions and Rules, those in authority will make sure that the structures are flexible enough to evolve with our lived experience.⁷³

The draft text had positioned this article after one on authority as service. By moving the article to the first place in this Part and Chapter, the General Chapter of 1980 underlines its importance and indicates that all organizational norms are to be interpreted flexibly enough to evolve with our lived experience. This was the thinking that gave rise to districts in the first place, from the flexible thinking of de Mazenod which led to its use as an apostolic instrument in the missions of Ceylon, then to other mission territories, to France under the persecutions, to newly established provinces who saw a use for it as they consolidated their structures. In the present day, it has spread to some older provinces who witnessed a decline in their membership, and finally to provinces everywhere where the elimination of many large institutional houses and the rise of smaller residences in urban and rural areas and their grouping under the 'district' banner was seen as a step

⁷² JETTÉ, F., O.M.I., *The Apostolic Man: A Commentary on the 1982 Edition of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules*, A. Kedi and A. Lalonde, trans., Rome, General House, 1992, pp. 226-227.

⁷³ CC&RR 1982/87, p. 85; cf. *Proposed Text*, 1980, p. 74.

upward to a more vibrant and real community life rather than a step backwards.⁷⁴

4.4.2.3. Administrative Divisions: Community Bonds

The proposed text had districts mentioned in a rule. Once again what was proposed as a rule was moved to a constitution⁷⁵ with all the prestige and permanence that implied. The Chapter placed even more responsibility on districts; they were to be the primary vehicle for the *vitam communem* for those living alone, a small but significant point.⁷⁶ There are, canonically, only two types of religious superiors: major and local (minor).⁷⁷ In the Oblate Congregation, local superiors preside over a house or a district; there is no difference in kind between them.

4.4.2.4. The Local Community

There is more legal precision in the 1980 text than in the proposed text.⁷⁸ In Constitution 88 the word 'district' has lost its capitalization even when not linked to the word 'superior,' emphasizing the fact that, for the Oblate Congregation, a district is merely another type of local community, established, modified, and suppressed by the provincial in council and is only dealt with in a legal manner when it is different from other types of local communities.

⁷⁴ See Appendix 7 for the facts and analysis of the geographical and chronological spread of districts.

⁷⁵ "Members of the institute live community in different ways. Some live in canonically established houses entrusted to a Superior. Others live in residences entrusted to a Director. Still others live alone because of the mission. In this latter case, they are either united in a district under the responsibility of a Superior, or assigned to a house or residence.

"Residences are either autonomous or attached to a house or district.

"Whatever is stated in the Constitutions and Rules about local Superiors applies also to Directors and district Superiors, saving exceptions foreseen by the Church's common law or by the particular statute of the residence or district" (CC&RR 1982/87, art. 77, p. 88-89; cf. *Proposed Text*, 1980, p. 76).

⁷⁶ In the 1980 English text, the 'District Superior' had become the 'district Superior,' and the word 'district' had dropped its capitalization. It had switched, at least in English, from being a noun in apposition (a term of equality) to being a simple adjective, a modifier with no pretensions to equality.

⁷⁷ *Codex* 1983, c. 620; c. 624, §3.

⁷⁸ *Proposed Text*, 1980, pp. 82, 8; CC&RR 1982/87, pp. 97-99.

Rule 86,⁷⁹ with reference to districts, is of special note here.⁸⁰ It calls for districts to be “governed by their particular statute, determined by the provincial in council”. This was not a new idea and had been in existence since the time of the first district in Ceylon.⁸¹ It was expressed quite clearly in the Constitutions and Rules of 1928.⁸² The laws governing religious are called “proper law”⁸³ and follow the persons wherever they go and laws governing places are called “particular law”⁸⁴ and oblige those in a specified place. Fortuitous usage or not, in an analogous sense it can be said that districts in the Oblates are governed by the ‘particular’ statutes, or norms, passed by the provincial in council specifically for the territory of the district. Because the law does not say otherwise, these norms could be general and the same for all districts in the province, but still applied individually, or they could be unique and tailored to each district. It is quite logical to have both types in the same province: a general statute in the provincial administrative directory and specific ones tailored to individual districts approved by the provincial in council. What is indisputable is that the Constitutions and Rules are calling for norms above and beyond what is found in the Code and the Constitutions and Rules themselves. Proper application of subsidiarity calls for this as there are decisions, obligations etc., which are more proper to the local level than the provincial level. It appears, as will be seen below in Chapter 5, that some provinces have decided that particular statutes were unnecessary and what is said in the Constitutions and Rules is sufficient.

The individual residences with their directors also have an autonomy proper to their status.

⁷⁹ “Residences and districts are governed by their particular statute, determined by the Provincial in Council.”

⁸⁰ This should be read in conjunction with R. 142 which states that the special statute of a district will determine whether it has the right to own property.

⁸¹ See Appendix 4, “Règlement provisoire du district,” signed and dated “Jaffna, 24-2-1869. + Christophe, O.M.I. Ev. Médéa, vic. ap. Jaffna, Vic. des missions de Ceylan.”

⁸² Article 516, after stating that the Superior General in Council can group together a number of residences into a district under a superior and council, states:

“But the Provincial, in agreement with Articles 513 and 515, will define precisely the rights and duties of the Superior and the Directors [of the residences in the district], as may be required by the circumstances of the locality and the work to be done.”

⁸³ See section 3.3.2.1. “Subsidiarity,” paragraph 1, for further details.

⁸⁴ Cf. cc. 12, §3; 13, §1.

which is noted in the 1982/87 Constitutions and Rules.⁸⁵ A district superior does not have the authority to interfere in the physical or apostolic running of the residences in his district and he may well not be a director himself. If, in a particular province, all superiors' responsibilities have degenerated to the extent that they simply look after the physical running of the house, and everything else is the responsibility of the provincial administration, then, without any specific statutes governing districts or any physical house for which to be responsible, the district superiorship could easily become a nominal position. The superior of a district is a true local superior and the provincial must respect the canonical principle of subsidiarity and give to the district superior the autonomy and authority necessary to enable the district to function as a true local community. The statute referred to by Rule 86 is one of the means offered in order to do so.

4.4.2.5. District Superior's Term⁸⁶ and Appointment of His Council⁸⁷

The addition made to the proposed text of Constitution 91⁸⁸ is that, now, before a district council is appointed, the local community is to be consulted. Perhaps as more and more of the congregation lives in districts, a future general chapter will consider making the district council mandatory rather than optional. Note also that when a house of one member is simply maintained as a juridic entity so as to fulfil the requirements of a province, it is physically impossible to have a canonical council in that house.

⁸⁵ *CC&RR 1982/87*: CC. 77, 78, 88, 91; RR. 86, 87, 92, 142.

⁸⁶ R. 92 "Normally the Superior of a district and the director of a residence is appointed for a definite term, as is a local superior." An item of note here is the last phrase of that rule, "as is a local Superior," which is incorrect here because a district superior is, by law, already a local superior; a better phrase would have been "as is a Superior of a house" (*Proposed Text, 1980*, p. 85; *CC&RR 1982/87*, p. 101).

⁸⁷ *Proposed Text, 1980*, p. 85; *CC&RR 1982/87*, p. 101.

⁸⁸ A peculiarity of the method of numbering the constitutions and rules in this edition is that a rule of a higher number can precede a constitution of a lower number.

4.4.2.6. Districts and the Ownership of Property⁸⁹

Rule 142 is quite clear: the special statute of Rule 86 determines whether or not a district may own property. The only time there could be a question, and there should not be one, is when the Province decides not to enact any special statutes for districts or for residences. In that case all property not belonging to a formal house is owned by the Province. There is nothing here to prevent a district from managing property in the name of the province but, again for clarity, this would best be included in the special statute.

4.4.2.7. Approval by the Holy See

The Chapter had met from October 26 to December 8, 1980, and, as it was about to close, it mandated the establishment a Post-Capitular Commission with the mandate of preparing the new Constitutions and Rules for presentation to the Holy See. This involved improving the formulation, removing ambiguities and incoherent passages if necessary, and verifying the correctness and parallelism between the English and French texts.⁹⁰

By January 27, 1981, the superior general and council decided that the text was ready to submit to the Holy See and it was done two days later. A total of 16 pages of suggestions came back along with a generally favourable report. The changes required by the Holy See did not touch upon the nature or application of districts or district superiors in the Oblate Congregation.⁹¹

4.4.3. The 1986 General Chapter and the Adjustments to the Constitutions and Rules

The General Chapter of 1986 placed most of its emphasis on the theme "Oblate Mission in

⁸⁹ *Proposed Text, 1980*, p. 109; *CC&RR 1982/87*, p. 135.

⁹⁰ See M. O'REILLY, "The Approval of the 1980 Constitutions and Rules by the Holy See" in *OMI Documentation*, 124 (March, 1984), p. 4.

⁹¹ See O'REILLY, "Approval 1980," pp. 7-12. A masterful analysis of this edition of the Constitutions and Rules from the aspect of districts as communities is to be found in F. SANTUCCI, "Districts as Expressions of Apostolic Community," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 53 (1994), pp. 109-114. He also deals with the subject in his article "Communauté" in *Dictionnaire des Valeurs Oblates*, Rome, Association d'Études et des Recherches Oblates, 1996, pp. 136-158.

the World of Today”⁹² and applied to its apostolates the fruits of the chapter of 1980.⁹³ The Chapter did make a few adjustments to the 1982 text because of experience and the promulgation of the 1983 Code of Canon Law. Of interest to this paper are the following changes by the General Chapter.

4.4.3.1. Changes to the Constitutions

Only five changes to the Constitutions were deemed necessary. These were made by the General Chapter and then approved by the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes on August 29, 1987.⁹⁴ Of these constitutional changes only one even tangentially touches districts and district superiors. Constitution 82 has a new paragraph:

The Superior General, Provincials, Superiors of Delegations and local Superiors are to make the Profession of Faith according to the approved formula on the occasion of their election, appointment, or taking up of office, in the presence of the Chapter or person who has appointed them (or confirmed their election) or his delegate.⁹⁵

This change was necessitated by Canon 833, 8¹, and, as is normal in the Oblate Constitutions and Rules, because it does not specify “Superiors of houses,” it automatically refers to both types of local superiors.

4.4.3.2. Changes to the Rules

Rule 90 also touches the point indirectly when it lays down that,

An Oblate to be appointed local superior or Director of a Residence should have been professed of perpetual vows for at least one year.⁹⁶

An Oblate Brother in perpetual vows may with, the necessary indult, be appointed Superior of a local community.

⁹² GENERAL CHAPTER 1986, *Missionaries in Today's World*, Rome, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, p. 62.

⁹³ See *Missionaries in Today's World*, p. 62.

⁹⁴ See *Changes to the Constitutions and Rules: as approved by the General Chapter of 1986*, [Rome, General House, 1987], p. 1. A new edition incorporating these changes has not been published.

⁹⁵ *Changes to the CC&RR*, p. 3.

⁹⁶ See *Codex 1983*, c. 623.

4.5. The General Chapter of 1992

4.5.1. Lead-Up to the Chapter: District Survey

As the 1986 General Chapter issued a call to all Oblates, and especially the Provincials, to “support district communities as real Oblate communities having a special purpose,”⁹⁷ so the General Administration in 1989 undertook a mini-survey of districts within the Institute to see what the situation was and how the concept of districts was developing after the Chapter’s impetus.⁹⁸

Fifteen provinces, vice-provinces, and delegations were sent a questionnaire: ten answered and three others sent in information without being asked. The reports were not uniform in set-up and not scientifically analyzed.⁹⁹

The districts, as such, exhibited many varying characteristics, as had been the case from their beginnings in the previous century. Some had superiors, some did not; some used the terms ‘region’ or ‘cluster’ and ‘sector’ if the division was by ministry. Community meetings were of major importance but distance, transportation facilities, and climate made their frequency vary immensely, from weekly in Sweden and Senegal, to yearly, but of a two week duration, in Northern Canada. The average was monthly. The main activities of the meetings were prayer, study, sharing and relaxation. Every area had variations on these and the depth of any one activity depended on the trust level of the participants. As of the date of this survey, 24.1% of the members of the Congregation lived alone in their mission. For this not insignificant number, the only way to live the community life, called for by de Mazenod, would almost certainly be in district communities.¹⁰⁰

District gatherings were also held to celebrate Oblate feasts, anniversaries, birthdays etc., and there were other responsibilities which various districts reported taking on. These were not the same for all districts, not even within the same province or delegation. The advantage of having the specific particular statutes of Rule 86 is that there is no need for uniformity, just a modicum of

⁹⁷ *Missionaries in Today’s World*, p. 47, no. 131.

⁹⁸ See “District Communities: Report of a Mini-Survey,” in *Documentation OMI*, 168 (1989), pp. 1-12.

⁹⁹ See “Mini-Survey,” pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁰ See “Mini-Survey,” pp. 2-3.

stability. General statutes, by themselves, would tend to reinforce uniformity; counterbalancing this, the addition of specific ones would preserve individuality.

In one district, all goods are shared in common among the residences: "Our economic goods are pooled at the level of the religious life with only one treasurer for the entire district. It is separate on the level of the missions but each superior must present his budget and any project which requires the *nilhil obstat* of the delegation must be submitted to the district community."

In another district, the personal budget of each Oblate is submitted to the district community before being approved by the Council of the Delegation. Elsewhere an Oblate is responsible for vocations on the district level and another is the liaison person for the promotion of justice and peace.

A few times mention is made, without going into detail, of a collaboration on the level of the pastoral plan. "A sharing of apostolic activities which extends to the point of organizing a sharing of common activities and an exchange of help which goes beyond the territorial limits of a mission or a diocese."

In a district where the Oblates work in the same diocese the pastoral meetings are held rather according to zones [diocesan divisions] while the meetings of the district community are more centered on the religious and Oblate life.¹⁰¹

The survey emphasized the importance of the district superior and, beyond what is called for by the Constitutions and Rules, outlined some practical tasks of the superior in most districts. It has become more a role of an animator, rather than an authority-figure, but nevertheless the district superior is a figure with authority:¹⁰²

- to dedicate some time to his function,
- to be present to each Oblate of this district,
- to be a conciliator in cases of interpersonal conflict,
- to encourage, to discern, to challenge,
- to watch over the health of each Oblate,
- to approve the personal budgets and the travel and vacation plans of each member,
- to communicate the information and the directives of the provincial administration etc.¹⁰³

The superior has a major task in communicating with the members, both to support and to challenge. That can be by telephone, letter, fax and/or visits. By whatever means he deems necessary, the superior must keep in touch with the men of the district and their apostolates. That may well involve job-related expenses, and that must be the duty of the province/delegation to provide for them. A problem, not obvious at first, rapidly became evident as the surveys were returned. District

¹⁰¹ "Mini-Survey," p. 4.

¹⁰² For further information on the statutes of districts in South Africa, see excerpts in Appendix 9.

¹⁰³ "Mini-Survey," pp. 5-6.

superiors normally had a full-time ministry and, especially those who were also directors, found that it was not easy to find the time necessary for this other job, that of superior. Which one is his primary duty? The Constitutions and Rules and writers on religious life would seem to say that it is the role of superior that is primary. However, it is difficult to see a person who was already a pastor or full-time missionary, teacher, etc., cut into the time allotted for this ministry in order to fulfil the call on his time of what could well be described as a part-time job, that of district superior.

Training for the office was usually unorganized and consisted of on-the-job-training plus annual or more frequent meetings with the provincial and council. All-in-all, the surveyed areas said that where the district life was well organized, the results were satisfying.¹⁰⁴ The province of Sri Lanka, once again taking the lead, said:

The district is the local community of the Province for those Oblates who are not attached to houses. Its purpose is to provide a framework of community life so that Oblates can engage in the missionary apostolate as a team. There is common prayer, sharing in faith and mutual support through the district. The districts are clearly oriented towards the mission.¹⁰⁵

The delegation of Senegal summarizes its implementation thus:

The effort expended by everyone and the results obtained confirm our conviction that we are on the right road: a consecrated life that becomes witness, a proclamation of the Word even before the Word had been proclaimed, a consecrated life which becomes sharing, fraternity, solidarity, support....¹⁰⁶

4.5.2. Lead-Up to the Chapter: Growing Awareness

As the Congregation prepared for the 1992 General Chapter the first major article specifically on district communities was published. It was a paper given by R. Schwietz of the Central U.S. Province, at their 1989 Congress.¹⁰⁷ In it he traced from the time of the Founder, the necessity of some kind of connection, a genuine relationship with a community and a superior, that an Oblate

¹⁰⁴ See "Mini-Survey," pp. 5-6.

¹⁰⁵ "Mini-Survey," p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ "Mini-Survey," p. 7.

¹⁰⁷ R. SCHWIETZ, O.M.I., became Bishop of Duluth, MN, in 1990. His paper was published as "Oblate District Life: Reflections and Questions," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 50 (1991), pp. 157-162.

must have for there to be a sense of his own self-worth and for his spiritual growth. In a word, he has to 'belong.'

The North American world calls for a measure of appropriate independence as a sign of maturity, but a balance is necessary so that it does not become self-centeredness. The protection offered to the preceding generation of religious by the institutional community living situation is no longer there. Individual Oblates today need to be supported and too often the personal support system, called for by our human nature, may not be found within the Oblate system of a specific province.¹⁰⁸

In that contemporary situation there is no use going back to the Founder and the early days of the Congregation and looking for concrete answers there. De Mazenod gave us the vision so that we could look beyond the problem and seek new solutions; that is one aspect of the legacy of his charism. The Oblates described in the paragraph above are no more isolated now than were the 19th century missionaries in Western Canada or Ceylon – just differently isolated. What Schwietz has done is to say that we can find a solution to this problem by community living in revitalized districts, the main form of local government which his province had since its establishment in the first quarter of this century.

Since the first stirrings of the spirit of the Second Vatican Council there have been innumerable articles written on community living, new structures of community life, and reform of the canonical 'house.' What is significant here is that, for the first time, an Oblate has said that the Institute neither has to be restricted to canonical houses nor has to search out a new form of community living. There is a home-grown and original solution if the Institute is willing to invest the time and labour to research and update it. Districts are no longer, if they ever really were, make-shift instruments taking the place of 'real' communities, but are, or can be, vibrant new ways of living the Oblate life.

Schwietz gives six areas where a district community has much to offer a province and notes a few unanswered questions:

¹⁰⁸ See SCHWIEZ, "Oblate District Life," pp. 159-160.

- They could promote an awareness of Regional priorities and how they should affect our ministry.
- They could be personal, supportive, and yet challenging to our growth as Oblates.
- At the same time they could enable us to carry out the kinds of ministry that have us separated from community living today.
- They could help develop leadership among us.
- They could help promote our personal health and well-being in this time of high stress.
- They could, at times, be just plain fun and enjoyable, so as to lighten up our lives.

The consideration of district community life entails the role of the district superior also. We are presently operating under differing sets of expectations regarding our superiors. We need to solve the issue of whether the district superior has a primarily administrative, or a pastoral relationship with his men. We need to look at what the authority of the district superior really is....

We see a great potential in the district community. More than that, we feel an urgency to look for ways to revitalize district communities. After all, what alternatives do we have for mutual support, for challenge, for sharing life as Oblates. ¹⁰⁰

4.5.3. State of the Congregation Report

On May 21, 1992, Marcello Zago, superior general, gave the General Chapter his "State of the Congregation" report. In Part III, "Religious and Apostolic Life," the section on "Apostolic Communities" begins with article 28, which, not accidentally, is mostly on districts:

Community life is an essential dimension of religious life, although there may be different ways of living it. Among the various religious families our way of living community life is quite original; it arouses interest and surprise in many quarters. Apart from the residential community in a house or residence, we also have district communities made up of individuals who live alone or in smaller residences. The aims of both forms of community, residential and district, are the same: to live community life, to relate to one another and to help one another to be authentic missionaries in different geographical, cultural and ecclesial contexts.

How is our living and awareness of community life developing?

The district community, which has to be lived by about one fourth of our members, is developing through the participation of the members: there is an increasing sense of belonging and of mutual support. There is quite a wide variety in the types of these district communities. They are sometimes made up of Oblates who already live in two or three-man residences but who, as a district, are more numerous, grouping together four to ten Oblates. In other places all the Oblates live alone and come together to form a district. The rhythm and intensity of community life vary. Some districts meet every week, others five or six times a year. Some groups try to live every aspect of community life, (human, Christian, missionary, economic), others are more selective. The role of the superior is important in

¹⁰⁰ SCHWIEZL, "Oblate District Life," p. 161-162.

all instances.¹⁰⁰

Regarding general tendencies in community life, he points out a greater awareness of the importance of community life almost everywhere, as a means of personal growth and missionary activity. Characteristic in Oblate renewal of community life is an increase in the atmosphere of brotherhood, exchange, dialogue, mutual help, and interest. There is less of a tendency towards polarization and an increase of tolerance. The spiritual and personal dimensions are more easily integrated, personal exchanges come more easily, and the apostolate is more often seen as a community commitment. The superior is seen as an animator to the life of the district and he is held to that expectation.¹⁰¹

The superior general notes that among the more effective means of promoting community life there are:

- the better selection of superiors able and willing to build and animate community, providing them with an initiation to their duties [i.e. formation/training of superiors], providing also regular meetings for them and involving them in the evaluation and programming of the province (enlarged Council);
- communication among members of the community and their involvement in the programming and activities of the community.¹⁰²

Among other means are a community action plan for the apostolate, visits of the provincial where he takes part in the local meeting, provincial congresses or gatherings on the theme of local community, and the careful and professional preparation of meetings and local events.¹⁰³

For Zago the main difficulties arose when there were:

- differences in outlook on community life and what is expected from it;
- difficulties in taking in all dimensions of community. There is a tendency to draw the line at brotherhood or mission without always taking on the aspects of faith, the religious and economic requirements;
- shortage or unpreparedness of local superiors;
- insufficient collaboration of members;

¹⁰⁰ M. ZAGO, "Report of the Superior General on the State of the Congregation to the 32nd General Chapter," circular 325, in *Acta Administrationis Generalis O.M.I.*, 15 (1992), pp. 186-187.

¹⁰¹ See ZAGO, "Report, 1992," p. 188.

¹⁰² ZAGO, "Report, 1992," p. 188.

¹⁰³ See ZAGO, "Report, 1992," pp. 188-189.

- centralization of certain aspects of community life such as mission and finance with consequent damaging effect on community life itself.
- the reluctance of some, including some Oblate bishops, to agree to meetings or groupings because the mission might suffer as a result.¹⁴

He concludes the section on apostolic communities with a call to seek the deeper meaning of religious consecration, to revitalize community life and residential communities, and regarding districts and local superiors, the following:

- We must continue our efforts to make our *districts* real communities. These districts should not be too widespread geographically, nor should they be made up of groups that are too large. The superiors should be well chosen and fittingly prepared. Even in district communities it is preferable that Oblates not live alone.
- Finally, the *preparation of Superiors* should constitute a priority for provincial and general administrations. For this purpose one could foresee retreats and courses at the general, regional and provincial levels taking account of the twofold way of living community. It would also be possible to organize mobile teams on a regional or linguistic basis to help build communities.¹⁵

In the section of his report on administrative structures the superior general notes:

The computerized data for the Congregation show that there are 216 houses, 672 residences, 430 stations and 140 structured districts. Of the 81 Oblate units (provinces – delegations – missions), 28 have district communities. I believe that we have to develop, structurally and otherwise, both types of local community, that is, the district and the residential community, and *incorporate the other divisions and distinctions within them.*¹⁶

Every community, whether residential or district, should have its own structure and the superior as an essential part of it. It should have its life rhythm, which ensures all the dimensions of community (human, Christian, religious, missionary, economic) for the good of persons and the mission.

In the precapitular survey, some asked for more details with regard to the district community. These details are to be discovered especially by the members of the districts themselves and by the provinces and delegations with experience of them, keeping in mind that they should be or become a genuine community in all that is required of that status (cf. CC. 37, 44, 87-91). Clarifications to this effect can be included in provincial or delegation directories.¹⁷

It will become clearer below in Chapter 5 that Zago's various comments are still quite

¹⁴ ZAGO, "Report, 1992," p. 189.

¹⁵ ZAGO, "Report, 1992," p. 190.

¹⁶ Emphasis added.

¹⁷ ZAGO, "Report, 1992," pp. 203-204.

applicable as the Congregation prepares for the general chapter which will choose his successor.¹¹⁸

4.5.4. "Witnessing as Apostolic Community"¹¹⁹

As was said above, by the time of the 1992 General Chapter, one-fourth of the Congregation lived in district communities.¹²⁰ The chapter recognized the growing importance of this form of local government, and of its superior, when it stated in its document to the Congregation that:

The Chapter reaffirms that *district community* is an authentic and important expression of local community (C. 38). This presumes that it will adopt "a program of life and prayer best suited to its purpose and apostolate"; that "once set up such a program is entrusted to the vigilance of the Superior"; that "regular meetings will be held..." and that there will be financial sharing. Current experiences are to be evaluated in terms of communion and interdependence; otherwise, we may stagnate in the routine and mediocrity of groups that are district communities in name only.

This Chapter strongly reaffirms the importance of the local superior. He is the pastor of his brothers. He brings the community together to evaluate its experience, to give itself objectives for its common life and mission, and he ensures the implementation of the same. The quality of the local superior is a determining factor for the Congregation's life. For this reason, the Chapter considers the formation of local Superiors to be a priority, and it asks provinces and the entire Congregation to develop appropriate instruments to render such formation effective.¹²¹

The Chapter called for a program geared to the good of the district to be set up before it is entrusted to the local superior, who had been suitably trained for these duties. Such a program, called for by Rule 86, need not be imposed from above. Rather, experience and a proper understanding of subsidiarity, would hold that it could well be proposed by the district, basing itself on the needs of the specific district community. It would then be submitted to the province where it would be integrated into a format containing the minimum necessary elements of the common law, the Constitutions and Rules of the Oblates, and the directory of the province. This would be passed by the provincial in council, and then would become the statute of that district. They would be flexible

¹¹⁸ For his most current commentary on the role of the local superior see M. ZAGO, "The Superior General's Letter to Local Superiors," circular 341, in *Acta Administrationis Generalis O.M.L.*, 19 (1996), pp. 12-14.

¹¹⁹ *Witnessing as Apostolic Community: Acts of the 32nd General Chapter*, Rome, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 1992.

¹²⁰ See ZAGO, "Report, 1992," p. 187.

¹²¹ *Witnessing as Apostolic Community*, p. 27.

enough for any local superior and membership to work, without having to have the statute changed with every change of leadership or personnel. They should, however, contain enough structure so that the membership and ministries of the district could flourish with clear and effective goals. As with a formed house, if the major apostolate or ministry changes, there would have to be a change in the statutes.

4.5.5. Administrative Structures Committee

As there had been no change in the overall structural system of the Congregation since 1972, and since membership had decreased by approximately one third since then, it was considered appropriate for the 1992 General Chapter to strike a committee to evaluate the current structures and propose changes to be presented at the 1998 General Chapter.¹²² Initial proposals would be submitted to an inter-chapter meeting of provincials with the general administration for discussion and interim approval.¹²³ From this would come the four following acts of interest to this work:

- preparation of an adapted text of Part III of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules along with an appropriate rationale statement;
- distribution throughout the Congregation of these documents along with an evaluation instrument;
- analysis of the evaluation data
- an exchange with the Superior General and Council on the results of the above.¹²⁴

The acts of this committee will be dealt with below.

4.6. Other Related Activities Outside the General Chapter Committee

4.6.1. Correspondence with the Roman Congregation

When the General Chapter concluded, a copy of the *Acta* and the Superior General's report were sent to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. In reply, the prefect, Edward Cardinal Martínez Somalo, said, concerning districts:

¹²² See *Witnessing as Apostolic Community*, pp. 64-69.

¹²³ *CC&RR 1982/87*, RR. 121.

¹²⁴ *Witnessing as Apostolic Community* pp. 67-68.

We support the view that establishing district communities is a good instrument to help those constrained to live somewhat in isolation to achieve better awareness of the importance of community life, both for individual growth and for accomplishing the mission.¹²⁵

This is, besides the obvious approval of all the Constitutions and Rules since 1910, the only direct approving referral to this Oblate form of local community and government by the Holy See.

4.6.2. Synod of Bishops IX Ordinary Assembly: "The Consecrated Life and Its Role in the Church and in the World"

This Synod of Bishops was called on December 30, 1991, by Pope John Paul II to be convoked in the autumn of 1994.¹²⁶ The Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod did the consultation, research, and planning, and published the results of the various stages in three documents as outlined below.

4.6.2.1. *Lineamenta*

This document, as is the nature of a *Lineamenta*, presented the topic of the Synod in a complete organic manner and indicated the topic's content and limits. It posed a series of questions and attempted to prompt discussion and an in-depth reflection. It also was intended to elicit information and indications which would be helpful in setting the agenda of the synodal assembly. It was not intended to preempt the process by presenting possible conclusions.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ "Riteniamo che la costituzione di comunità-distretto sia un buono strumento per aiutare quanti sono costretti a vivere piuttosto isolati per una maggiore presa di coscienza dell'importanza della vita comunitaria, sia per la crescita individuale che per il compimento della missione apostolica" (CICLSAL Prot. n. YM 29/92, December 23, 1992). English translation based on that of the *Acta Administrationis Generalis O.M.I.*, 15 (1992), pp. 13-15; Italian text from a photocopy of the original in the General Archives.

A personal discussion of this paragraph of the letter with Marcello Zago, superior general, brought out the fact that some within CICLSAL were interested in the concept of districts as lawful units of local government within the Oblates. They indicated that they were interested in the opinion of those who had experienced districts as to whether or not such a concept could be applicable to other religious institutes? It was suggested that research into the historical and canonical basis for this notion would be of benefit to the Church.

¹²⁶ See SYNODUS EPISCOPORUM, *The Consecrated Life and Its Role in the Church and the World: Lineamenta (=Lineamenta)*, Synod of Bishops, IX Ordinary General Assembly, [Ottawa], Libreria editrice Vaticana, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1992, p. 3.

¹²⁷ See *Lineamenta*.

As would be expected, the *Lineamenta* called for a continuation of the renewal in the line with what had been given by the Second Vatican Council and the later documents of the Holy See.¹²⁸

In part I, section 2, number 14, the document speaks of the variety of charisms and the plurality of forms in the consecrated life. The specific charisms of the founders are recognized and it reiterates the call of the Second Vatican Council “that the distinctive character of various religious institutes is [to be] preserved and fostered by the Church.”¹²⁹ It is specific when it singles out as part of that charism, “a specific experience of community life.”¹³⁰

4.6.2.2. *Instrumentum laboris*¹³¹

The next step in the process was to refine the answers to the questions and prepare a working document for the Synod itself.

During this stage of the preparation, John Paul II, in an address to superiors general, affirmed the call to renewal in these words:

Today the religious life is experiencing a particularly significant moment of its history because of the demanding and widespread renewal imposed by the changed socio-cultural conditions at the threshold of the third millennium of the Christian era.... In their day the founders and foundresses were able to incarnate the Gospel message with courage and holiness. It is necessary that, faithful to the breath of the Spirit, their spiritual daughters and sons continue this witness in time, imitating their creativity, with a mutual fidelity to the charism of their origins, and in constant listening to the demands of the present moment.¹³²

“Imitating their creativity,” is a key phrase and is echoed throughout the text. Religious institutes are told to read the signs of the times and to interpret them in the light of the gospel. This has been done, the document affirms, and the consecrated life has remained open to the challenges

¹²⁸ See *Lineamenta*, pp. 8-9.

¹²⁹ SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO RELIGIOSIS ET INSTITUTIS SÆCULARIBUS ET SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO EPISCOPIS, notæ directivæ *Mutuae Relationes*, 1978, Rome, in AAS, 70 (1978), 480, translation from *Lineamenta*, p. 19.

¹³⁰ *Lineamenta*, p. 20.

¹³¹ SYNODUS EPISCOPORUM, *The Consecrated Life and Its Role in the Church and the World: Instrumentum laboris* (= *Instrumentum laboris*), Synod of Bishops, IX Ordinary General Assembly, 1994, Vatican City, [Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops].

¹³² *Instrumentum laboris*, p. 5.

of present day humanity.¹³³ This is not easy, and the document reflects the trepidation of many who are still uncertain about which concrete renewed forms will give meaning to life and which will also have the capacity to survive the test of time.¹³⁴

When discussing new forms of community life, the members of the Synod were asked to discuss the fact that many institutes of apostolic and missionary life have expressed a desire to rethink and make more flexible their manner of living and their community structures. Not for their own sake were these changes undertaken, but so as to respond better to the institutes' own nature and purpose. Institutes were not continuing to put new wine in old wine skins. The search was on for some new containers.¹³⁵

In the mind of the *Instrumentum laboris* various factors have led to the decline in large structured institutionalized communities. Many members have shown a deeply felt desire to be closer to the people with whom they work and this has, in turn, led to the formation of small communities of common interest. On the positive side this has helped overcome the anonymity of a large community, but the resulting individuality can cause harm to the unity of the institute. Nevertheless, individualism and authoritarianism are the two extremes which must be avoided as solutions to the present ills of community life. If either of these are looked upon as instant cures, their implementation could be destructive of the *vita fraterna*.¹³⁶ A balance between individualism and authoritarianism was called for, a balance which the Oblates sought in the development and renewal of their district communities.

The *Instrumentum laboris* points out that, while the *vita fraterna* of canon 602 is a constitutive element of the consecrated life, how it is lived out in reality differs with each institute. Even within the same institute it varies in different places and circumstances. The community is the place of communal prayer where the experience of God can mature and be shared. It is a place under

¹³³ See *Instrumentum laboris*, pp. 18-19.

¹³⁴ See *Instrumentum laboris*, p. 25.

¹³⁵ See *Instrumentum laboris*, p. 29.

¹³⁶ See *Instrumentum laboris*, p. 30.

the authority of a superior whose primary task is to build a fraternal community in which God is sought and loved above all. Superiors serve God only in as much as they promote the authenticity of community life and serve their brethren by helping them to fulfil their vocation. In so far as they are the interpreters of the charism of the institute, superiors must be capable of letting themselves be helped and enlightened by their council and the other structures of participation. That this mutual assistance is a primary goal and benefit of the *vita fraterna* is not to be denied. Although the superior is primarily a guide and inspiration, what we often call an animator, still he cannot decline the responsibility to decide whenever that is necessary.¹³⁷

Those who look to district communities as a means to infuse new life into community, whether these be Oblates or religious of other institutes, can take heart from the words of the synodal commission, when, basing itself on the many replies, it says,

The life of fraternal communion *per se* is not conferred by simply being together and sharing an external organization of life. Rather it derives from living one's entire life with reference to the institute and in common with the other members with whom one shares the same charism of mission. Thus, at the level of the local community, it is not the physical fact of living under the same roof or the juridical element of an individual's being sent to a specific community which makes a group of persons an apostolic community, rather it is the charism-mission lived together in a particular apostolate. What unites the members of a community in an apostolic fraternal life is the desire to fulfil the plan of the common mission.¹³⁸

Fidelity to this charism and the apostolic project determines the way in which the community life is organized, be that a formed house or a district from the Oblate perspective.¹³⁹

The consecrated life has always been a prophetic element in the life of the Church. It calls the people of God to their ultimate goal, and also presents a prophetic sign to those who seek purely worldly goals. The consecrated life also takes a prophetic stand towards the Church;¹⁴⁰ it has with Benedict, Francis of Assisi, Ignatius Loyola, Teresa of Avila, Vincent de Paul, and with many others.

¹³⁷ See *Instrumentum laboris*, pp. 69-72.

¹³⁸ *Instrumentum laboris*, p. 73.

¹³⁹ See *Instrumentum laboris*, p. 73.

¹⁴⁰ Which is a theological way of saying that, historically speaking, religious have been great instruments of reform within the Church, even when the main body of ecclesiastics have been reluctant to move.

The prophetic signs shown by the founders and reformers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are not as spectacular as the above, in that they are not universally associated with the names of charismatic individuals. Nevertheless, the end result of nearly two centuries of prophetic development is a form of consecrated life which is profoundly new. One of those 'minor prophets,' so to speak, was Bishop Séméria, who, in putting forward the concept of districts as a means of supporting the *vita fraterna* and assisting the mission, planted a seed that would bear much fruit later.

4.6.2.3. *Vita Consecrata*¹⁴¹

This apostolic exhortation was issued by John Paul II on March 25, 1996, and is based on the deliberations of the Synod.¹⁴² In this document, religious are called upon to be faithful to their founding charism and the "subsequent spiritual heritage of each Institute."¹⁴³ Institutes are encouraged to, once again, show the initiative, daring and creative ideas characteristic of their early years. This is not only a call to perseverance and to their apostolate, but it is also a call to "develop a dynamic fidelity to their mission, adapting forms, if need be, to new situations and different needs in complete openness to God's inspiration and to the Church's discernment."¹⁴⁴

The pope repeats the theme from the previous two documents for this Synod that the *vita fraterna* is a constituent element in the consecrated life, but its embodiment in the common life has numerous acceptable traditions in the various institutes of the consecrated life. The life in community is where the Spirit speaks to one, and through one to many. Community life is not simply the place where the apostolate occurs but it is the place where we come face to face with God. It is there, together, that forgiveness, happiness, and love are achieved. It is a precious time, a time of mutual

¹⁴¹ JOHN PAUL II, Adhortatio Apostolica Post-Synodalis *Vita Consecrata*, in AAS 88 (1996), pp. 377-486. English translation: Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: *Vita Consecrata* (=VC), [Vatican City, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996].

¹⁴² See VC, p. 201.

¹⁴³ VC, p. 61.

¹⁴⁴ VC, p. 63.

support,¹⁴⁵ and one which must be treasured.¹⁴⁶ It is so much the more so when, by the nature of the apostolate and the numbers of the members, such a gathering/sharing can only take place on occasion. Districts then, for Oblates, must be an instrument to create community in a difficult situation, not an excuse to flee community.¹⁴⁷

Institutes should grow in their specific tradition and have a rightful autonomy which is theirs. It is a duty of the local ordinaries to esteem these and to give them a place in the pastoral plans of the diocese.¹⁴⁸ If there is no incompatibility, it is the sound tradition of the institute that must be preserved.

The document calls for a discernment of the signs of the times. Based on this, the community would take upon itself legitimate aspects of the prevailing culture of the place according to the charism of the institute. By this, the institute opens itself to the challenges of the Gospel and of the times.¹⁴⁹

4.6.2.4. Synod Conclusion

Far from putting a restraining clamp on notions such as district communities, the Synod, without ever mentioning them by name, encouraged innovative ideas inasmuch as they would lead to the enhancement of the mission and the *vita fraterna*, and as long as its implementation was open

¹⁴⁵ See M. ZAGO, "Vita Consecrata and the Oblates," in *OMI Documentation*, 214 (1997), p. 15.

¹⁴⁶ See VC, pp. 70-73.

¹⁴⁷ The Holy See has expressed this fear in at least four modern documents, referring to the dangers of religious living alone. See Paul VI, *Evangelica Testificatio*, no. 40-41, in AAS, 63 (1971), pp. 518-519; *Informationes*, 1 (1975), pp. 147-152; SCRIS, "Religious Living Alone in Apartments," 1977, private, in *Informationes*, 3 (1977), pp. 207-212, English translation in *Canon Law Digest*, vol. 9, pp. 446-452. The most recent document on the subject is CIVCSVA, *Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor*, in *Informationes*, 2 (1994), English translation in *Origins*, 23 (1994), pp. 693-712.

¹⁴⁸ See VC, p. 83.

¹⁴⁹ See VC, pp. 147-148.

to the discernment of the Church.

4.6.3. Regional and Provincial Directories: Administration of Temporal Goods

During this same period, a general administrative directory was promulgated for the Oblates, as required by the Rule (R. 154).¹⁵⁰ Following this, regional and provincial directories began to appear and they all had to address the existence of active apostolic communities which were district-based rather than house-based. The Canadian Region drew up such a directory. It was written by the Oblate Conference of Canada—Treasurers and was approved by the Oblate Conference of Canada (OCC) in the autumn of 1995.¹⁵¹ This is an excellent document and gives clear and concise guidelines to the local superior and his council and treasurer. It is equally applicable to residential and district local communities. However, it is only a guideline and has no legal effect in any province unless it is so adapted and adopted. Provincial treasurers are acting out of this document, but district communities who do not have a specific mandate are finding it problematic to do likewise, especially where it has not been adapted to, and adopted by, individual provinces.

4.6.4. Districts: ‘The Wheat and the Chaff’

Over time and as the notion of district communities became familiar as a living reality rather than as a word seen in provincial personnels, the concept and praxis of district communities quite properly became subject to a more critical analysis. Clyde Rausch, of the United States Central Province,¹⁵² raised some interesting questions in his article, “District Communities: Separating the

¹⁵⁰ CC&RR 1982/87, R. 154.

¹⁵¹ OBLATE CANADIAN CONFERENCE, *Regional Directory: Administration of Temporal Goods*, 1995, private printing.

¹⁵² This Province has been divided into districts from the outset and still is. In 1921 the Oblates in the North Central United States, mostly of German origin, were placed under the jurisdiction of the Manitoba Province, Canada, which formed them into a district with its centre at Fletcher, Minnesota. In 1924, the area was raised to the status of a Vice-Province and in 1953, to that of a Province. See D. LEVASSEUR, *Toward a Synthesis*, vol. 2, pp. 219-224, 393-396.

Wheat from the Chaff.”¹⁵³

4.6.4.1. Origin and Evolution

The author, basing himself on the foundation date of the 1928 Rule as proposed by Santucci, traces the evolution of districts in his own province. He notes the difference over the past 20 years. He perceives district communities becoming institutionalized as a local governmental structure. This thesis finds the genesis much further back than either he or Santucci suggest, its presence in the 1910 Rule being its introduction to Oblate proper law. Be that as it may, Rausch is quite correct in asking whether or not all of the problems and tensions have been solved by this structure or are there still Oblates living on the fringe? His answer is that there are still many who are living in the periphery, but they are of two types: those who want to live there no matter how close to other Oblates they are, and those who are assigned to isolated posts with no chance of regular contact with other Oblates.

For these men, it is either emotionally or physically impossible for them to be to be active in a district. With these limitations there is no value in simply listing them in a district community, and it does a disservice to the structure to include these men and have them looked upon by outsiders as active members of a district. There are limits to what any structure can do, and for those who are close enough for regular meetings and communication, the district does offer a real *vita fraterna* that was not available to them before the district structure was available.¹⁵⁴ For those who can not or will not, the provincial must handle the situation realistically, not bury it in a personnel.

4.6.4.2. Rausch's Critical Overview

Rausch sees the districts, which he has experienced in the Scandinavian Delegation, as units of government but not as true communities because of the vast distances between members. In his

¹⁵³ C. RAUSCH, "District Communities: Separating the Wheat from the Chaff," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 54 (1995), pp. 237-244. Since the writing of that article, the Vice-Province of Scandinavia has been established, combining the previous Delegation of Scandinavia (Central US Province) and the Delegation Polonaise de Scandinavie (Province of Poland). Clyde Rausch was appointed the first provincial.

¹⁵⁴ See RAUSCH, "Wheat from the Chaff," pp. 237-240.

opinion, there is not enough personal interaction to lead to the forming of a true community in these areas. He sees these districts as sort of micro-provinces, because of the distances involved. In these cases, the "coming together" is based on a shared accountability for mission, rather than as a exercise in community-building of the *vita fraterna* type.

In this unique situation, the district superior is more like a delegation superior than a local superior, and the powers and responsibilities of the provincial in such situations is severely limited because of distance or, at least, it is delegated to someone on the scene. For Rausch, whatever these entities are, they are not local communities. An Oblate region could well have, in his opinion, many more micro-provinces than a lesser number of large provinces.¹⁵⁶

4.6.4.3. Analysis

Basing oneself on the geographic spread of the Scandinavian Delegation¹⁵⁶ as he does, his criticisms have validity. There must be a limit to the size of a district so that it is possible for it to have regular and normal lines of communication among its members. This is nothing new for a local community; it was the decision that de Mazenod, under different circumstances, had to face many times.

The structures and the hierarchical functions of each and every district must be such that it is a true 'local community,' not a micro-province masquerading under the name of district. To do that does violence to the concept of district as local community, and subverts the principle of subsidiarity. Such is the case when Rausch describes the situation where a district superior has practical control over local residences, though he admits never in a way foreseen by canon law or the Oblate Constitutions and Rules.¹⁵⁷ Aberrations such as these must be eliminated or the district system will

¹⁵⁶ See RAUSCH, "Wheat from the Chaff," pp. 240-244.

¹⁵⁶ At its greatest extent the delegation contained four districts: Greenland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The district superiors made up the council of the delegation superior.

¹⁵⁷ See RAUSCH, "Wheat from the Chaff," p. 241.

begin to break down.¹⁵⁸

4.6.4.4. Rausch's Contribution

Rausch's conclusions may not be the same as this thesis, but his major contribution to the development of the concept of districts was in being the first to openly challenge the assumption that this structure is the answer to all the Congregation's problems; it is not. To consider districts as a panacea for all of the ills of contemporary religious life in areas of small and individual apostolates is just as wrong as saying that the only solution is to return to the era of large institutions.

4.7. Chapter Summary

The 1972 and 1974 General Chapters continued to refine the renewed structures and reemphasize the importance of the apostolic community. That which would increase its viability was to be encouraged. Subsidiarity was emphasized and the provinces were urged to place more responsibility in the hands of local superiors, both house and district.

In their revision process, the Oblates were intentionally on a parallel track to that of the Canon Law Commission of the Holy See. The revised Code would not do away with the notion of canonical houses, but neither would it forbid such notions as that of districts and district superiors.

The 1983 Code eliminated many of the details concerning local communities which had been contained in the previous Code. It invoked the principle of subsidiarity in order to place responsibility for variations in such matters with the proper law of each institute. It did this by distinguishing between two types of houses (*domus*): one constituted and open to variations, and one established with juridical personality. This was an unsatisfactory verbal distinction and one which

¹⁵⁸ In a private letter from an Oblate in another missionary country, the development of an overly strong 'district' structure in one province is recounted, though at one point the names of the local communities were changed and the geographical subdivisions were called 'regions' not districts, and the Oblates in those 'regions' were called the 'equipos.' 'Regions' elected coordinators who became the provincial council. Decentralization was taken to an extreme and decisions as to membership and apostolate were made at the 'regional,' i.e. local, level. The provincial and council proposed; the 'region' decided. With the coordinator, not superior, to facilitate the process, the 'equipos' of each 'region' democratically came to a decision in assembly. Other factors led to its decline and that system is no longer in place. However, it was an interesting if unconventional experiment and, if nothing else, showed that any system can be taken to the extreme.

would be taken up and repeated later in the proposed changes to the Constitutions and Rules circulated in 1996.

In the 1980 and 1986 General Chapters, the text of what was to become the 1982/87 edition of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules was passed. The Constitutions were approved by the Holy See and districts and district superiors not only remained, they were listed as one of the primary vehicles for the local apostolic community. As districts became more widespread, articles began to appear in Oblate literature constructively criticizing the notions of districts and district superiors and calling for deeper study and more precision in application.

While leading up to the 1992 General Chapter, the general administration undertook the first tentative survey of the 'health' of specific district communities. Based on this, among other things, the 1992 General Chapter, noting that one quarter of the congregation lived in districts, reemphasized their importance. They mandated a post- capitular committee tasked with drawing up proposals for a new 'administrative structures' section of the Constitutions and Rules and instructed them to look closely at the structure and application of the local apostolic community.

In the intervening years, the Synod of Bishops met and studied the consecrated life and its role in the Church and in the world. Not that districts were mentioned by name, but the Synod did note that the distinctive characteristics of the common life proper to each institute were part of their legitimate tradition, which the Church is pledged to preserve. During the same period, regional and provincial directories began to appear among the Oblates, and they had to address the existence of active apostolic communities which were district-based rather than house-based. The success of these varied greatly. The next step in the constitutional renewal process was to prepare for the 1998 General Chapter by preparing a document, with updated administrative structures, for presentation. With proper 'homework,' these proposals would already have the overall general support of the major superiors and membership within the Congregation. Part of that 'homework' was the preparation, completion, and analysis of a questionnaire on the current status of districts and their superiors in the Oblate Regions of Canada and the United States of America. This questionnaire will be the subject of Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

A 1994 SURVEY OF DISTRICTS IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES: GENERAL, PROVINCIAL, AND LOCAL VIEWPOINTS

5.1. The Questionnaires

5.1.1. The Preparation of the Instrument

During the period in which the topic for this thesis was being researched, it became evident that the theory and the practice of district communities and district superiors, at least in North America, were often far apart. It was felt that, while library and archival work would accomplish the necessary research on the situation in the past and what was called for in theory, only a contemporary questionnaire would be able to discover the present-day situation in the Canadian and United States Regions with reference to their districts and district superiors. These two regions were both dropping in membership and looking towards consolidation, sooner rather than later. All but one province¹ involved was able to use English as a working language, and the one French-speaking province involved was just in the process of setting up districts, therefore only their two major superiors would be receiving a French questionnaire.²

In early 1994 the questionnaire was drawn up³ with the intention of finding out how districts were viewed in theory and how they were working in reality. By that spring three basically similar questionnaires had been drawn up, tested on volunteers, adjusted, and were ready to be sent out to

¹ No distinction was made at any place in this process between provinces and vice-provinces.

² A second French-speaking province, St-Joseph, held a preliminary meeting on January 15, 1997, to study the feasibility of establishing a district in the north-west sector (which they refer to as a 'region'), of the Province. This was too late to be included in any study for this thesis. See PROVINCE SAINT-JOSEPH, *Fax OMI*, no. 7, January 30, 1997.

³ In this process, the guidance of Professor Gordon Irving, Ph.D., of Carleton University and Professor Gilles Fortin, Ph.D., of Saint Paul University, was very much appreciated. The French translation of the questionnaire was prepared by Jacques Croteau, o.m.i., Ph.D., former Dean of Philosophy of Saint Paul University.

the three Oblate groups to be surveyed, who were:

- the members of the past and present general administrations,
- past and present provincial major superiors⁴ in Canada and the United States whose 10⁵ provinces had, or planned on having, districts in the immediate future,⁶
- past and present local district superiors in those same two regions.⁷

5.1.2. The Distribution and the Returns

In June, 1994, 115 questionnaires⁸ were mailed out. Over the next eight months the results came back and were as follows:

- general administration: 22 sent out, 17 replied, average returned 77%;
- provincials/vicars: 27 sent out, 23 replied, average returned 81.8%;
- district superiors: 66 sent out, 39 replied, average returned 59%;
- totals: 115 sent out, 79 replied, overall average returned 68.9%.

In their computerized and collated form, that is, with the question expressed just once for each group, the answers and comments total 183 pages, of which this thesis will present a

⁴ Both provincials and vicar-provincials were contacted.

⁶ "The general rule governing APA style on the use of numbers, is to use figures to express numbers 10 and above and words to express numbers below 10." AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 4th ed., Washington, DC, 1994, p. 99. The rules and exceptions as contained in this manual, pp. 99-115, are followed throughout this chapter.

⁷ Involved were the following provinces and vice-provinces:

Canada: N.D.-du-Rosaire, St. Peter's, Assumption, Manitoba, St. Mary's,
Grandin, St. Paul's;
United States of America: Southern, Central, Western.

⁸ Every provincial involved was contacted to ensure that the structure of his province matched the parameters of this thesis, and to obtain an accurate list of the names of all his current district superiors as well as former ones whom he considered worthwhile to contact. Besides these, any former district superiors personally known to the author were added to the list.

⁹ The questionnaires were, on average, 15 pages in length, and contained blank spaces for the entry of written replies and explanations. Those prepared for the general administration and provincials/vicars contained 34 questions; those for the local superiors contained 30 questions. In all three questionnaires, nearly half of the questions were subdivided. Appendix 10 is a copy of the questionnaire, noting those parts specific to the two senior levels of government, or to the district superiors, and omitting the spaces left for written replies.

representative and significant portion, but still only a small portion.

5.1.2.1. Return-Rate Significance

In the field of social-science surveys, the percentage of questionnaires returned has significance in itself.⁹ The average return, in North America, between the 1950's and 1979 has dropped from 80% to 60%,¹⁰ and there is no evidence that the trend has reversed. It is "confirmed that for surveys conducted by an academic organization, ...there have been substantial increases in refusal rates since the early 1950's."¹¹

By all standards the return-rate in this questionnaire is more than sufficient to make it possible to draw conclusions from the results.

The non-responses, while not invalidating the overall results, were concentrated in the group of local superiors,¹² rather than in the provincial¹³ or general¹⁴ level groups. This also is significant in itself.¹⁵ This might lead one to conclude that the subject matter is more important to those in the higher levels of government rather than to those in the lower.

⁹ See A. BLAIS, "Le sondage," in *Recherche Sociale: De la problématique à la collecte des données*, 2nd ed., Sainte-Foy, Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1992, pp. 361-398.

¹⁰ See C. STEEH, "Trends in Nonresponsive Rates, 1952-1979," in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 45 (Spring 1981), pp. 40-58.

¹¹ STEEH, "Trends," p. 55.

¹² A 41% non-response.

¹³ A 18.2% non-response.

¹⁴ A 23% non-response.

¹⁵ See D. FOLZ, *Survey Research for Public Administration*, Thousand Oakes, California, Sage Publications Inc., 1996, p. 39.

5.2. Survey Results¹⁶

5.2.1.¹⁷ General Information (Question number 1 [= Q1]¹⁸)

Only 11.76% of the general administration, and 34.78% of the provincials/vicars, had ever been district superiors. All of those who replied to the district superior's questionnaire were holding, or had held, that office; 10.52% of them had been provincials as well.

Of the 79 districts covered in the replies,¹⁹ 15.18% were described as in a mission territory, 15.18% as rural, 17.72% as urban and 51.89% as mixed urban and rural.

One district of six members answered the questionnaire as a district endeavour. Their answers were statistically counted as one person's, the superior's, but the one answer sheet actually contains many responses which deserve more study and weight than can be given here.

5.2.2. District Membership²⁰ (Q2)

The actual number of Oblate members per district surveyed varied from 3 to 30 with an average being 10.

Eighty-three percent of the members of the general administration and the provincials²¹ felt that a district should ideally have between 5 and 20 members.²² No one on the general administration agreed with a lower number, but 17% of provincials did; one provincial felt that four would be sufficient, three agreed with three members. Of the 13% who would admit larger numbers of

¹⁶ Quotations from, and references to, individual respondents' replies are not footnoted.

¹⁷ The numerals after the initial '5.2.' correspond to the number of the question as found in Appendix 10.

¹⁸ As found in Appendix 10.

¹⁹ These included those who were superiors and those whose provinces had districts; no attempt was made to delete repetitions. There was no way to ascertain accurately the number of respondents from each province as some did not note the name of their province. Therefore, for this question, the percentages given in the responses are informational rather than significant.

²⁰ The title of each section will usually be a précis of the question asked.

²¹ From this point on, the added 'vicar' will be omitted.

²² This second part of question 2, regarding the ideal number of members in a district, was not asked of the district superiors.

members, two of the general administration would set 25 as an upper limit, while one provincial would go as high as 35.

5.2.3. Particular Statutes (Q3)

Regarding the particular statutes required for districts,²³ overall, for the three levels of government combined, 30.13% reported having them, 21.91% did not have them and 47.94% did not know.

Of note was the response of the provincials: 52.38% did not know if their province had such statutes. In one province, the current and immediate past provincial said they had such statutes, one vicar agreed, two did not know, and one said they did. Of the seven superiors²⁴ from that same province who answered, four did not know, two said no, and only one said yes. The only possible conclusion is that the situation is confused.

5.2.4. Reason for the Introduction of Districts (Q4)

Although (for provinces that have had them for quite a while), some reasons were lost in the past, and sometimes districts were introduced because of pressure from the general administration, the overwhelming majority (90.9%), said they were introduced for the good of the local community: to revitalize it, to renew it, to recover it, to retain it, or to establish it.

5.2.5. Changes both since, and because of, the Second Vatican Council, the Contemporary General Chapters, and the CC&RR of 1982/87 (Q5)

All see differences, but it is unclear whether or not these can be attributed to one or other cause or not. It is also unclear what these changes actually are. That which is clear in the general chapter documents is not so clear in the lived reality.

The general administration sees an increase in the numbers living in district as an answer to

²³ Cf. *CC&RR 1982/87*, R. 86.

²⁴ This shorter term will ordinarily be used from now on in this chapter to indicate 'local district superior.'

the call for the establishment of apostolic communities.

- Instead of being an exception, the concept is becoming more and more the rule.²⁵
- Vatican II's emphasis on the 'People of God' ecclesiology and the enabling of people, underlines the concept of District. It is not only in the formation of the Oblates in the field, but also the way our parishes and other ministries function. Participation from the base is the essence. They know best the status/situation of the men and the mission. That is where life is happening. Decisions evolve from the base; they are modified accordingly by legitimate superiors with proper consultation.

However:

- Not much changes except for a few new roads and more frequent flights.
- Yes, in principle provincial councillors were no longer ipso facto superiors.
- In several provinces there is a provincial councillor for each district. The provincial counsellor [*sic*] of the district usually is the animator and responsible for the functioning of the district, even if the co-coordinator or chairman of the meeting rotates each time.
- Formerly, residences were attached to a house. The house superior had authority over all residences. Now, however, even when thirty or more Oblates live in the same house (e.g., retirement centre), it is canonically established and known as a 'district.'

Provincials saw little change. What was noted was the call to apostolic community and a movement away from traditional authority figures.

- New application did much to make Oblates, who lived alone because of ministry etc., feel a part of the province community and not referred to as 'lone wolves.'
- 'Living under *one* roof' was no longer the only acceptable model/norm and other forms of community living were acknowledged and validated (and started to be seen as even more authentic than residences/houses).
- I do not know if the changes were modern, but we tried to give to the superior not so much 'authority' in the legal meaning of the word, but 'moral authority': choosing the men who would care for the Oblates of their districts and giving them the means to do it. We insisted that in every meeting they had as a district there should be a part for prayer, a part for serious sharing and a part for community recreation. Those who put that in practice really succeeded in creating a community. This was especially for mission territory districts and rural area districts.

Half (50%), of the superiors see a change: first, away from old-style superiors, then through a nebulous period, where many feel stuck or even lost. However, some are now moving towards an empowerment of a non-authoritarian sort, but the connection with the Second Vatican Council is not always clear.

- As we began to appreciate more the value of encountering one another as missionaries with same goals, we developed an interest in meeting a little more often and a little longer

²⁵ Because of promised confidentiality, references to, and quotations from, individual responses are made without further specificity other than what is given in the accompanying text.

each time. Now, our meetings (a couple of them a year) can last as much as three or four days.

– The formation of districts has more to do with changes that came about with a renewed understanding of personal life, of community, of relative autonomy etc. This evolution would have taken place independently of Vatican II and General Chapters which belatedly caught on to what was happening in Church and society.

– I was ordained in 1970. I feel that we have become more collegial in decision making. Districts are an attempt at this.

– Before Vatican II it was clear what a superior was, what he was responsible for, etc. With district superiors it is much less clear, continues to evolve and depends on the unique needs of each district.

– YES – superiors in general, and especially district superiors, have become more 'animators' and less 'giver of permissions.'

– You see, nobody wanted to be district superior. So we had guest speakers, videos or films, new approaches to ministry, preparation of homily etc.

– Yes – the idea that a local superior is like an *animator* of his community.

– I don't know.

– Yes: district superiors were delegated areas of authority: replacement of cars: spending of community funds, within limits set by the province: permission for holidays. We become personally accountable to the district in some areas.

– NO.

– Now there is consultation in the district for the office of district superior. The office of district superior is now more of a pastoral ministry to the members – not so much for permission to purchase a car, etc.

– Yes. From consultor/superior to just the role of superior.

5.2.6. District Superior Evolving into a New Position (Q6)

The general administration was unanimous, 100%, in saying yes to the evolution of this office. There was no agreement on where it was going. While the majority saw him as a real superior, some saw more emphasis on the aspect of him as an animator.

– The office of district superior is focused on calling and facilitating district meetings. All other authority is vested in the provincial, or in others delegated by him, e.g., an area consultor of the provincial council.

– From a function of coordination to a function of real animation as a local superior.

– It is evolving from a structure where Oblates were functioning loosely on the district level, but still have direct access to the provincial, to a more 'autonomous' district [structure] where animation and decisions are taken by the men in the district itself, except those properly reserved to the provincial and his council. The running of the life of the district itself is mostly left to the district superior and his council. The programming of the meetings of the whole district determines much of the movement in the district level.

For the provincials, 89.48% saw the office becoming something new. Half who commented do not see the position as becoming stronger, while nearly as many see the opposite, that the application of subsidiarity is giving the position some strength. All say that they see it as a positive

factor in the life of apostolic communities, but disagree as to how.

- declining membership and mission/ministry demands are demanding an evolution: new community forms/expressions that support us in our life and ministry. Position is quite clear 'on paper,' in the directory; however, provincial leadership has been very slow in clarifying the role of district superior, in encouraging Oblates to relate to the district superior for community needs, and in supporting the district superior and the local level in its life and ministry.
- More authority-sharing and calling for more interdependence and subsidiarity.
- I see the district superior much more active re: organizing district events. I personally do NOT see any evolution in terms of real district decision-making. The district has made a difference in having us reflect on the findings of the [provincial] Gatherings.

The superiors do not agree with respect to the changes to the same extent as do their provincials. Superiors themselves see the position as in a state of flux (86.11%), and are not sure what it is becoming. A significant number (19.44%), foresee the encompassing of duties by the district superior which are presently performed in the field by a provincial consultor, while others (22.22%), see him as a flexible superior/animator. The majority (58.34%), give no clear indication of their thoughts regarding the position's inclination. One superior states, "At least for us younger ones, we see the word [superior] as demeaning of Oblate brotherhood. We are *all* equal."

One other superior says volumes about the office, and its function and importance in his province, in a short letter which he returned in place of a completed questionnaire.

I must briefly reply to your request of June 6, 1994. I have never been officially notified of my position as superior/animator of the Oblates of the District. I presume that it has been taken for granted when my predecessor passed away in 1992. Besides being in charge of the Oblate Residence here, my main work is to be in charge of the [---] of our diocese. The members of our District, 13 all together, are scattered throughout an immense territory, so it is very difficult to organize any meeting except when our Bishop calls for a special meeting of his own. Therefore I do not see how I would properly answer all the questions of your study.

5.2.7. A District is Run Like a House (Q7)

The majority (73.33%), of the general administration agrees as long as animation is the prime responsibility of both categories of local superiors. One who strongly agrees says, "We share our life very much at the district level: praying, reflecting, relaxing, supporting each other." While, strongly disagreeing at the other end of the spectrum, another says, "The human contacts are rare. The district superior has little if any opportunity to animate his confreres or to guide them in their personal life

or ministry, or to grant permissions regarding poverty, travel, etc.”

On the other hand, provincials, for the most part, disagree (71.42%). They point out that the house superior has to spend a great deal of his time dealing with household matters; a district superior lets each residence look after itself in day-to-day matters. Most who agree nuance their reply.

– I see dynamics to be a very similar, with the understanding that the district superior is not involved with the day-to-day community life of his members. As far as I’m concerned, the word ‘run’ is not the word to be used; the word ‘animate’ would be preferable. I think that the basic principle guiding the one responsible for the community should be about the same, whether it’s a local house or district. Today it’s not so much a matter of autocratic authority that decides everything and gives orders to subordinates; it’s much more a confrere who animates his brothers to come to making decisions together along the line of collegiality, dialogue, and co-responsibility.

– The superior today is much less into the dictating of rules of conduct, than in searching, along with his brothers, for the preferred orientation to be taken. In my view the subjects have less orders to receive and more discerning to do together with the one responsible as to what the will of God is for each one and for the whole community.

– I believe this ought to be the case – possibly on every level except the physical operation of a residence, but it’s not the present reality. The Provincial tends to run the Province as one large local community; individual Oblates can pretty well by-pass the local superior, for everything and relate directly to the Provincial.

– Men aren’t used to this or perhaps they aren’t ready to accept this yet.

Superiors overwhelmingly disagreed (85.71%). A looser structure in districts and the lack of responsibility for the upkeep of the residences make the two jobs distinct.

The differences are not as deep as may appear, because many point out that communication and the human contact is primary for both types of superior.

Pro:

– [I strongly agree because] a community lives, works, and prays together *and* decides together.

– For the most part the roles are the same: foster community, call the community together, conduct business, pray together, etc. It is different in the sense that the contact is not as regular, and so the direction may not be as concise or consistent.

Con:

– [I disagree because] involvement in the practical running of a particular house community entails decisions made in [the] district [after] consultation with members. District superiors do not involve themselves in the practical running of houses. Each individual residence needs to be the responsibility of the members in that residence.

– First, he does not run anything; rather he runs with the rest of the pack, and he is to bring in a sense of fellowship and unity by providing opportunities to come together and share their experiences in life and in ministry. It is a very hidden and discreet presence as servant of the community.

5.2.8. Nominal District Superiors: Members Should Relate to the Provincial (Q8)

In the general administration, 26.66% agree that such is the relationship now but only 13.33% agree that this is the way it should be, while 20% did not know. Most (73.33%), believe that subsidiarity calls for a less centralized system than was previously the case.

Of provincials, 23.8% agree that such is the way that it is, and that it should be so; 71.44% disagree, while 4.76% did not know. The same reasons are given as above, i.e., the proper use of subsidiarity.

Among the superiors, 30.55% state that their positions are nominal, but only 11.11% agree that it should be so. The vast majority (91.66%), see their position as one which must have a base in reality if community life is to exist at the grass roots; clarification is called for.

- There is a shift in attitude taking place, where the local superior is seen as the one to be referred to, rather than the Provincial. The Provincial reinforces this by referring matters back to the local superior and making it known that the local superior is the one with whom they should be dealing.
- The life of the Province resides in the vitality of the local community: decision-making needs to be done by adults in a dialogical and open setting.... It seems that the local community is the appropriate place for these issues to be discussed, NOT by running to the Provincial.
- By giving more responsibility to the District Superior, you are binding the men closer together to exercise their apostolic mission and feel support from a fraternal bond, otherwise you would have a number of individuals under one Provincial, without co-ordination or collaboration among themselves.

A lack of clarity regarding the authority given to the superior is seen as a factor in thwarting the implementation of this subsidiarity.

- 'Nominal' roles of local superiors that seem limited to organizing social gatherings every few months tend to 'water down' the superior-role and could have the effect of transferring all significant decision-making power to the centre ...all of which weakens subsidiarity.
- This [nominal role] is not surprising since the duties of the district superior have never been defined.²⁶

²⁶ To a canonist, this statement and the quotes supporting it are incorrect: the district superior's authority comes from the law which creates the office. What this survey underlines, here and elsewhere, is that, to a non-canonist, the law itself is not sufficient. The district superior's authority must be put down in black and white in provincial directories, district statutes, in letters of appointment, and through a suitable installation ceremony. The authority must be known and acknowledged by both superior and members before it can be successfully utilized to the betterment of local community life.

5.2.9. District Superiors are Merely Nominal: Because Members Relate to the Provincial (Q9)

Most (73.33%), in the general administration disagree that it is so. Where district superiors are seen to be merely nominal, the reason given by the general administration is the presence of a strong individualism, which weakens the local community. At the same time, the provincial is not thinking in terms of subsidiarity.

Of provincials, 38.09% agree while 61.9% disagree. Of the superiors 27.77% agree and 72.22% disagree. Comments among superiors varied from one extreme to another.

Pro:

– I strongly agree. This is simply the case. The provincial in return, does not pursue any direct dialogue with the superiors, as superiors. There really does not seem to be any role for the superior except as animator.

Con:

– I strongly disagree. In my province they don't [relate to the provincial] unless they are asking for a new posting or if they are dealing with legal matters.

There was a general call for each level of authority to respect the bounds of the others and to seriously implement subsidiarity, even when those bounds could not be agreed upon.

5.2.10. How Successful Are Districts in Different Areas? (Q10)

The general administration feels that districts work fairly well in small communities in a large area (86.66%), in urban areas (80%), and in mixed urban and rural areas (66.66%). In all areas, attitude is the key. "If community is wanted, members will make it come about."

Provincials agreed (76.19%), with the above divisions. Emphasis was put on the qualifications and commitment of the superior.

Superiors were not so convinced that the system is working well. In small scattered communities in a large area, 58.33% felt it worked and 41.66% did not. In urban areas, 64.28% thought it worked, while 35.71% did not. In a mixed rural and urban area, 63.33% thought it worked while 36.66% did not. Comments can best be summed up as, "as always, very much depends on the

personnel and their vision of Oblate community life. Do they see community and sharing as 'value'?"

5.2.11. How Does a District Community Improve the Local Situation? (Q11)

5.2.11.1. Small Residences Now Part of Larger Community (Q11.1)

It was almost identical in the three groups. Of the general administration, 83.33% agreed and 16.67% disagreed; of provincials, 85% agreed while 15% did not; of superiors, 85.29% agreed and 14.71% did not.

5.2.11.2. Reintegration of Solitary Apostolates (Q11.2)

In the general administration, 86.66% agreed and 13.34% disagreed; of provincials, 84.21% agreed and 15.79% disagreed; of superiors, 88.57% agreed and 11.43% disagreed.

5.2.11.3. All Are Helped by Having a Local Superior (Q11.3)

In the general administration, 86.66% agreed and 13.34% disagreed; of provincials, 90.47% agreed and 9.53% disagreed. However, of superiors, only 57.77% agreed while 42.43% disagreed, including the only two who disagreed 'strongly' with any part of question 11. Comments of superiors included.

- One wonders about the relevance of the office of local superior.
- Individualism seems to be the prevailing philosophy everywhere now.

5.2.11.4. Other Reasons for District Communities? (Q11.4)

The most common reason mentioned was to improve the life of the individual Oblate. Every group spoke at least once of this being the only possible way of establishing a viable local community in a geographically large, even immense, area.

General administration:

– Things happen when Oblates come together with open minds. Even those with reservations eventually see the importance of a support group. Decisions are quicker, especially when the provincial is out. Communal and corporate discernment. Help is readily available within a district, like rehabilitating one another when the need arises.

Provincials:

– Possibly taken for granted in the above, but a new district helps an Oblate remember that he *is* an Oblate and belongs to a group which is essentially supportive – perhaps even affirming.

Superiors:

– Another reason for district meetings is simply to share life's joys and frustrations with your fellow Oblates. Rome is certainly not helping us in that she doesn't seem to care what is happening on the front lines. The district has become for me, and others, a support group.

5.2.12. Reasons for Non-Improvement of Community in Districts (Q12)**5.2.12.1. No Commitment of Members to Build Community (Q12.1)**

This was unanimously (100%), agreed upon among the members of the general administration, while 80% of provincials and 77.77% of superiors agreed.

5.2.12.2. Appearance Is All That Is Desired (Q12.2)

Of the general administration, 64.28% agreed with this and 35.72% did not. Provincials disagreed by a margin of 65% to 35%. Superiors also disagreed by a margin of 65.72% to 34.28%.

5.2.12.3. It Legitimizes Lone-Wolf Apostolates (Q12.3)

The general administration agreed by a margin of 69.23% to 30.77%. Provincials disagreed by the slight margin of 57.15% to 42.85%. Superiors rejected this reason by a wide margin of 79.41% to 20.59%.

As a comment on the above three questions, although none was asked for, one provincial notes,

– The further I get into this questionnaire, the more I wonder what my responses would be if part of my experience of District Communities would include the experience of local

levels being challenged to work out all details related to our vowed life and the operational dimensions of our ministry!!!

5.2.12.4. Other Reasons for a Lack of Improvement (Q12.4)

Another reason which surfaced in all groups was poor leadership and leadership formation (provincial and local), in such a situation. For example:

- Lack of support from the provincial. If the provincial doesn't see himself as a member of the district within which he lives, and make an effort to be at the meetings, how can we expect members to interest themselves in district gatherings?

Also mentioned three times, were financial and "time away from the apostolate" worries, about what will the bishop think, the time and travel (including money), expended on district meetings. Many reasons were extremely personal and underlined a healing which is sought after.

- Some members may have been immobilized through past hurt/wounds inflicted in community, mostly through administration.
- Lack of desire to want authentic community.
- Fear of conflict, change, confrontation, security, obstinacy, or culture.
- General fatigue with the old expressions of religious life.
- Lack of interest and commitment, along with lack of time to get together.
- A feeling that we have lost our original vocation; and we have yet to find our new vocation in the changed social and cultural context.
- The clear identity of the Oblate missionary and educator is gradually getting blurred, and less and less recognizable.
- Acceptance of the secular culture with its emphasis on independence and individualism.
- Distances and 'busyness,' as mentioned above, hinder closer contact. Coming together as a district must also become a priority; busyness can be used as an excuse. Sometimes one finds more meaningful support in other associations. A support group which has been part of "Priests Ministry to Priests" program has given me support and a sense of belonging.
- Lack of knowledge or understanding or even acceptance of the new CC&RR and of the notion of apostolic community and what it entails.

5.2.13. Based on Experience, a District Superior, *Under the Provincial*, Has the Following Within His District (Q13):

5.2.13.1. Active and Effective Input Into the Apostolate and Vision (Q13.1)

To this 92.85% of the general administration agreed and 7.15% did not; with the provincials, 90.47% agreed and 9.53% did not. Among the superiors only 69.44% agreed, while 30.56% disagreed. As answers to this question were explicitly based on experience, as well as viewpoint, it is apparent that a significant number in the junior level of government are not receiving the message

which the senior levels indicate they are sending.

5.2.13.2. Appropriate Input into the Spiritual Life (Q13.2)

Regarding this, the general administration agreed by 86.66% to 13.34%; the provincials agreed by 90.47% to 9.53%. Superiors agreed by 72.22% to 27.78%. Any lack of enthusiasm here on the local level could be negatively felt in the life of the district as an 'apostolic community,' the importance of which has been a continuous message of the leadership since the time of Hanley, if not Deschâtelets, and, under the more traditional name, 'local community,' to de Mazenod.

5.2.13.3. Appropriate and Effective Input into the Financial Affairs of the Membership (Q13.3)

Here the general administration agreed by 71.42% to 28.58%; provincials agreed by 66.66% to 33.34%; however, superiors, for their part, disagreed by the significant margin of 80% to 20%. It would seem that the district, as a local community which holds its goods in common, is not a value held or practiced on the local level.

5.2.13.4. Active Role in Problem-Solving (Q13.4)

The general administration agreed by a margin of 85.71% to 14.29%. The provincials agreed by 80.95% to 19.05%. Superiors for their part, agreed by 70.27% to 29.73%. For some, this traditional role of the superior as problem-solver/trouble-shooter is not very important.

5.2.13.5. Primary Responsibility for the Health (Spiritual Physical and Mental) of the Members (Q13.5)

The general administration agreed by 80% to 20%. The provincials agreed by 57.14% to 42.86%. Superiors agreed only by a margin of 57.89% to 42.11%. This responsibility, under the provincial, has been a major part of the mandate of the district superior since the first regulations were drawn up by Séméria.

5.2.13.6. Active Role in the Ongoing Formation of Members (Q13.6)

Here the general administration agreed 86.66% to 13.34%. The provincials agreed 76.19% to 23.81%. Superiors agreed by a smaller margin, 60% to 40%. Ongoing formation is closely linked to both health matters and ministerial/apostolic updating, yet is not seen as a proper area for their concern by a significant number of the local superiors.

5.2.13.6.1. Examples of Appropriate Areas of Local Input in the Above Are: (Q 13.6.1)

Here the general administration noted nothing out of the ordinary. The main responsibility was to help in all possible ways to create and foster community among the members. The provincials agree with this, three of them noting that making the district superiors aware of the scope of their responsibilities has sometimes been neglected in the past. District superiors, for the most part, agreed with the above, with added emphasis on the local vision aspect. However, opposing viewpoints are expressed by the district superiors as:

- It's not the responsibility of one person. It's our responsibility.
- Problem-solving is left to the provincial and consultant [*sic*]. The district superior doesn't have much input. There is confusion between the roles of consultant and district superior.
- Advisory, perhaps; this is done at the Provincial level.
- At the present level of empowerment there is very little confidential information passed on to the district superior. I feel his input is very limited in the health (spiritual, physical, mental), area.

5.2.13.6.2. Examples of Inappropriate Areas of Local Input in the Above Are: (Q 13.6.2)

The general administration simply points to areas which are by law and custom the responsibility of the senior levels of government, with a general warning against interference and a controlling attitude. Provincials agree with this, and place great emphasis on inappropriate *style* rather than inappropriate areas. Superiors are in agreement, emphasizing the inappropriateness of certain interfering, controlling, or 'nosey' styles.

It is noteworthy that superiors, who come from what they consider highly or overly-centralized provinces, mention that for them to touch the areas of finances, ongoing formation,

health, apostolate, decision-making, etc., is out-of-bounds.

5.2.13.6.3. *Besides the Above, Appropriate Areas of Local Input Are: (Q13.6.3)*

The general administration replies suggest that anything that assists and supports the individual and the local community ministry should have the benefit of the superior's input. One makes the suggestion that,

The provincial should support superiors and clearly authorize them to take decisions in all the appropriate areas, otherwise the superiors are 'kneecapped' by the provincial administration as it centralizes decision-making more and more.

Provincials agree with the idea that anything which raises the morale and effectiveness of the membership is appropriate, even if not explicitly mandated. The overall vision of the province and its implementation in the district is mentioned by four. One provincial notes that a shared responsibility in his province is liaison with the local bishop, noting that in his discussions with the local ordinary, the district superior is present and involved.

District superiors, as with the others, believe that visioning and all aspects of the life of the members offer appropriate areas of input, as long as there is respect for the proper bounds regarding the authority of the provincial and the privacy of the individual. Liaison with the bishop is mentioned by one, as is input into personnel moves which will affect the district community. Visiting the members and 'celebrating our Oblate life' are mentioned by two. One superior returns to his theme of doing away with the office by saying that the responsibilities should be assumed by the provincial councillor.

5.2.13a.²⁷ Provincials Must Share Authority With Superiors for Districts to Function Successfully (Q13a)

The general administration agreed 100%, while the provincials agreed 95%. The overall answers to the questionnaire indicate that in many cases this has not been implemented, at least not

²⁷ Sections 5.2.13a. (Q13a), 5.2.13b. (Q13b), and 5.2.13c. (Q13c), were given only to the general administration and provincials.

from the superiors' perspective.

5.2.13b As Part of the Governing Structure of the Province, the District Superior Has a Right to Input into the Visioning of the Province (Q13b)

The general administration agreed 100%, but the provincials only agreed 90.47%. One provincial strongly disagreed with the statement.

5.2.13c. Depending on Local Needs, Qualities in a District Superior Will Vary (Q13c)

The general administration agreed 86.66%, and the provincials likewise by 85.71%.

In their comments on the three questions above (13a, 13b, 13c), those in the general administration noted that the district superiors have a real place in the governmental structures, and what is required for distance travelling would be the only differentiating characteristic. The only problem foreseen is, "where there are no structures in place for dialogue and communication between superiors and the provincial administration."

Provincials, in their comments, generally agree with the above. Provincials are quite aware that each district must have an appropriate superior chosen for it, depending on such items as apostolates, age of the membership, size of the area, etc. They also say that the basic qualities of a good superior are the same in districts and houses; the incidentals may differ.

5.2.14. Is an Active District Superior, at This Time, an Unnecessary Level of Authority Between the Member and the Provincial? (Q14)

The general administration answered in the negative 100% to this question. Provincials answered 80.85% in the negative while, on the other hand, a very significant 19.05% answered that district superiors were an unnecessary level of authority.

District superiors disagreed also by a margin of 83.33% to 16.67%. Although no comments were asked for, three superiors volunteered the following:

- It should not, but in reality this happens.
- [Superiors, not needed.] although there may be a need for 'social coordinators' or some form of 'liaison officer' at local levels for those who are geographically or otherwise isolated.

– If one defines authority in narrow terms of giving permissions, then a district superior is a non-authoritative, superfluous official. But if 'authority' is taken in the original sense of promoting and fostering growth, then such an intermediate level of authority can be very helpful.

5.2.15. The District Can Be an Excellent Way of Monitoring the Spiritual, Physical and Mental Health of its Members (Q15)

Once again, 100% of the general administration agreed with this statement; 85.71% of provincials agreed, while 14.29% disagreed. Superiors agreed 83.33% to 16.67%. The advantage most pointed out was that those in the district were closer to the concrete situation and would be aware of problems before the provincial would be.

5.2.16. If All Members of the Districts Deal Directly with the Provincial on all Oblate Matters, Power is too Centralized and Subsidiarity is Ignored (Q16)

In this matter, 93.33% of the general administration agree that such a *modus operandi* over-centralizes power and ignores subsidiarity. Provincials divided their answers as follows: 70% of them agree that it would centralize power too much and ignore subsidiarity, and 30% do not. Superiors agree by a greater margin, 86.11% to 13.89%. Those who agree show a good understanding of the principle of subsidiarity; the local level is the appropriate level for many items. Comments ranged from the positive:

- Even if it didn't, I believe it's still inappropriate for members to do so and for the provincial to allow it. Such a process/procedure kills life at the local level.
- Not the role of a provincial; if he has so much spare time, [let him] get a part-time job.

To the negative:

- The provincial has the power. District superior has no authority to act.

5.2.16.1.²⁸ If All Members of the Districts Deal Directly with the Provincial on All Oblate Matters, an Inappropriate Strain is Placed on the Person of the Provincial (Q16.1)

In the general administration 100% agree with this statement regarding strain on the provincial, while only 80% of provincials themselves agree that such a situation puts too great a strain on the provincial.²⁹

5.2.17. Do You Agree on the Necessity of Having the District Superior as a Useful Intermediary Level of Authority Between the Member and the Provincial (Subsidiarity) (Q17)

This question resembles question 14, among others, and was put in to test the consistency of the answers. The general administration agrees 100%, noting that, without strong local communities, there is no Congregation. Provincials agree by a margin of 76.19% to 23.81%. Superiors agree by only 69.44% to 30.56%.

Expressed this way, the respondents are not as positive as they were in question 14. The comment of one provincial expresses well the positive side:

– We have lost the value and lived experience of community living (true in our houses as well as districts). It is presently a sham! Without local cells/units/communities – there's NO apostolic religious life and I believe without actual local superiors, there are no local communities!!

While two other provincials take the opposite viewpoint:

– It is not a necessity; perhaps a help to the provincial.
– In a small province such as ours, such an arrangement would be more of a hindrance than a help.

The interpretation of the general administration is not completely accepted by the lower levels of government.

²⁸ This question was asked only of the two senior levels of government.

²⁹ Those 20% of provincials who give the impression that it is not too much of a strain, are simply asking for people to give them extra work; that is simply human nature.

**5.2.18. A Small Canonical House With Residences and Individuals
Attached is Actually More like a District (Q18)**

Here the general administration agreed 92.85% to 7.15%. Provincials agree 71.42% to 28.58%, and district superiors agree 78.12% to 21.88%.

**5.2.19. If the Concept and Practice of Districts and District Superiors Are
Evolving, Which Items Would You Would Like to See Written into
Provincial Policies, Guidelines, etc.? (Q19)**

There were many suggestions here. Before looking at some of the more interesting ones, it is noteworthy that 57 respondents offered suggestions; as well, the distribution did not show any significant differences among the three groups. The general administration offered suggestions 71.42% of the time; provincials, 77.27% of the time; district superiors, 76.92% of the time. This appears to indicate an across-the-board interest in having clear guidelines issued.

Some suggestions are, from the general administration:

- Insistence on the fact that the district is an apostolic *community*, although they do not live under the same roof, i.e., that what makes a community is not the material structure, but the relationship among the members. (three times)
- The district be in the one diocese to keep the sense of house.³⁰
- The province must more and more pay attention to the formation of superiors. (four times)
- Precise responsibilities and expectations of district superiors. (six times)

From the Provincials there was an emphasis on the definition of responsibilities and expectations, but expressed in varying ways, such as:

- Since the district superior idea is conceived as a facilitating device bringing 'authority' closer to the individual, it might help if a 'job description' were written in each district by the individuals and reviewed at each change of administration. Approval of the job description would incorporate the input of the provincial.

District superiors, for their part, understandably took a very communitarian approach. Whatever improved community life was important, and no one said that the Oblates should do nothing. Some examples are:

- The district superior must have executive authority and not be a sort of 'football coach.'

³⁰ A concern over districts covering more than one diocese was also expressed verbally to the author by two provincials. The question was looked at canonically in Chapter 4, section 3.2.6. and, from the viewpoint of the Constitutions and Rules, it will be looked at in Chapter 6, section 6.6.1.1.

However, this authority must be spelled out in a suitable directory, and must extend to all Oblates without exception. He should be particularly concerned for the development of religious and community life.

– I think it might be helpful in the creation of any new structures or roles to *process* how we communicate with each other, by way of what channels, for what specific purpose, according to what priorities, how often, etc., via some kind of province-wide assembly *before* the structures themselves are put in place. (And we should then, after a trial period, have some mechanism of review.)

– This alone is not the most important consideration. The most critical aspect is the motivation of the members to live apostolic community.

– In our province the consuler who oversees a district has more weight and authority than a district superior. For many, the district superior's role means nothing – this needs to be clarified.

– More specific authority.

– Keep it simple.

– The relationship of the district superior vis-a-vis the provincial needs to be reflected upon. At times (especially personnel moves), there is no dialogue between the district superior and provincial. The first time the superior knows there is a change, is when he reads it in the obedience list.

– Formation of district superiors.

– Beyond the general directives, I would be apprehensive about more specificity because each district is so unique due to its membership. I believe the broader directives gives each district superior the room needed, flexibility to respond to said uniqueness.

– More direct participation of superior in financial permissions and relations with the Bishop where Oblate interests are concerned.

– The items are less important than having clear guidelines and clear understandings about the relationship of the district superior to:

1. Provincial/provincial district

2. Members of districts

– Presently in our province the districts [currently in place] are not really working for one reason or the other. I feel we need that system more than ever.

5.2.19.1.³¹ It Would Be Useful to have the General Administration Issue Guidelines for Items to be Covered by Provincial Statutes for a District (Rule # 86) (Q19.1)

The general administration agreed 92.85% to 7.15%; only one felt that the provinces should do the job on their own. No one wanted the provincial statutes dictated by the general administration. Most felt that the broad outlines could be given, and "this will be helpful to point out areas of responsibilities; however, in concrete, the province will have to evolve guidelines which are appropriate in its given context."

³¹ This question was asked only of the general administration and provincials.

Provincials also agreed with this statement, by a margin of 85% to 15%. This is somewhat surprising, given the independence which provincials enjoy and defend. On the other hand, it underlines the importance of the statutes, and the fact that provincials feel inadequate in drawing them up "from scratch," as one of them expresses it. Two of the three who disagree, would only do so if it was the intention of the general administration to "dictate the statutes from on high," rather than combining guidelines with a period of provincial experimentation. The provincials want clear flexibility, which are not contradictory concepts.

- Let's change our mind-sets first: we are too conditioned by past-expressions and canonical norms. Let's *not* describe district communities in relation to the past models of houses and residences. The primary concept ought to be of local communities and all that the Constitutions and Rules say about local communities should apply [to districts] as well as to houses. Local communities ought to be the norm, the general term used to refer to local houses and districts: houses are the exception, districts are our lived reality.
- Let's get rid of canonical requirements that insist on three formed houses for a province. Three well-functioning local communities, (of at least six members, etc.), ought to be the requirement. Let's get rid of canonical requirements that insist on three formed houses!
- Some provinces may not have the resources to write statutes without help.
- One province could profit from the experience of other provinces.
- Maybe our Constitutions and Rules ought to be amended to make it clearer that the local community can be organized either as houses (under one roof), or districts – both enjoying the same canonical privileges and governed by the same guidelines re: community life, etc.
- But just guidelines: it is not time already to have fixed rules. I think we must leave the provinces to "experiment" for a time before carving in stone the rules for district communities.

5.2.20. A District Council is an Important Part of Local Government (Q20)

In the general administration 88.23% agreed, 5.88% disagreed and 5.88% said they did not know. The reasons given for agreeing were the same as for a house council: to advise, discuss, and, if required, to give consent. Provincials agreed, but by a smaller margin, 65% to 35%. They agree for most of the same reasons as the general administration. They emphasize that the existence of a local council helps the district take ownership of its life and decisions. Those who disagree say that either the superior should act alone because the districts are not as complicated as a house, or that the entire district should be the council. Superiors themselves agree by a margin of 76.47% to 23.53%. They see it as a help to, and a prudent check on, the superior and as a way of encouraging collaboration. As one says, "We are all responsible for our life together; let us not dump that

responsibility on one person, i.e., the Superior.” Those who do not see it as valuable note such things as, “We don’t have anything to govern,” and “In a small district the council, basically, is a rubber stamp of any discussion. In a large district (I have never been in one) the council may have a purpose.”

No one noted that in certain situations¹² the consent of the local council is needed for either the validity or liceity of the superior’s actions. It is perhaps logical then to suppose that, for these people, that situation has never arisen. This would mean that either the local superior has acted alone, either illicitly or invalidly, or that such a decision, especially regarding financial matters, has always been taken at the provincial level, ignoring subsidiarity.

5.2.21. What Would Be a Good Reason for Having the Entire District as a Council in a Larger District? (Q21)

The general administration sees no good reason for having such a large council, and many reasons for not having it. As one stated, “this is a congress not a council.” Provincials are mostly of the same mind, noting that, “what is everybody’s job is nobody’s job,” and “it puts too much power in one man’s hands.” District superiors are of the same mind, generally speaking; they look upon the idea as too unwieldy.

Those few from all categories who see a benefit in such a large council would agree, only if there is a good level of communication and if it enables all to take responsibility for and ownership of the actions of the group.

5.2.22. Are There Any Good Reasons for Discontinuing the Use of Districts in Specific Areas? (Q22)

There is complete agreement here: no! The general administration can only see three possible reasons for this discontinuance: all members are already in viable houses; or existing districts are merely shams because there are too few members; or they simply do not want to live any type of community life. Provincials agree completely, adding only one other possible reason: if distances are

¹² CC&RR 1982/86. C. 124. RR. 79, 93.

too great for there to be any reasonable hope of having meaningful community meetings. As one states, "No! For most OMI situations, to discontinue districts would in effect mean to terminate any possible opportunity for OMI's to come together in that given area: with no meeting/sharing there's no local community." The district superiors agree as well, and they do not put forward any other reasons or arguments for discontinuance, besides those already mentioned.

5.2.23. As District Superiors Become More Involved, Will Residence Directors Lose Independence? (Q23)

Members of the general administration are split on this question, however, they agree with it by 61.52% to 38.47%. If the unusually high number of abstentions are calculated, the percentages are 50% agree, 31.25% disagree and 18.75% offer no opinion. Those who agree foresee the coming abolition of residences as units of government. Those who disagree see the director changing into the person who looks after the physical needs of the buildings. These two seemingly opposing viewpoints are, in fact, quite compatible.

Provincials appear to have a different opinion: 84.21% disagree, while 15.79% agree. The difference in opinion is not as radical as the numbers seem to indicate. The main reason given for agreeing is:

- This would be desirable. I believe local communities at district level will have a better chance if 'directors of residence' no longer have any canonical/CC&RR authority. His role would simply be the physical management of the residence or cooperation with other residences – something which could be done by a non-O.M.I.

What is interesting is that almost the same reason is given by most for disagreeing with the same question:

- It would seem to me that little conflict ought to exist if each stays in their areas of accountability, i.e., director: issues in-house as focus: superiors: in the larger area, including the Province.

District superiors disagree 81.81% to 18.19%. Their reasoning is much like that of the provincials':

- I feel the issue is not one of taking authority from one area and positing it in another, but rather one of specifying clearly the responsibilities and functions at each level (including provincial and general levels...!)
- Residential directors still have first hand knowledge of the life of their community – any

district superior who does not recognize this or does not encourage its life will undermine the local life.

There is no clear conclusion, statistically speaking, from these results. However, reading the comments of the respondents, it may well be that there is a real place for residential directors, not as head of a governmental division, but as the person responsible for the smooth running of the individual living units, perhaps with a new title, such as manager, which has no historical baggage attached.

5.2.23.1. Would Such a Shift in Authority Be Beneficial to the Community Life of the District? (Q23.1)

The members of the general administration agree this would be beneficial by a margin of 92.3% to 7.7%. While pointing out that the district community is the 'local community,' and realizing that certain matters are still to be dealt with within the one physical building, they see it as beneficial because it, "would avoid the 'community' within the 'community.'"

Provincials are more evenly split, with 42.85% agreeing, 28.57% disagreeing, and 28.57% abstaining. Their reasons are much like those of the general administration, and are expressed quite forcefully:

- The distinction among houses, districts, and residences are outdated and no longer apply to our lived situation (and I wonder if they ever did, houses of formation excepted) as far as community living is concerned. They are primarily canonical distinctions! Let's consolidate our efforts and energy re: community renewal at a district level.
- I could argue in both directions. This would be the case only in exceptions or instances of abuse. If a residential community is too strong or independent, then the loss of independence would be helpful. If the residential community loses a sense of involvement, I believe that would be a loss.

District superiors agree 69.44%, while 16.66% disagree, and 13.88% abstained. In their comments there are no great disagreements with the provincials. There was one very good caution from one superior. He said that such an improvement in community life as a result of such changes, "Could be, provided there is true identity with districts as significant communities of thought, action and change." This caution was echoed by two others.

5.2.24. How Often Should Regular District Meetings Be Held for District Community Life to Remain Viable? (Q24)

The general administration would like it a minimum of once a month (70.7%), though they admit that it is not always possible. If it is less than monthly two suggest that it ought to be longer than one day. Provincials are more scattered, with 44.44% opting for once a month. Others opt for less because of the limits of geography. District superiors prefer monthly meetings 62.85% of the time. The others simply say as often as is possible given the limits of geography. Superiors are the only ones to note that it is more important to have well-prepared meetings than to have a lot of them.

5.2.24.1. A District Should Not Be So Large Geographically That Regular Meetings Can Not Be Held; It Should Be a Natural Grouping of People Capable of Achieving an End (Q24.1)

The general administration agrees with this 93.33%, while recognizing that it is idealistic; 6.67% feel that it is unrealistic.

- Hudson Bay would seem to indicate that, where there is the will, Geography need not be an obstacle. Normally, however, geography should be a factor in grouping Oblates in a district community.
- There are distance-limits for coming together, but combination with other meetings remains possible.
- Community is the result of sharing. If a group cannot meet from time to time for effective sharing, it is pointless to speak of community in any realistic sense.

Provincials agree 80.95% to 19.05%. Provincials agree that it is an ideal, but insist that it can, and must, be accomplished.

- The purpose of a district is to be a resource and a support, and unless the members can gather, there is no need to determine it as a community.
- Distances do cause problems, but it is important to share time socially and not just come for a two hour session.
- 'Natural groupings' are becoming more rare – except for the basic/common element of being Oblate.
- Where regions are large, exchange and variety of experience are real values. The solitary Oblate is no longer a possibility. The world is too complex and the dangers too real.
- Little purpose is served otherwise.
- It's necessary to keep in touch with reality. It is especially a must not to adopt frameworks that are too rigid, which risk becoming yokes that choke life.
- Isolated and far away regions should not be forgotten.

District superiors agreed with this statement 72.22% of the time. While 11.11% disagreed, the same percentage, 11.11% chose the middle ground (neutral), and 5.55% abstained. For all, the

reasons were very similar to those of the provincials. Geography must not be a barrier they state:

- The optimum would be “natural grouping” but if I were a missionary in the far north, I would appreciate being part of a district (sense of belonging) even if that would mean two or three meetings a year only.
- It depends on the number of members. It is a matter of sufficient number of members and their commitment. If the district is so large that the members have to travel excessively, then a smaller district is required. Travel is by time – not distance. Here in West Texas people think nothing of shopping 200 miles away, one way.

A significant number of district superiors, 20%, mention the necessity of using the radio, telephone (including conference calls), and fax machines, as well as aeroplanes and riding ‘piggy-back’ on diocesan meetings, as communication methods in order to achieve the purpose of the district community.

5.2.24.2. All Aspects of Community Life (Human, Christian, Missionary/Apostolic, Economic) Must Be Both Lived by the Group and Dealt With in the District Community Meetings (Q24.2)

The concepts and expressions used in the formation of this question are taken from many of the later general chapter documents and from the writings of the superiors general. Nevertheless, the answers indicate that the natures of the district as local community and of the office of district superior are not clearly understood by many.

The general administration agrees with this by 97.14%. Even the 2.86% who disagree simply say that it is an unrealistic ideal.

- You can’t legislate everything - keep the ideal!
- The Rule presupposes that community affects all these areas. The above aspects are the basic elements of community life. If the members do not deal with them in the district level, then there is not a district, just a group of individuals doing their own thing.

There are 85.71% of the provincials who agree and 14.29% who do not. Those who agree, speak of true common life, subsidiarity, commitment, and apostolic community as goals, for which these matters are necessary means. The need for appropriate privacy is mentioned. Those who do not agree fear the re-imposition of rigid structures. One provincial states: “Again, I don’t agree with the thesis that districts should have any authority.”

District superiors agree with the statement by a margin of 77.77% to 22.23%. Their reasons vary.

Agree:

- These are the realities that we deal with as religious. I would hope they form an important part of the dialogue we share with each other.
- We only live one life (the now) and we Oblates have chosen to live it in community. All of the above aspects of life, lived out by each one, impact (help or hinder), the community life of all in the district.
- I believe everything is open for discussion in an open, respectful way which has as its goal to build the kingdom – so secrets are not helpful, nor are double standards – quality communication needs to be fostered and encouraged.
- If we are going to get real about community, we need to get real about being Oblates, which includes all the above areas.

Disagree:

- We have our personal lives as well; I need some form of autonomy.
- Some [of these] matters go well beyond district [responsibility] and are the responsibility of the provincial/council/Congregation.
- What concerns the mission or the parish should not be discussed there because we have our deanery meetings.

5.2.25. Do You Agree That There Is Sufficient Preparation of Oblates Who Are to Undertake the Office of District Superior? (Q25)

The general administration answers in the negative 92.3%. Only 7.7% agree with it. The reasons given for the negative response are quite predictable.

- We have to do the best with what we have!
- The turnover is so frequent or so infrequent that in both cases Oblates could not spare the time for much preparation.
- No previous formation; it normally takes place only after the appointment.
- I don't know of any policy requesting preparation before taking office either as local or district superior.
- It is generally speaking the case for local superiors: the last Chapter pinpointed the lack of their preparation.
- Since the precise role and expectations are not all that clear at this time, the efforts to prepare superiors are scattered and deal with generalities.
- There are sufficient good Oblates who have the basic qualities to undertake the job but many of them are lacking sufficient preparation.

The provincials answer in the negative 80.95%; 19.05% agree with the statement.

Whether they agree or not, some provincials in their comments appear not to take the question too

seriously. Provincials who agree that the current level of preparation is sufficient say that:

- Might sound simplistic...., but if a man is a good empathetic gregarious Oblate, no course is needed, and if he isn't, no course of preparation could help.
- Choice [of candidates] is limited.
- There is sufficient, but there is need for more, as the very face of religious life/community life changes in the future.

Those who disagree with it say:

- The process of consultation generally surfaces the candidate who is the most popular. The most popular candidate is not always the one who is the best leader. At the present time, we are attempting to offer training sessions for newly appointed superiors, but we need to continue developing that program for new superiors.
- We are attempting to improve the situation. We have had regular workshops (1993) and will have another this year (1994).
- At this point we count on a certain level of maturity, good will, personal psychological and mental health, stability, consistency and common sense. This is not something that any 'preparation' can provide. However, some process of information-sharing about the role would be helpful.
- Not always, but it seems to be getting better as the district superiors have meetings to help them in their responsibilities.
- I don't think district superiors have any preparation now. But the person should have 'common sense.'

Only two provincials 'strongly disagree' (9.52%), and they say:

- Training of local superiors, preparing them to assume the 'ministry of a local superior *today*' is one of our greatest deficiencies. I believe the much needed training won't be encouraged and done until 'power' is shifted to individuals and local communities - otherwise the concept of 'local apostolic communities' remains on paper only: "Let's not get too serious about it all, otherwise what will the provincial do?"
- Only one superior has had training for the job, so far. It's *essential* to train them for the job.

District superiors, for their part, disagree with the adequacy of the preparation by a margin of 66.66% to 33.34%. Those who agree with the current level of preparation mention such factors as:

- I don't personally see any need for a long-term preparation. Superior's role being one of animator and promoter of unity in person and effort is not such a complicated one. He is to work as one of the group!
- Again this seems related to the expectation re: a district superior's actual role. The more that is expected of him, the more he should be prepared.

- Being a district co-ordinator¹¹ is something one learns while doing. One can overdo the 'formation' and 'preparation' thing. Much will depend on who is preparing whom for what. Best preparation is to be one who cares about others.
- Our average age is over 60; by this time most of the men have achieved good leadership qualities: they mostly need good job-descriptions for themselves and the others too, otherwise how can you evaluate?
- The way it is, in my case, anybody could undertake the office of district superior.

Those who disagree with the current level mention factors like:

- There has been no direct preparation, or even attempt, by the provincial administration to define my role as district superior.
- Most could benefit from a well-coordinated leadership workshop. Some are not comfortable having responsibility or 'power' over others.
- Handbooks were available at one time (and may still be, with a need for updating).
- Not at present, but we are working on it. Areas that should be addressed: animation, effective leadership, constitution and rules re: roles, etc.
- I was named period. The only positive thing about being named was the fact that I was *asked* by the guys to be superior.
- Formation is essential. With the thrust of the Oblates on 'community life' they should be prepared better.
- We are making an effort but have a ways to go before I would agree with the above statement.
- Oblates seem to be chosen at random because they were administrators of residential schools or were on the bishop's council or were teachers or principals, or pastor of a city parish, but with very little understanding of our CC&RR or Oblate life as it is taught by our Oblate general council at the present time.
- No preparation, just appointed, or railroaded may be a better word.
- I was not prepared at all. I don't know if anyone was?
- It is not easy to be district superior, when you don't know what is expected of you. Hence, training in this would be very beneficial.

It appears that those who understand best what the Constitutions and Rules are calling for in this office, are the least satisfied with the preparation. Definite improvement in educational techniques is called for, from the top down.

5.2.25.1. Was There Any Preparation That You Know Of? (Q25.1)

To this straight 'yes/no' question, the general administration answered yes, 26.66%; no, 26.66% while 13.33% did not know, and 33.33% chose to give no answer; this is a significant

¹¹ This title is the equivalent of district superior in this province. When the proper title of an office is not used, the implication is that there are connotations to the original title that are being avoided. However, too much of value may be lost in such a substitution.

statistical spread for those entrusted with the responsibilities they have undertaken.³⁴

Provincials answered yes, 57.14%; no, 23.80%; while 19.04% chose not to answer. It is presumed that all in this group had been informed in one way or another of their obligations in this matter.

District superiors answered yes by a slim majority of 52.77% to 47.23%, with no abstentions. The message has not been received in almost half of the cases; whether or not it had been properly sent is another question.

5.2.25.2. Such Preparation Is the Primary Responsibility of the Provincial; Do You Agree That It Would Be Feasible to Have the Region Also Involved in This Preparation? (Q25.2)

The general administration agrees with this suggestion 100%. They see this as effective, enriching, and quite feasible where language constraints permit. One respondent even suggests that a permanent program must be established in each region.

Provincials, for their part, agree 80% to 20%. Those who agreed, mentioned such items as:

- To provide this training opportunity in a thorough manner, it would be done more efficiently on the regional level.
- A province like our own would find it difficult to provide such preparation because of limited resources of personnel; this is where the region and general administration could be helpful.
- Once this vision/direction is embraced by the provincial leadership (and general council), call *all* of us to move in this way. There are many excellent models/ways of doing this preparation (used by other groups, both religious and secular).
- This would facilitate a broader sharing of information in a non-threatening environment. However, don't expect such 'preparation' to provide any more common sense, faith, compassion, wise judgement, etc.

Provincials who disagree give only two reasons:

- It isn't practical.
- Personal opinion: Let's give time to each province to come to some conclusions before getting mixed up in the special circumstances of other different provinces. In a set-up like this one, 10 or 15 years of experience is not so long.

Superiors agree with this suggestion 85.29% to 14.71%. However, their reasoning indicates

³⁴ "The Superior's role is so important that suitable training is necessary." *CC&RR-1982/86*, R. 78.

that they are rather sharply divided on this point; 45% of those who agree do so strongly, while the comments of those who disagree speak for themselves.

Superiors who agree say:

- By 'region' I assume is meant the 'Canadian Region' or the grouping as defined in C.104. I do really think it would be good to have input from other provinces re: the most suitable internal structure of a province...and in fact such input would also be good to discern possible future integration of some of the *provinces* themselves within the Canadian region.
- It can only happen on a regional level, very few provinces would have the resources to bring about this whole renewal.
- Cost, and presenters can be more effective: getting to know others in other provinces can also be helpful.
- I think it would be difficult to organize a province-level preparation that is adequate. As our numbers are less and less, regional preparation is more and more necessary.
- I was in the first group [to do so]. It was helpful to hear that my problems were not unique, that the problems were not just in this province but exist in the region. It was good to share, to listen and to help.
- I just came back from a regional preparation of 10 days.
- I feel that the district superiors should have input; they can see where the weaknesses and strengths of their area lie. Johnny on the spot.
- Again the more we all get involved the better – more hands lighten the load, but it is the primary responsibility of the provincial.

Those superiors who disagree say:

- [It is the] Responsibility of the province (all the men), and especially the men of the district.
- Best not to make this into another burden, nor give this office more importance than it has or deserves. The district superior is more like a coordinator, an animator, an admonitor and facilitator. The *preparation* is present in both the *general formation* (to religious life and priesthood), and in the continued *participation* in the life of the community.
- Out of 101 Oblates in the province 63 are above the age 70, it is better dealt with by the provincial.
- The guys have enough work as it is. Let the provincial do his own administration along with his provincial team. That was the reason he was elected.

5.2.25.3.³⁵ Do You Agree That the Preparation of District Superiors Should Be Encouraged by Some Positive Action of the General Administration? If So, What Action? (Q25.3)

All, 100%, of the general administration agreed with this; they suggested:

- Asking provincials to show what is being done.

³⁵ This question was asked only of the general administration.

- Prepare: documents on district communities:
 - description of role of superior of such communities;
 - encouragement to pool resources for formation of superiors
(through the general counsellor [*sic*]⁴⁶ for the region).
- The general councillor for the different regions should sit down with the provincials of that region and make sure that such preparation is being done.
- During the orientation session for new provincials, by pointing out resource persons.
- The general counsellor for the region must:
 - co-ordinate among several provinces
 - prepare resources persons
 - propose and facilitate some programs
 - encourage Provincials by asking them for a regular report, etc.

Two agree, but have some reservations:

- It's being done already.
- The implementation of it depends largely on the provincial and the delegation authorities.

It is a fair conclusion, based on the answers and comments on all of the parts of question 25, to say that there is an openness, even an enthusiasm, on the part of the majority of the lower levels of government to accept the initiatives of the senior level, should they be forthcoming and presented in a non-threatening manner.

5.2.26. Do You Agree That, Prior to Changes Being Made to District Personnel, District Superiors Should Be Consulted to the Same Degree as Are House Superiors? (Q26)

To this question, 86.66% of the general administration answered yes, while 13.34% said no. Those who agree see no fundamental difference between the two types of local superiors; they are the level of real day-to-day leadership. Those who disagree point out that the relationship of the provincial with the men would be more free without this. There is no indication from the latter group whether or not the same reservation applies to house superiors.

Provincials agreed by a margin of 85% to 15%. Those who agreed emphasized the lack of distinctions between the two types of local superiors.

⁴⁶ The number of times the terms councillor, counsellor, consulter, consulator and assistant are used incorrectly and interchangeably in the responses for the proper CC&RR terminology (general councillor, provincial consulator, local assistant) leads one to wonder if it would not be better to choose one term and stick to it, e.g., councillor, as in general councillor, provincial/delegation councillor, local councillor. This says nothing about other ambiguous and non-defined terms used in the replies, such as, "area consulator," "district councillor," and "district consulator."

- I believe the distinction (which is out-dated), between a house superior and a district superior should be gotten rid of once and for all. This kind of terminology perpetuates the confusion. All superiors ought to be referred to as 'local superiors' – all enjoying all rights granted by law and our CC&RR.
- I believe there is little or no distinction in our province between the two kinds of superiors.
- District superiors many times have more insight into personal matters than does the provincial consultor.
- It's evident that a change of membership in the district community does not have the same consequences as does a change of membership in the local community in which several members do the same type of work. However, so that the district community be real, it is important that it provide itself with means: consultation, it seems to me, is one of those means.
- I always do; they feel they're taken seriously and for me it's invaluable in making my decision.
- Their role is as crucial to the well-being of the province as is that of a house superior.
- The district superior is a gathering place [*sic*] not only for individuals but also for information. It would be wasteful not to recognize this.

Those who disagree give two basic reasons: they indicate that either they do not want to consult any more that they are obliged to, or there is a real confusion in their minds among the terms: local superior, house superior, and district superior.

- Should the provincial have to consult with everyone and his dog (and there seems to be more and more of the latter around these days), it would take him a long time to do his *work*. It would be best if the local superior would know, at best, in advance of any changes, even proposed changes if possible.
- District superiors, in most cases, do not live with the members of the district; a local superior must have a more direct say in who is going to be in the local community so that there is common grounds for growth in the house.
- No. The house superior is the one who is directly affected. If necessary the district superior could be brought into the discussion.

District superiors agree by a margin of 77.77% to 22.23%. In their comments, those who agree state generally that such consultation is best for the good of the individuals, the community, and the mission. Some wanted the consultation to be even wider.

- If the district superior is in such close contact with his members, how could the provincial make changes with a fair knowledge of the situations of the personnel without consulting the district superior?
- If someone is moved out or into a district, the members should have a say in this. I myself would not want just anyone in a district; we need to be compatible to a degree.
- I think we need a whole new way of dealing with personnel changes.

All but one of those who disagree do not do so on strong philosophical grounds but express more of a *laissez-faire* attitude, and see little change on the horizon.

- Sometimes being informed is enough; sometimes matters are beyond the district.
- They could be informed, and consulted to some extent. Often, persons are transferred, and

the district is not officially informed. Sometimes, it can be helpful if the district members know of a transfer at least in the final stages. They need not be the last to know.

- It doesn't happen anyway. It's been up to the provincial and the individual Oblate.
- Houses are more likely to have members with a specific apostolate, e.g., teaching, retirement home, communications, etc., and consequently a greater degree of team ministry. There is, therefore, a greater need for consultation before team members are changed.
- I don't know if the superior has ever been consulted up to now about personnel changes.

One, however, is quite specific.

- Let's not add to bureaucracy and red tape please!

5.2.26.1. When Personnel Changes Are Made by the Provincial, He Must Provide for the Adequate Staffing of the Apostolates. In a District Community the Provincial Must Also Provide for an Adequate Pool of Members From Which a Suitable and Capable District Superior Can Be Chosen. (Q26.1)

The general administration agrees by a margin of 92.85% to 7.15%. However, they correctly point out that the pool in question is, in fact, the entire province. "On the one hand I agree with the statement, but on the other hand it does not seem necessary that the district superior comes always from among the members of a given district. As house superiors, many times shift around, so could district superiors. They can then exercise a 'similar' ministry in their new district."

Provincials agree by a margin of 95.23% to 4.77%, again looking upon the province as the pool, and not obliging the provincial to the impossible.

- Or, send someone to the local level explicitly to serve as superior – his primary ministry. This person then assumes other ministry responsibilities to the extent possible. The superior's ministry as superior needs to also be viewed as an important apostolate, the same way as the witness of our community living is itself a ministry and missionary!
- Without a functioning superior, a district ceases to have real meaning and impact on the members.
- "must do his best" would read better, given the scarcity of personnel.
- It seems evident to me, though, 'you can't give what you don't have,' and the scarcity of membership is beginning to show here! A valid reason for restructuring.
- Our district has gone from 11 to 6 persons in one month.

The only dissenting comment was:

- This isn't possible; it would only complicate staffing and new obediences. There are enough difficult factors to contend with now, i.e., Bishops, desires of the laity, etc.

District superiors also agreed by a wide margin, 93.33% to 6.67%. It was also clear that they

are well aware of the personnel constraints on the provincial.

- There may be exceptions to this rule, but, as it stands, it makes for stability. If a district superior is to be regarded as an important appointment, it seems clear that priority be given to it in the assignment of personnel. (Sometimes it almost seems that a higher degree of importance may be placed on naming a local director, pastor etc. than on the selection of a district superior.)
- That is now becoming a problem, due to aging. Due to aging it will also be more difficult to change attitudes or bring about a new approach to apostolic community.
- In theory, yes, but taken into consideration [must be] our diminishing numbers and our age and our many commitments; just so much can be expected.
- Community life needs to become a value to the provincial administration if this is going to work.
- When you no longer have enough personnel I feel the district could be dissolved or combined in a new one.
- Right now it is hard to achieve because we are overloaded with ministry work.
- It's better to have fewer districts, but ones that have 'Life' than many districts that are only juridical groupings on paper.
- If we are taking seriously the capitular document *Witnessing in Apostolic Communities*, we have to remember that the community is the mission and they depend one on the other.

Those who disagree because it is impossible to do it with insufficient personnel are not saying that they really disagree with the premise.

- We are so miserably short of personnel! I do not wish to complicate the task any further for a provincial in charge of providing adequate staffing.
- The question is irrelevant. We have no more personnel.

Others, a few, disagree in principle.

- District Superiors, as I see it, do not take precedence over the apostolate.
- The major focus has to be the ministry. Seeing the present role of the district superior, *any* pool of Oblates easily has a few who are capable of assuming that office.

5.2.27.³⁷ How Often Does Your District Celebrate the Eucharist Together Per Year? (Q27)

To this question, 20% answered "never" or "rarely," 40% said 1 to 3 times yearly, 20% said 4 to 6 times, 5.71% said 7 to 12 times, 5.71% said "often," 2.85% said "when we get together," and 5.71% said "daily."³⁸ It is not a scientific conclusion, but it does appear that a significant percentage

³⁷ This question was asked only of district superiors.

³⁸ Reading the information part of these questionnaires, these 'districts' having daily Eucharist are, in reality, houses.

celebrate the eucharist together at most district meetings.

5.2.28. Is It Reasonable in Present-Day North America to Require All Provinces to Maintain Three Formed Canonical Houses.³⁹ Even If There Are Not Enough Personnel to Adequately Staff Them, Rather Than Legitimizing the Option of Having a Combination of Actually Functioning Formed Houses and/or Districts, As Long As They Total Three Units? (Q28)

The general administration was split on this subject: 22.22% said that three formed houses should be required; 77.78% did not agree. From the comments it is obvious that the members of the general administration feel that this is not a legal requirement to be interpreted strictly because, "both are local community," and "real community *life* is important." They admit that there must be some change to the present Constitutions and Rules in order to, "affirm the validity of district communities as a recognized form of 'living together.'" Only one comment goes in the opposite direction when he states, "A practical point: it is in the Code, so it's not impossible. The three houses are a sign, I believe, that a province is viable."

Provincials split also, with 16.66% saying that three formed houses should be required; 83.34% did not agree. The comments were basically the same as above for the general administration. The fear was voiced that before long our only houses will be retirement homes. It was generally expressed that community is our base, and we must not get too bureaucratic, "structures for the sake of structures would be anti-Oblate and anti-demazenodian."

Local superiors are almost unanimous; only 3.34% say that three houses should be required, while 96.66% do not agree. All of the reasons are similar; "choose life over structure." The lone dissenter says, "as age increases, three houses is no problem, but people to run them will be," and even that comment can easily be interpreted as having been said with the respondent's tongue planted firmly in his cheek.

³⁹ "A province is an organic unity comprising at least three houses and provided with sufficient personnel, revenues, and other requisites for its stability and development." *CC&RR 1982/86*, R. 78.

5.2.29. Do You Want a Copy Of the Answer Summary When Completed? (Q29)

Their interest in the follow-up was indicated by the 69.04% who wanted copies of the summary. Of those who did not ask for a copy, 20% expressed a confidence that they would either receive a copy of the whole thesis, or that the results would be disseminated by the Oblate authorities.⁴⁰

5.2.30. Do You Have Any Other Comments or Suggestion to Make on the Subject of Districts and District Superiors? (Q30)

Thirty respondents out of the 79 who replied (37.97%), offered other comments, some up to a page in length, often summarizing their philosophy on the subject, noting the timeliness of the study, or offering moral support. The general administration give two of note, though they reflect the comments of most:

– *Witnessing in Apostolic Community*, # 23.5 says: "Current experiences are to be evaluated in terms of communion and interdependence; otherwise we may stagnate in the routine and mediocrity of groups that are district communities in name only."

This is very true! The fact that the members of a district community live alone (or perhaps one or the other with a second Oblate), the fact of physical distances between the members, the fact that quite some travel is involved if meetings are held, create some extra difficulties which do not exist in house communities. The will of the members and their commitment to truly create community must therefore be stronger than in a house community (though one has also house communities where the commitment to create community does not exist – they become 'hotels'). It is therefore not enough to create an awareness and to train superiors, a general formation in community building for *all members* of the district is necessary to clearly define the competencies of the district superiors and to clearly communicate these to the district members, so that they know exactly when they can and may or must call on the district superior, and when on the provincial. Here, clarity and conscientization are both necessary.

– [I am] Happy and proud that the Oblates have 'discovered' the district community.

Provincials are of two schools; 88.88% see benefits in changing the structures.

– Until we have a paradigm shift, nothing will happen – other than a continuous disintegration of community living as such. We are lagging miles behind in the renewal of our structures (per Fitz & Cada model). Most of our structures were developed to facilitate life and ministry in a drastically different time in the Church (society). They served us well but they are now well dated (should I say archaic?)! Our mission (in our Province) in

⁴⁰ Over-all, though 90% indicated their interest in this way, 100% indicated it by answering the questionnaire. There were even at least another 10 Oblates who indicated personally, that for one reason or another, they were not able to answer the questionnaire.

Canada has been crying out for years for radical changes and renewal in our way of living together and governing ourselves. Efforts have been to put 'new wine' into 'old skins'; we are badly in need of new skins – to support, nourish, sustain, etc., all of us in our life and ministry, in response to the spiritual hunger/unmet needs of the people we're called to serve.

The others, 11.12%, have other priorities.

– As is evident from my answers, I don't think district superiors need any more authority. The provincial congresses, when held, seem to be the place to bring things up for discussion. – it will depend on the members taking ownership of what is agreed upon. There are many important things that can be discussed, more important I believe, than district superiors. Whether, this will happen, I don't know.

District superiors' comments are virtually unanimous, with only minor variations.

– It seems to me that the underlying problem is the now classical one of reconciling the hierarchical and collegial dimensions of authority in a way that will enhance our charism. Any projected model will suffer from the flux of rapidly changing circumstances. However, the last [provincial] congress showed that there is a widely shared desire to make the system work insofar as necessary to keep us together for as long as possible.
 – I do think a renewal of the apostolic community dimension of religious life is essential to our witness and credibility.
 – I like the word 'co-ordinator' better than 'superior.' 'Superior' has a lot of baggage from pre-Vatican II days. Co-ordinator, to me, better defines the *service* role of the person called to lead; 'superior' has a connotation of 'lording-over.'

5.3. Chapter Summary

Realizing that the history, law, and practice in the area covered in this thesis were not necessarily perfectly aligned, it was decided to do a contemporary survey on the question of the theory, current practices, and future prospects of districts and district superiors in the 10 Oblate provinces of Canada and the United States of America, where they were either in use or proposed. Such a study was carried out in 1994, with returns which were quite sufficient to be statistically significant, and which gave good insights into the present situation.

Three groups were questioned: past and present members of the general administration, past and present provincials and vicars, and past and present district superiors.

The results indicated that the general administration, for the most part, adhered to the call of the Constitutions and Rules and the contemporary general chapters, and felt that this was pretty-well the overall state of affairs in most of the concerned regions of the Congregation.

Provincials and vicars, were not so clear in their understanding of what the Constitutions and Rules called for, though, for the most part, they were fairly open in their understanding of subsidiarity, if not its implementation. There were a few provincials or vicars who believe that it would be much simpler if district superiors would simply call meetings and carry out the provincial's bidding according to a pre-ordained plan. There were also a few areas where a good number of provincials wanted to restrict the authority of the district superior and run one or more aspects from the provincial administration. A large majority of provincials and vicars were quite clear in their understanding that there was to be no difference between house and district superiors, except accidentally, and called upon the general administration to emphasize this in various ways.

District superiors were roughly divided into two groups, both of which were doing their best to follow their conscience, the Constitutions and Rules, the mandate (or lack thereof) given them by their provincial, and to do all that they can for the benefit and the welfare of the members of their district. One group had been given little or no authority to do anything in their district except to act as a figurehead. The other group had been given some authority but did not know what to do with it. Some from both groups had simply decided not to disturb the status quo, while others believe that there were principles here worth fighting for.

Nearly all, in the three levels of government call for more clarification to be done in this area of local community and government, as districts now contain a majority of the Oblates in the provinces which have this division, within the regions of Canada and the United States. It is also clear that there is a lack of acceptance, even understanding, among most of the respondents on the local level, a sizable number on the provincial level, and even some on the general level, that the district superiorship is an ecclesiastical office whose fundamental authority is derived from the law itself, not simply from the will of the provincial.

However, what emerges is an overall concern, in all levels of leadership, for the good of the membership and the continued health and growth of the local apostolic community. De Mazenod's notion that the mission can only prosper when the Oblate community is healthy and the Rule is followed is still considered to be true today. Such concerns call for healing and incisive direction

within the local apostolic community and non-threatening and constructive changes to the present Constitutions and Rules.

Having looked at the history⁴¹ and the law⁴² of districts and district communities, and, in this chapter, the present situation and future prospects of this unit of local government in Canada and the United States, the thesis in the next, and final, chapter will look at the discussions of the intercapitular meeting held in Bangkok in the autumn of 1995, and the subsequent administrative structure changes proposed, in October, 1966, to the membership of the Institute for their comments, and to be submitted by them before the end of April, 1997. After input from the membership, the results are scheduled to be presented to the 1998 Oblate General Chapter as proposed changes to the administrative structures' section of the Constitutions and Rules concerning districts and district communities. In chapter 6, these proposals will be critiqued in light of the history, law, and questionnaire results, as found and developed in the first five chapters.

⁴¹ Chapters 1 and 2.

⁴² Chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 6

THAILAND INTERCAPITULAR MEETING AND THE 1996 PROPOSED TEXT

6.1. Intercapitular Meeting: Thailand 1995

The general administration, along with the Oblate provincials of the world, gathered in Samphan, Bangkok, Thailand, from October 23 to November 8, 1995, for the scheduled intercapitular meeting normally held half-way between general chapters. At this type of meeting implementation of the follow-up from the last chapter and preparation for the next are reviewed.¹ If there are specific items which the last chapter mandated for this meeting, then these are taken care of. For the purposes of this thesis only the address of the superior general and the work of the 'Post-Chapter Committee on Structures' will be reviewed.

6.2. "Becoming Witnesses in Apostolic Community"²

In his address to the members the superior general, Marcello Zago, began by stating that, "the animation of apostolic community life is our principal duty as major superiors. It is the core of our inter-chapter meeting."³

Of interest to this study, because they involve districts, he notes, positively, that some provincial administrations have held enlarged council meetings with local superiors to provide a

¹ CC&RR 1982/87, R. 121.

² M. ZAGO, "Becoming Witnesses in Apostolic Community: Inter-Chapter Meeting: October 1995," [=ZAGO, "Inter-Chapter"], in *OMI Documentation*, 208 (March, 1996).

³ ZAGO, "Inter-Chapter," p. 3.

sense of community and the animation of the province.⁴ Special sessions for the formation of local superiors have been held in certain places. Monthly retreats are more common in local communities. Fax messages are being used weekly in some district communities to facilitate communication.⁵

Negatively, he notes that in some districts members have not taken up the challenge of the last general chapter. Some are too involved with their work and are afraid to waste time responding to community challenges or even simply ignore the entire meaning of community. Others are afraid of returning to the past or losing their independence, in other words, 'all structures are bad.' The available instruments for local community development can, at times, be under-utilized and sometimes the province does not provide the required means or decision-making atmosphere. In certain places ambiguous and presumably interchangeable terms are in use for the same reality (such as cluster, district, zone and region). Their exact meaning is unknown. In some places they mean the same thing, while, in other places, their meaning is opposed.⁶ Confusion and lack of understanding can be the result of such imprecise terminology.⁷

M. Zago began the section of his talk on the nature of the apostolic community by again stating that.

In the Oblate context, the community may follow either of two formulas: a house community or a district community. This means that Oblates may live their brotherhood under the same roof and in the same house, or while living in different places they may form a district. Both the district and the house should be made up of a number of persons who can meet regularly so as to develop the interpersonal relationships necessary for community life.

In both cases the purpose and the demands of community life are identical. Every religious community must promote and realize three essential purposes: the experience of God, fraternal charity, apostolic action.⁸

⁴ Some provinces have, at least informally, resurrected the archaic title 'extraordinary provincial council' for these meetings and are considering formalizing them in the provincial directory and even reserving certain topics for discussion at these meetings rather than at regular council meetings. This would be done so that such meetings in the future would not be simply held at the pleasure of the provincial of the day. It will be seen that the Post-Chapter Committee on Structures proposes to re-introduce the term into the Constitutions and Rules.

⁵ See ZAGO, "Inter-Chapter," pp. 4-5.

⁶ See ZAGO, "Inter-Chapter," p. 6.

⁷ Rausch's Scandinavian districts are one example.

⁸ ZAGO, "Inter-Chapter," p. 7.

Regarding the local superior he said.

There can be no community without a superior. There are terms which express different forms of sensitivity (animator, coordinator, superior)⁹ but we must accept his role and make it possible by providing adequate preparation for those who are called to this internal ministry.¹⁰ The experience I have acquired through contact with the various situations in the Congregation convinces me that this is important. I have seen that *wherever there is no recognized and effective superior, community life does not develop*.¹¹ Therefore the Chapter had every reason to insist on the need for the preparation of local Superior[s], and, I would add, the need for choice and a clear mission.¹²

6.3. Report: United States of America Region

Regarding districts the report states that most of the region is organized around the model of districts, with district superiors being more and more the facilitators of Oblate life. A lot of time and effort has been spent in developing these districts and strengthening the role of local leadership.¹³

6.4. Report: Asia-Oceania Region

Regarding districts, the report states that even among those living alone for the sake of the mission entrusted to them, the bonds of district community are stronger than before. The need to belong to one another, the realization of the need for unity and cohesion among members of the same religious family is growing slowly, perhaps too slowly. On the other hand, there is a strong pull towards individualism among those who seem charismatic and prophetic and who are talented intellectually or otherwise. These launch into their projects without any reference to their community.

⁹ To exclude one or two of these aspects skews the whole concept of community leadership. In different areas different synonyms are used, facilitator is another one. To use different terms, depending on the emphasis of the moment, is fine: to use them because the word 'superior' is *verbum non gratum* is not acceptable.

¹⁰ See chapter 5 (1994 Survey), section 2 (Survey Results), paragraph 6 (Question 6). From this point onward references to the 1994 survey will be given in numbers only. The above would be given as "See 5.2.6." The numbers after '5.2.' will always refer to the question number.

¹¹ See 5.2.14.

¹² ZAGO, "Inter-Chapter," p. 10, emphasis added.

¹³ MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA REGION, *Report of the Region to the Inter-Capitular Meeting*, Bangkok, 1995, unpublished material, Oblate General Archives, Rome, p. 4.

hence the community involvement bypasses them and their projects also. Even some of the local superiors are notable individualists and often not only do not contribute to community growth, but may well hinder it.¹⁴

6.5. Structures Committee: Basic Rationale Statement

In its introduction, the committee, which had previously met three times over the preceding two years,¹⁵ reported that it began from three basic assumptions, "(1) we are structuring a missionary presence and not simply a group of priests and brothers, or some secular enterprise; (2) we are doing this to enable us to face the future; (3) each level of government is to be structured as an organic whole."¹⁶

It noted that the old model of leadership was authoritarian, clear, inflexible and often deadening to the humanity of the members. Recent models diffused the authority in the community, tried to create a balance between roles and persons, but too often the quality of leadership of the one called to office was ignored or diluted, so that in the end the structure was ineffective.¹⁷

The committee envisioned a collaborative model for the future. Authority and roles are marked by interdependence; in order to work, this collaborative model must presuppose that a sufficient level of internal participation has been achieved within each Oblate unit. A level of collaboration is called for, which both implies a high degree of relationship and presumes significant levels of human maturity and personal commitment.¹⁸ Other principal values are:

- (1) Respect for the dignity of the persons involved; (2) flexibility, allowing for adaptation in various parts of the world according to circumstances; (3) integration of discernment in decision-making; (4) subsidiarity, within the context of a well-functioning centre, allowing for decisions to be taken at the

¹⁴ MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE: ASIA-OCEANIA REGION, *Apostolic Community*, Bangkok, 1995, unpublished material. Oblate General Archives, Rome, pp. 1-3.

¹⁵ POST-CAPITULAR COMMITTEE ON STRUCTURES, *Inter-Capitular Text: Basic Rationale Statement*, (=PCCS, *Text*), Bangkok, 1995, unpublished material from the Oblate General Archives, Rome, p. 27.

¹⁶ PCCS, *Text*, p. 3.

¹⁷ See PCCS, *Text*, p. 3.

¹⁸ See PCCS, *Text*, pp. 3-4.

most appropriate level; and (5) strong leadership and consistent forms of accountability at all levels.¹⁹

6.5.1. The Bangkok Process

The purpose of the presentation by the committee at this meeting was to have the gathering give detailed feedback on the proposed changes to the administrative structures. The specific texts were discussed and the whole group voted on 91 different questions based on these proposals. The results were released to those present on November 4, 1995. It was known how each of the six groups (five regions and the general administration) voted, though not how the individuals within them cast their ballots.²⁰

6.5.2 Preparation of an Adapted Text

Taking this vote into consideration, the Post-Chapter Committee on Structures was to prepare an adapted text of Part III of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules along with an appropriate rationale statement. They would distribute it throughout the Congregation, collect an evaluation, analyze the data, consult with the superior general and council concerning the results, and prepare a revised text to be presented to the Pre-Chapter Commission for the 1998 General Chapter. They would assure that suitable prior arrangements had been made with the Holy See regarding the approval in principle of those matters requiring its intervention.²¹

This has been done and, at the present time, April, 1997, an adapted text has been circulated throughout the Congregation for analysis and evaluation. What follows deals with those texts pertinent to the topic of this thesis.

¹⁹ PCCS. *Text*, p. 4.

²⁰ For each question the participants were asked to weigh their votes as: 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-indifferent, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree. They were asked to use the number 3 as rarely as possible. Not all proposals were approved. For example, limiting the superior general to one term of 12 years, suppressing the office of general councillor, and electing the provincial for one term of five years, all received strong negative votes.

²¹ See "Acts of the 32nd General Chapter, Administrative Structures," in *Acta Administrationis Generalis O.M.I.*, 15 (1992), p. 79.

6.6. Adapted Text of Part III of the Constitutions and Rules²²

This text was first distributed in manuscript form in August, 1996,²³ and then more formally in October, 1996.²⁴ The format of the adapted text is a great improvement over the 1982/87 text. The text has been rendered more comprehensible with the adaptations made, notably the assigning of the same base number to the rules and the constitution to which the rules refer.²⁵ There appear to be more rules than before and some constitutions are shorter. If this is permitted by the Holy See, then, in the future, fewer changes may need to be referred for approval to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

6.6.1. The Spirit of Government

The proposed text, in AC71²⁶, focuses upon the establishment of structures in order that the Congregation might better function in the missions in which it serves, as does the present C71. The present second paragraph of C71 is incorporated into AR71b(2).

The rules following AC71 specifically name the qualities and values desired in the

²² These proposals are in the draft stage and will be honed prior to being presented to the 1998 General Chapter, only to be further refined upon acceptance by the general chapter and approved by the Holy See. However, in order to render the text less burdensome, the word "proposed" or any similar expression will ordinarily be omitted, thus allowing the commentary to treat the proposals as if they had been accepted in their present format, while realizing that this will not be so.

²³ POST-CAPITULAR COMMITTEE ON STRUCTURES, *Part III, Organization*, unpublished manuscript from the Oblate General Archives, Rome, 1996.

²⁴ POST-CHAPTER COMMITTEE ON STRUCTURES, *Revised Text*, [=PCCS, *Revised Text*], Rome, Oblate General House, 1996. Sections relevant to this thesis are excerpted in Appendix 11.

As the 'questionnaire' of chapter 5 (Appendix 10), was drawn up in 1994, two years before the *Revised Text* of the proposed changes to the Oblate Constitutions and Rules (Appendix 11), were submitted, there was no intentional correlation between them either in order or content. Nevertheless, many of the proposed constitutions and rules, as dealt with in this chapter, contain concepts which are related to aspects of the questionnaire and its responses as dealt with in the previous chapter. Rather than attempting to make too numerous cross-references through footnotes, a correspondence table, Appendix 12, has been added. In this table there is noted the correspondence between the sections of the *Revised Text* quoted in Appendix 11 and both the questions as found in Appendix 10, and significant responses as given in Chapter 5.

²⁵ Using the decimal system, as with the SVD Constitutions (Appendix 1), to number the consecutive rules (R71.1, R71.2), instead of an alphabetical system (R71a, R71b), as used here, could profitably be considered. Distinguishing among "b, c, d, and e," when spoken, is more difficult than when using ".2, .3, .4, and .5."

²⁶ Adapted Constitution = AC; Adapted Rule = AR.

government of the Congregation and in its members. These are: collaboration, human and spiritual maturity, flexibility, integration, discernment, subsidiarity, strong leadership, and consistent accountability.²⁷

In AC72, as in C72, the values of coresponsibility and collaboration are stressed. In AR72a and AR72b new details are given, noting the characteristics in government for which we must work.²⁸ AR72b is noteworthy since the characteristics mentioned are those required in all good governments, civil and ecclesiastical.

6.6.2. Administrative Structures

The administrative structures outlined in AC75 and AC76 are fundamentally the same as before, comprising the same organizational levels with the notable exception that the concept of a vice-province has been dropped.

Community bonds, as described in C77, have been much simplified:

AC77 Members of the Congregation live community in different ways. Some reside together in constituted houses, while others are gathered in a district; both are under the responsibility and animation of a local superior.

Whatever is stated in the Constitutions and Rules about local superiors applies equally to superiors of constituted houses and of district communities, saving exceptions foreseen by the Church's common law or by the particular statute of the district.²⁹

²⁷ AR71a: "Our collaborative structures of government presuppose a significant level of human and spiritual maturity and personal commitment."

AR71b: "In addition to the spiritual characteristics of an authentic missionary body, a number of other significant values are to be integrated in our governance structures.

"Among the values these structures are to promote, the principal ones are: (1) respect for the dignity of the persons involved; (2) flexibility, allowing for adaptation in various parts of the world according to circumstances; (3) integration of discernment in decision-making; (4) subsidiarity, within the context of a well-functioning centre, allowing for decisions to be taken at the most appropriate level; and (5) strong leadership and consistent forms of accountability at all levels."

²⁸ AR72a: "Oblate government structures shall favour our presence as a missionary body and promote the participation and coresponsibility of the members of the Congregation. Likewise, animated by a spirit of service, our government must be structured in such a way as to foster true interdependence and profound communion within the Congregation."

AR72b: "Our government structures should also be value-based, cost effective, as regards persons, time and finances, and foster the development of appropriate resources."

²⁹ See 5.2.3.

AR77a When a constituted house meets the conditions specified in the common law of the Church, it can be canonically established with the rights and obligations pertaining thereto.

All Oblates are to live in community. This is either in a house or in a district, each has a local superior with equal authority under the Oblate Constitutions and Rules. The only difference in their authority would have to be that mandated by the Code or by the general or specific particular statute. It would seem then that if there are no particular statutes enacted by the province, then the superior of a district has all of the powers of a local house superior, saving the restrictions of the Code. What is clear by AR77a is that any difference between a constituted house and an established one comes from the Code, not from the Oblate Constitutions and Rules; a distinction which takes subsidiarity into consideration.

In AC78 the definition of a province omits the notion of a specific number of established canonical houses being required.³⁰ A province made up entirely of districts, or districts and constituted houses, is quite conceivable;³¹ under the 1982/87 Constitutions and Rules such a makeup would automatically relegate the unit to the status of a vice-province.

6.6.2.1. Critique

When AC77, paragraph two above, states that, "Whatever is stated in the Constitutions and Rules about local superiors applies equally to superiors of constituted houses and of district communities...." does it intend to exclude "Section Two" of this chapter, which refers to "Superiors: General Norms"? It would seem not, as the section specifically refers to local superiors in various places. It would be clearer to add the words "superiors' general norms and" after the word "about," making it read, "Whatever is stated in the Constitutions and Rules about superiors' general norms and local superiors in particular, applies equally to superiors of constituted houses and of district communities...."

³⁰ AC78: "A Province is an autonomous governance unit grouping several local communities of Oblates at the service of the Church within a determined territory."

³¹ See 5.2.28.

The legal notions of 'residences' and 'directors' are removed from the Constitutions and Rules. However, there are now two types of houses, constituted and canonically established, a distinction lifted right out of the Code, cc. 608 and 609. It is confusing in the Code and is confusing here as well. With this distinction there is no longer an obligation to have any canonically established houses in a province, the more generic "local communities" will suffice.¹² AR77a states that a 'constituted' house can be 'established' when it meets the canonical requirements, but it in no way even implies that such institutions must be established. The basic difference is that by having a juridic personality an established house enjoys a permanent existence independent of its membership. It also has the right to own property in its own name, a questionable characteristic most of the time. If, however, civil law requires that property be held by a civic juridic personality registered in that jurisdiction, and a district is the only unit of the province in that jurisdiction, then the province has the authority to give juridic personality to that district and have it obtain civil juridic personality. There is now no need to set up a canonical house simply to fulfil a civil requirement.¹³

There is one problem that the elimination of residences does not solve and that is a semantic one. Oblates are notorious among themselves for having precise language in the Constitutions and Rules and at the general level, but quite imprecise usage of that same language at the provincial and local levels. One only needs to look at the varied use and misuse of such terms as 'region', 'residence', 'house', and 'district', in North America to see that in action.¹⁴ These new Constitutions and Rules now ask that the members learn to distinguish between constituted and established houses; perhaps in canonical papers that might work, but it is doubtful otherwise.¹⁵ One other option is to use

¹² AC78: "A Province is an autonomous governance unit grouping several local communities of Oblates at the service of the Church within a determined territory."

¹³ Besides countries which give civil recognition to ecclesiastical juridic personalities, there are countries, such as Australia, which require federally incorporated bodies, such as a province, to also be separately incorporated in each state in which they own property. The latter requirement could probably be adequately fulfilled by a district which has been given the right to own property.

¹⁴ Residence Deschâtelets in Ottawa is a building which contains a number of local communities four of which are canonical houses, including one house called 'Residence Duvic' with a superior. St-Joseph Province is itself divided into regions.

¹⁵ Not that the Code has had much more success in cc. 608 and 609.

the term 'residence' for a community which is independent of any district and which has its own superior but which is not canonically established. This would leave 'nameless' those former residences which are now part of a district, not a practical idea.

A third option would be to use the term 'residence' in the non-legal sense of a physical building where people live, whether that be alone or with one, two, or more Oblates, and is part of a district. The term 'house,' without any adjective, would be used for one that has its own superior and is not a part of a district, which is the proposed 'constituted' house. Houses which are canonically established, and which will most probably drastically decrease in number once they are no longer required to form a province, could be called 'canonical' houses, which, at least in English, is the common term for them at present.

At least there would not be a new term for a house to be misused, and everyone already knows that a residence has never been canonically established. It goes without saying, that it is a sound and immemorial tradition in the Congregation that no individual Oblate feels bound by terminology dictated from on high. For this latter reason, as well as because the terms 'house' and 'residence' have been with us since the beginning of the institute, all of these possibly problematic terms ought always to be defined in the constitutions and rules when used in a sense that differs from that of the previous edition.

The elimination of directors removes one layer of government that was never very clear. The director was so much like a semi-superior that the office of district superior could become simply a nominal position. The rights and duties which previously belonged to local residence directors would now belong to the district superior. This would still preserve the autonomy of a pastor to run his parish, the mandate for which is received from the diocesan bishop (cc. 678, 681, 682) without the interference of the district superior, though the Oblate accounts and possessions would now be accountable to him, subject to the terms of particular statutes. A proper application of subsidiarity would also dictate that the district superior must let the Oblates who live in the various buildings look after them with guidance and cooperation from him and the local treasurer. However, it is now up to the local superior and his treasurer, through proper budgetary procedures, to see that such upkeep

is carried out, and that, through them, sufficient funds from the district or province are available to do so. To establish procedures and guidelines would be the responsibility of the provincial in council, on the advice of the provincial treasurer. The carrying out of these would be the responsibility of the local community with the assistance of the local treasurer.

6.6.3. Superiors: General Norms

The general norms of C80, C81, C82, C83, C84 and C85 and accompanying rules are virtually repeated in AC81, AC82, AC83, AC84, AC85, AC86 and AC87. In these latter and their accompanying rules there are listed the objective requirements, training and qualities necessary for the holding and carrying out of the various levels of superiorship, replacements, and council; this is clearer and better written than the equivalent in the 1982/87 edition.

6.6.3.1. Critique

In AR84e¹⁶ we have the oft repeated call for the suitable preparation and training of superiors, both before and during their term, first heard from de Mazenod.¹⁷ This is so important, and so often neglected, that it must be finally given greater emphasis. Perhaps it could be made a constitution, but the best solution would probably be to have someone on the next higher level of government explicitly listed as being responsible for seeing that this is carried out.¹⁸

The council and treasurer required by AC85 and AC87 are not optional. In districts, a council ought to be appointed with the absolute necessity of attending council meetings in mind. Do not appoint someone to council on the basis of geographic distribution if that means that they do not have

¹⁶ AR84e: "The superior's role is so important that suitable training is necessary. That is why superiors will meet from time to time among themselves and with resource persons. This will permit them to exchange experiences, deepen their understanding of their task, help them evaluate their effectiveness and learn appropriate methods of animation and dialogue."

¹⁷ DE MAZENOD, letter to Father Mille, superior at N.D. du Laus, May 21, 1836, in *Selected Texts Related to the O.M.I. Constitutions and Rules*, P. Sion, ed., Rome, Oblate General House, 1984, art. 497, pp. 557-558, among many others.

¹⁸ There appears to be the mistaken notion on the part of some, as shown in answers to the questionnaire (see 5.2.25.-25.1.-25.2.-25.3.), that the 'grace of state' extends to the infusion of the knowledge necessary for the proper holding of the office of local superior; that is not true.

the time necessary to travel a great distance to meetings and hence negate the intention of AC8. If funds are all that are lacking, then they must be budgeted for on the local or even from the provincial level if necessary, and disbursed automatically.

The local superior, on his part, must have the time and finances necessary to visit the members of his district. The provincial must not appoint a man local superior if it is impossible for that man to find the time to carry out his duties; that he have the finances necessary to do his work goes without saying.

6.6.4. The Local Community: Nature and Role

The current Constitutions and Rules covers this area in C87 to C91 and R84 to R94. The adapted text has AC90 to AC97 and some fourteen rules. The expansion of this section is a clear sign of the added importance given to the local community and its superior.

Unless the Code or the particular statutes of a district say otherwise, all of the Constitutions and Rules of this chapter apply equally to constituted houses and districts. Established houses have the rights and duties given by the Code as well as those given by the Constitutions and Rules.

AC91 makes Christ the model of our communities and calls upon us to share so that the members may grow in their apostolic life and achieve their missionary goals. AR91b makes this more explicit and calls for the district and household sharing to be in the following areas:

AR91b The local community is a place of fraternal charity and apostolic zeal. This presupposes: sharing of life, prayer, mission, and material goods; commitment and accountability for each other and to each other; hospitality, as an expression of our family spirit; involvement with the local Church, and openness to collaboration with the laity and others.

These are to be characteristics of the relationships within each local community, not simply those between a local community and its province.

6.6.4.1. Critique

The precision of the wording of AC90 could be disputed. One could say, based on the dignity of the individual as expressed in AC71, AR71b, and elsewhere, that the individual Oblate is actually the living cell, the basic unit, of the Congregation. Then, when gathered together in a house or a district, these individual Oblates form the basic *social* unit of the Congregation, a local community.

Local communities are said in AC90 to be the living cells of the Congregation, but instead of going on in the second paragraph to talk about the sharing of faith experiences, as does C87, AC90 states that every member has the right and duty to belong to a local community.³⁹ This is based on cc. 608 and 610 and is intended to provide the *vita fraterna* called for by the Code and the theologians of religious life.

An Oblate who is on loan to another province, or who has his domicile in an Oblate community distant from his own province, is logically expected to form his local community with the immediate province, not with his own province.

If, as was pointed out before, it must be for a very serious reason, an Oblate's apostolate precludes him from being an active member of a local community, then all the more so must it be that a major superior not be denied the benefits of a local community. This would appear to be self-evident, and it was in the days when the 'provincial house' was the senior canonically established house in a province and the local community of the provincial. However, now that provinces may potentially exist without any houses, major superiors, specifically provincials, can not withdraw from participation in district life in the mistaken notion that, by belonging to a district, they would be favouring one district over another. That is no more true than would be the accusation that the provincial house is inherently more important than any other: there is a primacy of honour involved at most, nothing more. Perhaps the personal value of his participation in a local community could be mentioned in a rule. New ways of being a member of a district must evolve for the major superior.

³⁹ AC90: "Local communities are the living cells of the Congregation. They are the primary units of our missionary presence where life and mission find their inspiration and their expression. As such, they help all Oblates to become more prayerful and reflective and to live the Gospel fully, thereby freeing them for ever greater fidelity to their calling.

"Every Oblate has the right and duty to belong to a local community and to participate in its life and mission."

bearing in mind the needs of the person and the burdens of the office, just as in the past the nature of his membership in the provincial house community had evolved over the years. His is a unique apostolate and, arguably, the most stressful ministry in the province and it is unthinkable that he be asked to carry it out without the benefit of a local community, in as much as his office will allow.

6.6.5. The Local Superior, Specifically

In AC92, the vital role of the local superior is stressed, and, unlike the present C89, there is no mention at this point of his collaboration and liaison with the provincial and other communities. What AC92 gives are the essential elements of the nature and role of the superior.⁴¹ His relations with others, outside of his own local community (including the provincial), are secondary and are mentioned later when the structures and functions of the office are described.

The local superior is not a delegate of the provincial,⁴¹ nor is he the first among equals within the district. It must be remembered that the position of local superior is an ecclesiastical office in the sense of c. 145, and, as such, carries with it the ordinary and proper power of governance⁴² and, therefore, in its proper sphere, is independent of the provincial in its exercise, and cannot be derogated by him. This article points out that aspects of both the common life and the apostolate of the district are within his mandate as outlined in the proper law of the Congregation.⁴³

⁴¹ AC92: "The local superior has a vital role to play in fostering and animating community. Indeed, the quality of local superiors is a determining factor for the Congregation's life. At the service of his brothers, the superior brings the community together to evaluate its experience, to give itself objectives for its common life and apostolic projects, and to ensure their implementation."

⁴¹ Though the provincial can delegate extra powers to him.

⁴² *Codex 1983*, c. 131, §1 & §2.

⁴³ As the holder of an office he, and his council, should be suitably installed. The Catholic Church is universally noted for its splendid ritual. It is sad if a local superior only gets a letter in the mail informing him of his appointment, and that his council just reads about their appointment in a circular letter. If the office is important, it must be seen to be important.

6.6.6. The Local Community: Structures and Functioning

6.6.6.1 Local Community Structures

In AC93⁴⁴ the minimum number of members is set at three.⁴⁵ The authority for creating the local communities, constituted house or district, is the provincial in council, and the rights and privileges of the local ordinary, plus common courtesy, must be respected in opening, exercising, closing, or changing the apostolate of a local community.⁴⁶

6.6.6.1.1. Critique

There is, however one potential danger with the minimum number of 'three members' in this article, as it is worded. If it is left stand as it is, there is nothing to prevent a province from dismantling its district/residence structures and setting up a large number of constituted houses of three members, or even two live-in members and one attached; directors would then become superiors and there would be little improvement over the present situation. This fragmentation would leave districts to be made up of only those who live alone and did not wish to be, or could not be, attached to a constituted house. Such deconstruction is against the spirit and thrust of the renewal of districts and local community life as found in this document, and is a situation which must be avoided.⁴⁷ A rewording of this article could eliminate this problematic possibility.

There is nothing mentioned in the articles on districts or district superiors that would in any way restrict the establishment or functioning of a district which has parts of itself in different

⁴⁴ AC93: "The local community, whether a constituted house or a district, consists of at least three Oblates. It is established by the provincial in council, in accord with the norms of the Church's common law. These same norms will be respected should the community want to change its apostolic goals and especially in cases where we intend to close a local community."

⁴⁵ For reasons of fostering good interpersonal relationships, it can be argued that this number should be raised to four, but there are no canonical reasons for not having it as presented.

⁴⁶ *Codex 1983*, cc. 609, 612, 616, 678.

⁴⁷ One Oblate, in proposing such a possibility, noted, as a side-benefit, that there would not be any more district meetings for him to attend. Another Oblate suggested that he be transferred to residence X so that it would then have enough members to be taken out of the local district.

dioceses. This could, and does, exist in both districts that cover a large geographic area,⁴⁸ and ones that are urban in an area which is divided among two or more dioceses.⁴⁹ Proper communication among all of the ecclesiastical superiors involved is all that is required for the proper functioning of such a district.

6.6.6.1.2 Formation Community: Critique

In AR93a⁵⁰ the question, “Whether or not the law-giver could accept the notion of a district community being designated as a post-novitiate or pre-novitiate community?” is unanswered, and perhaps it should remain so. Canon 647, §2, answers the question for the novitiate, it is to be a house at least in the generic sense, but it may well be up to some enterprising director of formation to see possibilities for other formation communities in this lacuna. It would appear that in a province which has only districts, the PCCS did not foresee any problem in having a district responsible for a formation community, as long as the calls to vows went through those appointed as the responsible formators.⁵¹ Also in AR93a, the term “established” is used when referring to the setting up of a novitiate or post-novitiate community. It would be preferable to choose a verb other than ‘establish’ as that carries the connotation in this proposed text of ‘canonically established house’ and that is most probably not the intention here. All that is necessary is the legal approval by the superior general. The word ‘designation’ could be substituted.

⁴⁸ The Maritime Provinces in Canada.

⁴⁹ The Ottawa-Hull National Capital Region of Canada includes parts of three archdioceses and two dioceses, and the Ottawa District Oblate Community of St. Peter’s Province has had members living and working in most parts of the Region, without any inter-diocesan complications.

⁵⁰ AR93a: “In the case of a novitiate, or of a post-novitiate formation community, its establishment requires the approval of the Superior General in Council.”

⁵¹ Cf. AR97a.

6.6.6.1.3. Particular Statutes: Critique

Once again, as in the current R86, AR93c⁵² does not make particular statutes for local district communities obligatory. Consideration could well be given to making this a constitution. However, in this document it is not as problematic as in the current Constitutions and Rules. In the document under study, AC77 gives equal authority to district and constituted house superiors.

Such particular statutes ought not to be instituted without substantial input from the local superior, council, and district membership. If a province is just beginning to set up districts, it would be advisable to not have particular statutes of either type, but especially not specific ones, until the grass-roots have had enough experience to bring some reality into such statutes. The statutes then could limit the use of the local superior's powers in some ways or even delegate other powers to the superior, but special statutes do not give him powers which he already has by office. Even so, leaving district superiors for any length of time without any particular statutes, generic or specific, especially if there is no provincial directory at all to give guidance, is not a sign of good skills of governance on the part of the provincial administration.⁵³

6.6.6.1.4. Canonical Establishment: Critique

There is the possibility of confusion in this constitution and the accompanying rule AR93d⁵⁴ and the preceding AR77a.⁵⁵ It is clear who can set up a local community, either a constituted house or a district, who can change its goals or close it: the provincial in council. It is clear who can close a canonically established house: the superior general in council. It is not clear from this who can

⁵² AR93c: "District communities are governed by their particular statute, determined by the provincial in council."

⁵³ One frustrated newly appointed district superior, faced with a simple obedience sheet of appointment, wondered aloud to the author if he was supposed to be a mind-reader or a canon lawyer. His conclusion was that it was safer to do nothing until someone told him what to do.

⁵⁴ AR93d: "The suppression of an established house is reserved to the Superior General in council at the request of the provincial in council. The suppression of a constituted house which has not been established, pertains to the provincial in council, as does the suppression or modification of a district community."

⁵⁵ AR77a: "When a constituted house meets the conditions specified in the common law of the Church, it can be canonically established with the rights and obligations pertaining thereto."

canonically establish a house. Is it the provincial in council or the superior general in council? The current constitutions and rules in C88 says, "The local community, whether house, residence or district, is established by the Provincial in Council...." If this is to continue to be the method, then AC93 must be adjusted to include it. One more item of possible confusion is the use in AC93 of the verb "established" when referring to any and all local communities and the adjective "established" when referring to canonically erected houses. As long as the expressions 'constituted house' and 'established house' have two very distinct canonical meanings, then the word 'established' must not be used in the same paragraph in the non-canonical sense of creating or initiating. This would not be a problem if the third option of section 6.6.2.1. was accepted: three entities – residences, houses, and canonical houses.

6.6.6.2 Functions of the Local Superior

In AC94, and the accompanying rule AR94a,⁶ the local superior's functions of animation, collaboration, and coordination are noted. This is in relation to the membership of his district community, to the provincial, and to the other communities of the province. He is called upon to be open and available as well as being willing to raise questions of a personal nature with the membership. He is to give special consideration to those who live alone or in isolation.

Rule AR94b states that,

The community meeting, convened by the superior, is a privileged means of building community. It provides an opportunity for the members to be called to live up to their Oblate vocation and it provides them with the support they need in their ministry.

⁶ AC94: "The local superior animates and directs the community to further the apostolate and the best interest of the members. He invites their collaboration and maintains close liaison with the provincial as well as fraternal contact with the other communities of the province."

AR94a: "Since the superior's charge includes concern for his brother Oblates' well-being and personal growth, he will be open and available to all and will not hesitate, if need be, to raise questions of a personal nature in an atmosphere of respect and confidence.

"Superiors will manifest special concern for members who are isolated or who live alone for reasons of ministry (cf. C. 38)."

6.6.6.2.1. Critique

This meeting is more than simply an aspect of the communications function of the superior, at least in the case of the district community. Consideration must be given to containing this material in a separate constitution. Community meetings might well be considered as a constitutive part of district communities. Without district community meetings there is no practical way for the *vita fraterna* to even continue to exist there, let alone to flourish.

6.6.6.3 Term of Office

The length of the local superior's term of office, three years, and the number of consecutive terms, two, is given in AC95 and associated rules. Superiors of district communities have a bit more flexibility in the number of consecutive terms they may serve, though the permission of the superior general in council is required for a third term or more.

6.6.6.3.1. Critique

It is only logical, as in the case of very small districts, that the provincial ought not to be ordinarily required to change the personnel in six years simply because only one member of the community has the qualities necessary to be the superior. Although it is not necessary to bring in a new man to be local superior, the provincial may still consider it a prudent thing to do. Rule AR95c instructs the provincial to consult the community and the individual concerned before the appointment of a local superior.⁵⁷

Actually the more frequent problem is that the office is taken too lightly. Obediences are given and men are moved; only then is it noticed that superiors have also been switched without

⁵⁷ AC95: "The superior of a local community is appointed for three years by the provincial in council. He may be reappointed for a second consecutive term and, exceptionally, for a third."

AR95a: "In the case of the superior of a district community, however, greater flexibility is allowed in reference to the number of consecutive terms that may be served."

AR95b: "The permission of the Superior General in council is required for the appointment of the superior of a local community for a third consecutive term."

AR95c: "Before appointing a superior, the provincial will seek the views of the community concerned regarding the current situation and the qualities needed for leadership of the group. He will invite suggestion about a suitable person for the office and consult the candidate chosen before making the appointment (cf. AR. 19)."

sufficient concern for the stability of that office. When a man must be moved and he is the superior, a suitable replacement must be either already in the district or be moved into the district before the provincial's task is truly completed. This makes the provincial's task more complicated from one viewpoint, but it is not nearly as problematic as a local community with the wrong person as superior.

6.6.6.4. Local Council

Constitution AC96 calls for the appointment of a local council and does not give the provincial any option in the matter.⁵⁸ The next constitution, AC97, and accompanying rules give more information on this. The community is to be consulted and there is to be a local treasurer appointed, though there is no restriction against his being a member of the local council.⁵⁹ The appointment of a district treasurer is no longer optional.⁶⁰

6.6.6.4.1. Critique

In a small community there is the option of appointing all of the community as council. This is an option that ought to be used solely when there are only one or two members beyond the superior and the two members who would ordinarily constitute his council. Having all members as the council ought not to be taken as a way of doing away with either district meetings or council meetings; they each have distinct matters and responsibilities pertaining to themselves. In this scenario, a confidential matter involving one person could not be discussed easily 'in council' unless that person is excluded from the meeting. This is problematic when it becomes obvious that one member out of a community/council of, say, ten is excluded from a particular council meeting.⁶¹

⁵⁸ AC96: "Each local superior is assisted by a council in animating and directing the community to further the apostolate and the best interest of the members."

⁵⁹ Based on the spirit of c. 636, §1, he would not ordinarily be the superior.

⁶⁰ Cf. *CC&RR 1982/87*, C. 91.

⁶¹ Such an action could even be construed as violating cc. 220, the right to privacy and a good reputation.

6.6.6.5. Local Council Competence

It is important to note that there is no difference in the matters which fall under the purview of a house council and a district council. These are:

- animation of the life of the community,
- animation and discussion of the ministry and apostolate of the community,
- discussion of community questions,
- addressing financial issues and giving or withholding its consent on financial questions according to the norms established by the provincial in council,
- presentation members for vows when they are not under the jurisdiction of the formation personnel.⁹²

6.6.6.5.1. Critique

The complete removal of any of these matters by the provincial from the jurisdiction of all local councils would be contrary to the principle of subsidiarity and would probably be invalid.⁹³ To limit it for a just reason in the case of a specific community through its particular statute is foreseen by the law itself, AR93c. If, through over-centralization, district superiors and councils have nothing of substance to discuss except the timing⁹⁴ of the next district meeting, then it becomes self-evident that their role is not taken seriously.

The general administrative and financial directories, and in their turn, the regional and

⁹² AC97: "The provincial in council, after consulting the local community, appoints at least two assistants who constitute the superior's council. A local treasurer will also be appointed in the same way.

"In the case of a small community, the provincial in council, instead of naming two assistants, may permit all the members of the community to function as a local council."

AR97a: "The local council is regularly convened by the superior to assist him in animating the life and mission of the community. The following matters also pertain to it:

- to discuss community questions and matters relating to the ministry;
- to address financial issues and to give or withhold its consent on financial questions according to the norms established by the provincial in council;
- to present members for vows; not, however, in the case of novices or scholastics, since this pertains to the formation personnel."

⁹³ See *Codex-1983*, c. 627, §2.

⁹⁴ As was seen in chapter 5, some provincial administrations even set the agenda for district meetings.

provincial ones, demand that provinces set the financial competence of local communities, so this is not an optional action, but is based on the constitutions and rules and even the Code.⁶⁵ In the area of financial competence, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to justify a province setting a limit of \$00.00 (zero dollars) for district competence for extra-ordinary expenses, so that the letter of the law would be fulfilled and yet at the same time all finances could be centrally controlled. It would be equally difficult to justify sensible limits being set on district competence on the one hand, while, on the other hand insufficient funds to cover ordinary and extraordinary expenses were allowed to be kept on the district level.⁶⁶ If virtually all moneys are sent by the individual Oblates directly to the central administration of the province, the result, intentional or not, is the thwarting of financial subsidiarity on the local level.

6.6.6.6. Matters Affecting the Entire Community

The final rule in this section is important enough to be considered for inclusion as a constitution. It is rule AR97b which reads:

In important matters affecting the entire community, the superior will seek the opinion of all the members before making a decision with his council.⁶⁷ The community will be kept informed of decisions taken in council.

6.6.7. Local Superiors and the Life of the Province

There are at least three different and distinct ways in which the proposed constitutions and rules foresee the provincial and his local superiors working together. Care must be taken that these are not confused or lumped together so that, by having one meeting with his local superiors during his term of office, he is not considered to have fulfilled all three of these constitutions and their rules.

⁶⁵ See *Codex-1983*, c. 635, §1.

⁶⁶ This over-centralization makes it impossible to cover ordinary expenses, let alone extra-ordinary ones.

⁶⁷ Which is based on the spirit, though not the letter, of the dictum, "Quod omnes tangit debet ab omnibus probari" (*Regulae iuris in VI Decretalium Bonifacii VIII*, no. 29).

6.6.7.1. Co-operation in General

In Chapter Three we see AC105 which states:

In his animation of the province the provincial superior works closely with the members of the council, with the superiors of local communities and with those in charge of formation. He plans with them, supports them in their difficulties and discusses with them the province's life and ministries.

This is the first and, correctly, the most general of the three. It states in broad terms that the provincial has three main groups with which he must work and plan for the animation of the province in its life and ministries. These groups are given in order of priority, and each has their proper area of competence. These are his council, the local superiors of the province, and those in charge of formation.

6.6.7.1.1. Critique

Within their specific areas of competence, each of these groups ought not to ordinarily be caught by surprise by a publicly-announced, wide-ranging initiative on the part of the provincial. They ought to have been involved in the planning of it, or at least in a discussion of its merits. The local superior's area of competence is small geographically compared to his provincial, but it is quite broad in its subject matter. Taken together as a group, local superiors are geographically competent over the entire province, just not over the same matters as is the provincial.

6.6.7.2. Extraordinary Provincial Council

The second is a specific formal way in which this is implemented and it is found in constitution AC110:

The provincial is assisted by a council of at least three councillors. They share in the government of the province by their advice to the provincial, and by their vote as required.

He requires the advice or consent of the council in those matters determined by the common law of the Church or by the Constitutions and Rules.

An extraordinary provincial council, grouping together the local superiors, may be convened as an important means of collaboration in the animation of the province.

6.6.7.2.1. Critique

The last paragraph is of interest here, and is also possibly quite problematic. This is an excellent procedure in subsidiarity, except that there appear to be no regulations outlining what this extraordinary provincial council must, can, may, or might do and what it is forbidden to do. It is not prudent to leave entirely to each individual province the establishment of their own system without at least an indication from the general administration of that which is expected. If not placed in the constitutions and rules, then it would be appropriately placed in the general administrative directory. Is this a consultative or a deliberative body; are there items which cannot be discussed there; how close is it to be to the extraordinary provincial council of the 1928 Edition of the Constitutions and Rules, in effect till the 1960's, which is all that anyone will remember?⁶⁸ If it is not to bear any resemblance to a true council (local, provincial or general), as outlined elsewhere in the Oblate Constitutions and Rules and in the Code,⁶⁹ but is to be merely an advisory body, then the name must be changed to either a provincial committee or a joint session.

6.6.7.3. Regular Meetings

The third way, a specific way for superiors to participate in the functioning of the province, is through meetings as outlined in AC112.⁷⁰ The last paragraph states that the provincial shall organize regular meetings with his local superiors. He is not given an option, and once a term would not be "regular" meetings; once a year would probably be the minimum.

⁶⁸ See *CC&RR 1928*, art. 530-533. This is a term which carries with it a lot of historical baggage, some good, some not so good. If it is to be returned to use it must be explicitly redefined to avoid confusion.

⁶⁹ *Codex 1983*, c. 627.

⁷⁰ AC112: "For the greater participation in the life and mission of the province, the provincial in council will set up consultative committees, determining their composition, functions and terms of reference.

"Likewise, according to the needs and possibilities, he will organize congresses or similar meetings, at least once during his term of office, in order to promote a common vision and determine common principles for mission.

"Similarly, he shall organize regular meetings with the local superiors of the province."

6.6.7.3.1. Critique

Having the superiors serve as a committee according to paragraph one is not sufficient as these committees serve at the pleasure of the provincial and can discuss only what he wants them to. The superiors can discuss anything that comes under their jurisdiction, which is everything except the setting of provincial policy, and, even with that, the provincial is instructed to confer with them regarding policies before they are set. There is nothing wrong with the provincial making it a policy that there is a local superior on each committee, but that is in addition to their own meetings. If a superior can not attend any meetings at all with the provincial and his fellow local superiors, then the efficacy of his role as local superior must be questioned, as it is not he alone who loses out, but also his entire local community. If there is only one main meeting a year, and an individual superior cannot attend this particular meeting, then, if the provincial agrees, the senior member of the local superior's council could be expected attend in his place. This is the sort of detail that would be in the general particular statute, or even possibly in the general administration or provincial directory, as an approved option.

6.6.8. Provincial Directory

Rule AR112c underlines the importance of the provincial directory by stating:

After appropriate consultation with the members, each province will develop and promulgate a provincial directory which determines specific applications of the Constitutions and Rules, as well as approved procedures. This directory shall be revised periodically, as needed. The text is submitted to the Superior General for approval.

There are two changes here from the current R95. The phrase, "After appropriate consultation with the members," begins the paragraph, and the sentence, "This directory shall be revised periodically, as needed," has been added. Both of these additions are significant and may well have been added in response to problems arising from the current text. Some provinces have produced their formation directory and their temporal goods directory, but have been slow with their provincial directory. Pressure from above, the general administration, could well be augmented by pressure from below, the local superiors, in order to put the details of local jurisdiction, terms of reference and administration on paper. The directory is for those general items which are common

to all of the local communities in the province, of one specific type or of all types: established house, constituted house, and districts. Specific particular statutes, as said above (AR93c), are used for items specific to one district community.

6.6.8.1. Critique

There is no canonical reason for a province not to have a particular statute for a house, even a canonically established house. Houses mandated by the province for a specific purpose (such as a retirement home, retreat house, etc.), might find it very useful to have this fact detailed in a particular statute so that it is not subject to the shifting needs and wants (and the memories), of successive superiors and provincial administrations. For example, if a certain portion of the cost of a building or of an ongoing program came out of a particular fund and such was noted in the particular statute, then any subsequent superior would know that he was assured such funds only for that program and that it was not just part of the house general revenue, to be used as he saw fit. Also if a building purchased with assets taken from a specific fund is sold, that amount would be expected to be returned to that same fund and not placed into general revenue.

6.6.9. The Regional Conference

Two articles from chapter 4 are of interest to this study. AC127 points out that the main purpose of a regional conference is to assist the components in sharing resources with each other and with the institute.⁷¹ In the listing of its structures and functions AR129c lists joint projects in ongoing formation as a particularly important area.⁷² There is no question but that one of the greatest needs in the area of ongoing formation is proper, professional training for local and provincial superiors. AR84e.

⁷¹ AC127: "The conference of the region is composed of the provincial, delegation and mission superiors of the territory. It is a means of assisting the various components to share resources of all kinds with one another and with the Congregation".

⁷² AR129c: "Meeting at least once a year, the conference coordinates certain joint projects, particularly in the areas of first formation and on-going formation, financial accountability, justice and peace, and mission. For this purpose, committees and task forces may be established."

6.6.9.1. Critique

The general administration has assumed the responsibility for providing regular sessions for new provincials. The most common reason given for the absence of a similar training program on a local level is that there are neither enough instructors/facilitators nor sufficient participants in one province to make the sessions worthwhile or even possible. The regional ongoing formation committee, then, is the obvious vehicle for such training. If the region does not have the resources then the general administration could provide them to the regions, using the world-wide resources of the Institute. There can be no acceptable excuse for not holding and not attending such sessions for those concerned. Even a cursory reading of the responses to the questionnaire in chapter 5 of this thesis, makes this quite obvious.

6.6.10. Temporal Goods

6.6.10.1 Ownership by Law

There are a number of relevant texts in chapter 6 on temporal goods. In AC157, the right given by the Code for provinces, delegations, and established houses to own property is noted. The accompanying rule notes that other governmental divisions can have the power of ownership delegated to them by the provincial in council .

6.6.10.1.1. Critique

It is also noted in the constitution that the provincial in council is to fix a limit on this right for established houses; as in other instances, a limit of \$00.00 (zero dollars) is not acceptable.⁷³ It should be noted that this rule presumes that a delegation is a juridic person and as such has the right to own property. If that is so it should be said in AC79⁷⁴ above, which is a description, not a

⁷³ AC157: "Our established houses, delegations and provinces, as well as the Congregation as such, have the right to acquire, retain, administer and alienate property. In the case of established houses, however, this right is limited; the limits are fixed by the Provincial in Council."

⁷⁴ AC79: "To coordinate our missionary presence and endeavours, several local communities of Oblates may be joined together as a delegation. Each delegation develops its missionary focus in such a way as to create a shared identity."

definition.⁷⁵

This is followed by AR157a which states,

The special statute of missions, constituted houses and district communities will determine whether they have the right to acquire, retain, administer and alienate property.

There are two problems with this proposed rule. First of all, in the section which introduces the concepts of missions, established house, constituted house, and district (AC75 to AC80), nothing is mentioned about special statutes for them; nevertheless, the wording of AR157a presumes special statutes. The second problem is that when statutes are mentioned (AR93c), they refer only to districts and they are called "particular" statutes, not "special." Further precision of language is needed.

6.6.10.2. Financial Competence

AC158 and AR158a deal primarily with financial competence in general.⁷⁶ The constitution states that the financial competency of local superiors and councils will be set by the provincial in council.

6.6.10.2.1. Critique

There should not be systemic differences between local communities at this level; houses and districts are to be treated in the same manner. If there is a good reason for a specific community to have a different competency, that can be accomplished through the specific particular statute of AR93c. If it is foreseen that this general level of financial competence will change at regular intervals, the exact amount may be set in a normal motion of the provincial in council, updating it

⁷⁵ In "Chapter One, Section One, Administrative Structures," a province is adequately defined, as is a canonically established house. Neither the constituted house nor the district is ever defined. A delegation and a mission are described here but must wait till AC114 ff. plus AC122 ff. for adequate definitions. The first section of Chapter One should be either descriptions only or definitions only. If this appears to be confusing, then it adequately describes the reality and must be addressed before proposals are presented to the 1998 Chapter.

⁷⁶ AC158: "Superiors and treasurers will manage Oblate goods in a spirit of poverty and in conformity with the laws of the Church and of the Congregation.

"The financial competency of local superiors and their councils is set by the provincial in council; the financial competency of the provincials and their councils is set by the Superior General in council."

AR158a: "In fulfilment of their office, the superiors and treasurers will be guided by the norms of the general finance directory."

as needed, while having the appropriate article in the provincial administrative directory simply refer the local community to the council minutes, or equivalent, for the exact amount.

6.6.10.3 Financial Management

On the strictly local level, AC161 and its three rules state the specific way in which the local community manages its temporal affairs. The constitution states,

The Provincial in Council determines which assets can be managed by individual Oblates and by local communities. He also sets the contributions which local communities are to make to the province.

By assets it refers to money (salaries, income, gifts, bank accounts), furniture, buildings and cars belonging to the institute.

6.6.10.3.1. Critique

This article does not refer only to established communities which can own temporal goods, but also to the others, districts and constituted houses, which simply manage what the province owns and the income of the members. How much the local community is expected to contribute to the province is also established by the province. This often, as with the cathedraticum, is a percentage of net or gross income but may be another criterion. It speaks of what the individual Oblate can manage, but not of what or how he is expected to contribute to the province; that will be covered by AR161c. Over-centralization, which results in all funds going directly from the members to the province will negate the legitimate implementation of this and related aspects of the constitution and rules.

6.6.10.4. The Local Treasurer

In AR161a⁷⁷ the local treasurer has the task, under his superior, of administering the

⁷⁷ AR161a: "The local treasurer, under the direction of the superior, administers the community's property. In bookkeeping as well as in bank accounts there must be a clear distinction between the funds and property belonging to a parish, diocese or other organization and those belonging to the Congregation.

"The same principles apply to those members of the Congregation who are entrusted with the collection and disbursement of funds."

community property including the community bank account, making a clear distinction between what belongs to the Oblates and what belongs to the non-Oblate apostolate. This is also true for other Oblates, besides the treasurer, who have Oblate and non-Oblate funds under their authority.

6.6.10.5. Fraternal Sharing

Fraternal sharing among local communities is called for by AR161b and the provincial is singled out as the one responsible for it.⁷⁸

6.6.10.5.1 Critique

This rule does not say that this sharing has to be done by him, just that he will make provision for it. With suitable permissions and bookkeeping safeguards, there is no reason why a local community could not take a percentage of its surplus and share it with another local community in the province which must otherwise rely on provincial subsidies to make ends meet. Admittedly this would be complicated on one level,⁷⁹ but on another it makes the provincial *vita fraterna* a tangible reality. Instead of bragging at the large surplus they handed into the central office, and commenting on how community 'X' had to go asking for money again, the whole process could be brought to the level of real Oblate sharing, with the spiritual and psychological benefits which would come from that. Such a result would be worth the book-keeping effort which it would necessitate in order to satisfy the provincial treasurer and the civil government. Sharing within the district is covered by AR161c.

6.6.10.6. Goods Held in Common

Rule AR161c states,

While respecting the rights of established houses and of benefactors and donors, the temporal goods of all local communities are placed in common, according to directives fixed by the provincial in council.

⁷⁸ R161b: "The provincial will provide for a fraternal sharing of financial resources among the Province's communities."

⁷⁹ But it is certainly not beyond the capability of any competent provincial treasurer or professional accountant.

This rule safeguards the canonical rights of ownership by established houses, and the intentions of donors and benefactors, which are also safeguarded by canon law.⁸⁰

6.6.10.6.1. Critique

This rule also states that the goods of each local community are placed in common. This common fund would be expected to provide for all of the ordinary needs⁸¹ of the members of the district. Those earning a good salary would share the surplus at this level with the members of their district whose apostolates are not financially self-sufficient. This is basically the process that has always been in place within an established house. The district, similar to a house, would then aim at having a surplus.

It is from that local common fund surplus, then, that the contributions mentioned above are sent to the province. If it was the intention of the lawmaker to have all of the temporal goods of the province held exclusively in one centrally administered common fund, then the words "all local communities" would have been replaced by the words "the entire province."

This does not mean that the province must lose out on the interest paid on one large bank account. As has been done by a number of provinces, all accounts could be held with one banking company and all local accounts could be subsidiary ones, inter-linked to the main provincial account for the purposes of interest payments received and bank charges paid. Spending authority remains with the legitimate holders of the subsidiary accounts. It is not the purpose of this thesis to go into details, though it is sufficient to state that tempted by the prospective profits of one large interconnected account, most commercial banks are more than willing to negotiate a good deal, and the Canadian Government, at least, is satisfied with the system for taxation purposes.

For a province that uses the individual budget system, there would be only one change. The local superior and council would be the level of first instance for ordinary budgets. It would be up to the province to decide to what extent the local superior and council would be involved in ongoing

⁸⁰ *Codex 1983*, c. 1267.

⁸¹ If some extraordinary needs were also to be covered in this way, these could be noted in the particular statute.

formation, sabbatical, and study budgets. Simply because a specific permission of the provincial may be needed for a sabbatical, study leave, etc., does not necessitate that all levels of its budgetary work need be done at the provincial level also. Some provinces have mandated the local superior and council to provide cars for the apostolate, according to strict guidelines, turning to the provincial treasurer for financing. Minor unexpected expenditures, such as the 'deductible' portions of household theft insurance claims, could be an ordinary expense of the district in the same way as they would be an ordinary expense of a house; that is a matter to be dealt with by the local superior and council out of local funds. It is a misunderstanding of subsidiarity – and of the concept of district – to have such matters always referred to the provincial for a district but not for a house.

For subsidiarity to work on the province level in the case of temporal goods, the centre has to let go of absolute control. Real work has to be done on provincial procedures so that local superiors and councils know how to act properly.⁴² Such procedures are also necessary in order for the provincial treasurer to keep track of the funds of the institute, continue to make a good return on the provincial investment, yet all the while avoiding the mistaken impression that he does not want Oblates interfering with 'his' money.

6.6.10.7. Competence of the Provincial Treasurer

The traditional areas of competence of the provincial treasurer are dealt with in AC162 and one related rule. That rule reads,

AR162a The provincial treasurer transacts ordinary matters of business, prepares the budget and make periodic reports.

For acts of extraordinary administration he requires the permission of the provincial who obtains the consent of his council and, if necessary, of higher authorities.

He will be careful not to interfere in the administration of property which belongs to a local community. The provincial superior may, however, delegate him to assist local communities in financial matters.

In assisting local communities, he will promote a spirit of collaboration, accountability, exchange of information and sharing.

⁴² As was seen in the previous chapter, it does no good to inform a local district superior, untrained in canon law, that he has all the authority and power of a superior; it means little unless such are spelled out in detail and in writing for him.

6.6.10.7.1. Critique

In the third paragraph the provincial treasurer is told not to interfere in the administration of property which 'belongs' to a local community. 'Belongs' is an ambiguous term and is to be avoided. If the word refers to that which is canonically owned by an established house, then 'own' should be used. If the word refers to provincially owned temporal goods which are simply 'managed' by the local community, then the word 'manage' should be used. If reference is to both, then 'owned or managed' could be used. This is a small point, but law must be precise so that misunderstandings can be avoided. There are few areas where misunderstandings can be more harmful to community life than financial ones.

6.6.11. Obligation of the Constitutions and Rules

In AC169⁴³ the canonical notions of dispensation and constitutive law⁴⁴ are applied to all superiors, including local superiors.

6.6.11.1. Critique

The provincial cannot use his power of dispensation to change the nature of the office of district superior; constitutive powers are not subject to dispensation. He cannot change the application of that office in one specific case so that the holder of that office is only an animator without the other constitutive powers of governance given to a superior by the common and proper law. The provincial in council, through the use of the general provisions of the provincial directory,

⁴³ AC169: "The general chapter and the Superior General may dispense individuals and communities from disciplinary prescriptions of the Constitutions and Rules for an indefinite period; other major superiors may do the same for a limited period of those under their jurisdiction. Superiors of local communities may occasionally dispense individuals or the community itself. Nevertheless, neither the general chapter nor superiors can dispense from constitutive laws, especially those which pertain to the structures and government of the Congregation, unless an exception is expressly stated."

⁴⁴ See *Codex 1983*, cc. 85 & 86. As with all dispensations, AC169 must abide by c. 92 which states that a strict interpretation must be given not only to a dispensation according to can. 36, §1, but also to the very power of dispensing granted for a particular case.

may limit the application of various powers of governance in all of the types of local government. The only power which is absolutely at the discretion of the provincial is a non-established community's power to own property. All others may only be circumscribed.

If the superior general in council judges that the limitations which a submitted provincial directory places on the superiors of its district communities and constituted houses are such that the superiors are no longer true canonical local superiors according to AC77 and the Code, then the submitted directory must be rejected and returned for revision.

If a provincial in council uses specific particular statutes to so limit the authority of specific local superiors that they are unable to act with the canonical power of governance inherent in their office, then such a particular statute must be disallowed by the superior general in council.

In all of these instances it must be remembered that AC77 makes district superiors part of the structure and government of the Congregation. They are subject to accountability and the limitations of law, but not to any limitation which would amount to an elimination of the constitutive elements of their canonical office.

6.7. Chapter Summary

At the Intercapitular Meeting in Thailand in 1995, the Post-Chapter Structures Committee presented its recommendations for a vote. The results were integrated into a proposed revision of Chapter III of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules. After its circulation to every member of the Congregation further revision based on input from the membership will be made. The final result will be presented to the superior general and, through him, given to the General Chapter of 1998 for its consideration. The main thrust of the new structures, as dealt with in this thesis, is to simplify and invigorate the local apostolic community. The local Oblate communities will be either houses, canonical and non-canonical, or districts. In every essential way, except juridic personality and its effects for established houses, districts are to be on a par with houses and the superiors have the same authority.

Anything which is either done or omitted and results in a loss of integrity within the local

community, simply because it is a district community, is contrary to the spirit, if not also the letter of the law.

The district superior is to be a leader in the mould of the missionary superiors of old according to the minds of de Mazenod and Séméria and updated according to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent general chapters, most especially the upcoming one.

The proposed changes to Part III of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules regarding districts are so fundamental that even provinces with long experience with active districts must review and renew them in this new light.

History and the evolution of religious institutes have given us the structures of community and 'superiorship' on the local level; the Second Vatican Council has called upon religious institutes to update these concepts. The 1983 Code of Canon Law and the Oblate Constitutions and Rules (1982/87) have undertaken to do so and the General Chapter of 1998 will continue that process.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Historical

Historically, districts, as units of local Oblate government, were founded in the missions of Ceylon and approved by the superior general in council on December 1, 1865, within a few years of the death of the founder. These districts were much more than governmental units. They were functioning community structures, characteristic of their day, and the direct forebearers of the post-Vatican II apostolic communities.

A current opinion has it that districts, as they are found in the 1990's, are the result of post-Vatican II apostolic community religious theology. According to this view, this new theology renewed Oblate religious community life by remaking an outdated, sterile, governmental concept (districts), left-over from early missionary attempts to keep control of, and contact with, the missionaries in non-Christian areas. This position is condescending and is not borne out by the facts.

Granted, districts were not in existence in the time of St. Eugene de Mazenod. However, given his family background, his stubborn insistence on a vibrant community life in his institute, and his dismissive attitude toward anything which hindered community life, it is not surprising that an innovative solution to a major missionary problem (the impossibility of establishing canonical houses in a mission territory), was found within four years of his death, before the problem could become a hindrance to the growing Oblate apostolate.

District communities, as foreseen by Bishop Séméria and Father Fabre, were as "apostolic" as anything in existence in their day. The 1869 particular statutes, as found in Appendix 4, are excellent norms, equally applicable to any local Oblate house superior of that day. The exception was that, the district superior did not have to look after the physical upkeep of each house and did not have as much control over the apostolate of the members as he would have had if they had lived in an canonically established house. This is *still* the case today in districts under the 1982/87

Constitutions and Rules.

In those places where, over the ensuing century, Oblate religious life was more rigid and regimented, many existing district communities gradually atrophied and became, very often, simply governmental divisions. It was a means often used to 'collect' scattered individuals and give the structural and legalistic impression of community. Even if this mistaken application still persists in some places today, this fault must not detract from the inspiration of the original concept.

With all forms of religious life, eremitical, monastic, contemplative, or apostolic, continued updating and renewal is necessary, lest the structure simply become a shell covering a sham. District communities, in this, are no different than any other manifestation of religious life. Following the admonition of the Council Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, a complete study and renewal of districts as apostolic communities cannot be successfully undertaken without studying the intentions, ideas, and implementations of the 'founders'.¹ With respect to district communities, there were three 'founders', *late dicta*:

- de Mazenod, the charismatic Oblate founder, who taught the primacy of community to the extent that, if community life did not come before even the ministry, the congregation, as he intended it, would die.
- Séméria, the missionary bishop, formed by the founder, who took an existing structure (diocesan rural districts with their vicars forane), and adapted it, with the help of his missionaries, to fit the needs of the Oblate missionary religious lifestyle, so that de Mazenod's intention could continue to be fulfilled in a new milieu.
- Fabre, the superior general, immediate successor to the founder and consummate administrator, who saw in that missionary structure a means of preserving de Mazenod's founding concept of the primacy of community. This was a structure, he foresaw, which could well be of use elsewhere in this rapidly expanding congregation.

District communities, as an active and alternate form of apostolic community, have been renewed, reborn, and restructured in the light of the Second Vatican Council, the revised Code of

¹ PC #2.

Canon Law, and the updated Constitutions and Rules of the Oblate Congregation. However, they are no more an invention of contemporary Oblate life than is the very notion of Oblate apostolic community. Both are creatures of the mind, spirit, life, and writings of de Mazenod as they have evolved and are found in the present-day life of his institute and will continue so into the future.

7.2. The Code of Canon Law

7.2.1. Local Community and *Domus*

In the next revision of the Code the use of the term *domus*, as in the present canons 608 and 609 and elsewhere, would be best limited in scope. It should be used to refer only to houses which are established with juridic personality and accompanying attributes.

The term used in the present Code in the generic sense of the current c. 608, that is, the lawfully constituted place where a religious community is to live under the authority of a superior designated according to the norms of law, would be called or named the 'local community.' A single canon would then be set aside to define one specific type of local community, that is 'house' in the sense of the current c. 609: a place with a juridic personality. Subsequently, the lawgiver would decide for each relevant canon whether the appropriate term would be 'local community' or 'house,' or even both.²

The further specificity of local community would be within the jurisdiction of the constitutions of each institute. It would be in the proper law that the competent Congregation of the

² This would be done in canons such as 610, 611, 612, 613, 616, 622, 624, 628, 629, 630, 634, 667, 688, 700 and 707. Of particular importance would be c. 621, which would then read:

The grouping of several local communities under the same superior which constitutes an immediate part of the institute and which has been canonically erected by the legitimate authority is called a province.

Canon 647 and related canons referring as they presently do to the 'novitiate house' would be reworded to simply refer to the 'novitiate.' The proper law of the institute would then elaborate on the specifics concerning the novitiate.

Canon 665 would then read:

§1. Observing a common life, religious are to live in their own religious local community and not be absent from it without the permission of their superior. However, if it is a question of a lengthy absence from the local community, the major superior for a just cause and with the consent of the council can permit the member to live outside a local community of the institute, but not for more than a year, except for the purpose of caring for poor health, for the purpose of studies, or in order to undertake an apostolate in the name of the institute.

§2. Members unlawfully absent from the religious local community with the intention of withdrawing from the power of their superiors are to be solicitously sought after by them and aided to return and persevere in their vocation.

Holy See would make a decision as to whether or not the types of local communities proposed by the institute's proper law were acceptable.

It is *not* recommended that the term 'district' be introduced into the Code. Rather use the terms 'local community' and 'local superior' instead of 'house' and 'house superior.' The terms 'house' and 'house superior' would be used in the Code only because of a necessary reference to juridic personality or its consequences within a local community. In that way one would not have to depend on the distinction between types of houses/*domus* given by verbs such as 'establish' and 'constitute'. The word 'canonical' could not be used to distinguish them, as both are canonically, that is legally, established, the only difference being the juridic personality and consequent attributes.

Furthermore, the term 'district' is not appropriate in the Code, because it refers to a specific type of local community developed by the Oblates, even though it has evolved to the state where it can be copied by other apostolic institutes. However, there is no doubt that other institutes can build on their own charism and traditions and evolve an acceptable, yet completely different, type of local community. For this reason the Code would reflect the possibility or existence of other diverse forms of stable local community which have canonical standing, without listing them by name.

Another possible way to approach the problem is to enact legislation parallel to where the 1983 Code expands the concept of province with the addition of the phrase "or some part equivalent to a province."³ This phrase leaves it up to the proper law of an institute to define that equivalent. In the Oblate Constitutions and Rules this covers vice-provinces, thereby making their provincial a canonical major superior. Could then this additional phrase have already set a precedent for a possible future evolution in the concept of house, i.e., by adding the idea of "house or equivalent," thereby including such communities as districts?

Any newly revised Code is probably decades away, and even then, there may be no changes made as suggested here. However that does not mean that there is no advancement possible at present. Canons are not static, but live through interpretation and commentary. The evolution of districts, in the Oblate community and elsewhere, is quite possible under current legislation.

³ *Codex 1983*, c. 620.

7.3. Oblate Constitutions and Rules

The Code of Canon Law and the proposed Constitutions and Rules of the Oblates already give the district superior adequate authority to fulfil his task according to the law: no additional authority is needed. What he does not have, in too many instances, is sufficient power to carry out that mandate.

In the meaning of the preceding paragraph, 'authority' to govern (the formal cause), is given from above, by the law and the appointment to the ecclesiastical office, independent of the individuals concerned. 'Power' (the instrumental cause of governance), the means to use that authority, comes from below. Power is earned, *supra legem*, by the district superior, bestowed by his brothers, the membership, supported by his peers, and aided by the positive actions of his provincial. Without that type of power, the office is nominal and sterile.

Without a superior with such power, the district as a local apostolic community will atrophy. If this happens too often, the province, in its turn, will die, and so on to the region, and even the congregation.

The general administration must implement concrete measures to reinforce their vision of the community system as it is communicated between the general and the provincial levels. The word is not getting down; too much is filtered out. General councillors must come and talk to the members on the district level, and not be hesitant to take the provincial to task if there are shortcomings. The congregation dare not simply presume that a renewed community life, at times involving fundamental changes in life-style, will come about through osmosis.

Provincials may sometimes have to be reminded that only two levels of superiors are mandatory or unconditional in the Code; supreme and local. All religious institutes have them under one name or another. Provincials are conditional superiors, to the extent that unless a congregation is divided into provinces, that level of governance is unnecessary. A district superior holds an ecclesiastical office with ordinary and proper power. He is neither the delegate of the provincial nor the first among equals within the membership.

7.3.1. Proposed Constitutions

Apart from the proposed definition of a district community itself, three items should become either part of, or strengthened in, the Constitutions: the necessity of particular provincial statutes for districts, preparation of local superiors, and the holding of district community meetings.

7.3.1.1. Particular Statutes

Without particular statutes, general and specific, districts are like rudderless ships destined to flounder into the night and come to a disastrous end. Through these statutes, inspired by guidelines from the general administration, implemented by the provincial in council, and based on the experience of the individual district communities, a balance will be achieved between over-centralization and unwarranted independence. Such guidelines themselves would be found in the general administrative directory, and be based directly on the definition of a district.

7.3.1.2. Formation of Local Superiors

One crucial need, that has already been widely recognized, is the adequate preparation of local superiors. Implementation has always been the problem. This can best be done on the regional level. Such a need calls for the creation at the regional, or inter-regional, level of the post of 'local superior formator' as part of the ongoing formation dossier of the region. He would have the responsibility of setting up and running such language-based courses on a regular basis. This would be a part-time position, well suited to a former provincial with a good grasp of the needs of local superiors, an excellent administrative background, teaching abilities, and a good working relationship with the general administration. If not considered to be a position which needs to be in the Rules, it ought to be in the General Administrative Directory, and not be simply left to the good-will and memory of overworked provincials. De Mazenod would demand no less.

7.3.1.3. District Community Meetings

District communities themselves must see that the success of their existence as apostolic

communities will come only through internal sharing. The sequence is simple. No sharing, no community meetings, no district community. The initial sharing is on the level of basic human communication: the sharing of stories, both personal and ministerial/apostolic. In the beginning, this calls for a minimum of trust and, as that trust grows, so does the basis for a living community. Afterwards, the sharing will expand, covering life aspects: areas of physical and spiritual life and health. Sharing will naturally expand to cover problem areas, in the community and in the apostolate. Financial and other resources will first be shared within the local community, then with the province. Finally, all of this is held together by the Oblate life which grows within the members through their sharing in prayer (especially the Eucharist), recreation, and in the brotherhood which is the result of eating a common meal together. This sharing has been the basis of religious life since the time of Benedict: it is the essence of de Mazenod's thinking, and it is the point on which districts will live or die. It is called the *vita fraterna*.

Law, by itself, is sterile unless the Oblate Congregation, in its general chapter, superior general, general council, provincials, local superiors, and members, has the vision and embraces the values necessary to make districts important and workable, that is, living and vibrant.

7.4. Viability of Districts as Units Within Other Institutes

7.4.1. The Society of the Divine Word

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate were the first to formally establish districts as units of local community and government and to receive the approval of the Holy See for them, making districts part of their proper law. Since that time, the Society of the Divine Word has done likewise, and in more detail. In preparing for the upcoming changes in the Constitutions and Rules regarding districts, the Oblates ought to read and benefit from the experience of the Society of the Divine Word. Not to do so would mean a great loss to the Oblate institute.

7.4.2. Other Institutes

Other institutes, not having districts in their laws or traditions, can quite profitably learn from

the experience of both of these institutes and, if they judge it opportune, initiate such a structure for themselves.

There is no reason, based on the Code of Canon Law, which would prevent such a proposal being made by the general chapter of any institute to the competent Congregation of the Holy See.

In order for it to be a reasonable request, the institute, be it male or female, clerical or lay, must be organized into apostolic communities, with local superiors. The charism which they have inherited from their founder must be such that the initiation of districts would not do damage to the spirit or the fabric of the institute. It would most probably work best in institutes which are either expanding in a large geographic area, or are contracting for one reason or another. It is not a system which can be imposed from above, for the entire institute, in one grand sweep of the pen. It is a complicated system in that it will live or die based principally on the intentions, actions, and community fervour of individual members in local communities. It is a system which can and will work, if it is built up from the bottom, slowly, with the help, support, and active guidance of those in authority.

The comprehensive concept and the definition of a district, as proposed in this thesis, are intended to be equally applicable in any institute which fulfills the above requirements. The variable specifics for the particular institute would be noted in the equivalent of the Oblate general administrative directory.

7.5. The Comprehensive Concept and the Definition of a District

The notion of a comprehensive concept is wider than that of a definition. It includes the essential elements and proper characteristics of the matter in question, as well as the definition itself. Too long and complicated in itself to be a workable definition, all of the parts of the comprehensive concept, must be found, one place or another, in the constitutions of an institute, in order for districts to be viable.

The comprehensive concept proposed herein includes elements of Canon Law⁴ and is based

⁴ See *Codex 1983*, cc. 608, 610, §1 & 2.

on the norms of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules (1982/87), on some of the elements of the 1996 proposals for the 1998 General Chapter, as well as in the reality of Oblate history and experience, and reads:

A district is a local apostolic community, lawfully constituted as a unit of local government with particular norms. It is distinct from an established or 'canonical' house in that it is an apostolic community of the common life, wherein members live either together, in various separate small residential units, or individually, all within a specified geographic area. It is under the authority of its own local superior, designated according to the norms of law. Each district is to be of a size and membership so that ordinary communication and interpersonal relationships are possible and fostered, the *vita fraterna* is capable of growth and encouraged, specifically through community meetings, and where there is the access to at least an oratory, in which the Eucharist is celebrated and reserved.

This comprehensive concept, as it stands, may appear, to an Oblate, as containing several self-evident statements. However, as it is formulated to be of use to all communities, even to ones that have no such community tradition in their institute, it is best not to be too Oblate-specific in its wording.

From this concept can be drawn the definition. The intention is to have a definition in the constitutions which would remain unchanged, even if a future general chapter made some changes in the applicable rules or regulations. The guidelines for implementation, as found in the general administrative directory or equivalent, are intended to be easily adjustable.

The definition itself is the statement:

A district is a local apostolic community of the common life, wherein members live either together in various separate small residential units, or individually, all within a specified geographic area, under the authority of its own superior.

However, as a skeleton without any flesh is quite dead, so the definition without its integral components is also quite dead. The additional elements in the comprehensive concept are not accidental, in the Aristotelian sense, but are substantial. From an Oblate viewpoint, and taking into consideration present traditions, one might even consider omitting from the definition that a district is a local 'apostolic' community, not simply because Oblates know that all local communities are apostolic, but specifically because this has been said previously, elsewhere in the constitutions. What ought to be remembered is that each of the above elements of the comprehensive concept is essential and must be present, one way or another, either explicitly in the definition, or implicitly because it is already explicitly elsewhere in the constitutions.

What is new, is that, within this comprehensive concept, the elements of: particular norms (the statutes of the current R. 86), restrictive size, and membership, and most especially the necessity of community meetings, are all now constitutive elements (constitutions), rather than useful adjuncts (rules). The minimum number of members in a district would be accidental (a rule).

Taking 'community meetings' as an example, the reasoning is thus. On the one hand, community meetings are very useful for the governing of a house, and perhaps even essential for the healthy growth of the community life of the apostolic community in that house. On the other hand, community meetings, in a district apostolic community, are essential to the very existence of that community, let alone the health of the *vita fraterna*. Again: no sharing, no community meetings, no district community.

The availability of the Eucharist is essential, but in a district community of a non-clerical institute or otherwise, because of liturgical norms it may not be able to be reserved within a residential unit of the district itself. In such a situation, access to the local church would provide that element.

7.5.1. Glossary of Oblate Terms

Concerning definitions in general, there are a number of new, and recycled, terms which are proposed to be in the new Constitutions and Rules and which are not familiar, in this context, to all

Oblates. The Oblate Constitutions and Rules could well benefit from the addition, as an appendix, of a glossary of Oblate terms. Possible problems could be avoided if the congregation had adequate definitions of such things as: extraordinary provincial council, house, residence, leave of absence, etc., important terms, but ones which need not be in the Constitutions and Rules themselves.

7.6. Areas For Further Study

There are a number of areas, touched upon in this thesis, which could well benefit from further research and study. Some which stand out are:

- the spirituality of district communities in the light of the *vita fraterna* of the Second Vatican Council;
- districts and district superiors in expanding areas of the Oblate apostolate;
- an Oblate glossary of terms;
- implications on other canons of the proposed changes to the meaning of the term, '*domus*';
- the proper methods of introducing and fostering the district community concept in a non-Oblate apostolic institute;
- a course outline for the ongoing formation of local superiors on a regional basis within the Oblates.

The final, and most urgent, item for suggested further study and research, is one which is beyond the training of this author. In studying the 173 pages of the 79 replies to the questionnaire on districts, which formed the basis for chapter 5 of this thesis, it became obvious that there is a wealth of further information contained therein. This deserves a thorough scientific analysis by a researcher who can apply to them the tools of the sociology of religious community life. Such a study must be done fairly quickly, before the information contained becomes merely an historical footnote. To such a person, preferably an Oblate, the collected research material could readily be made available.

7.7. Finis

Even if everything suggested in this thesis is accomplished on a structural level, there is no guarantee, nor could there be, that a renewed district community structure will produce as good, or better, a local apostolic community than did the old-fashioned institutional-style house in its day. Such a success, today as always, depends on how much work and prayer the district superior, his council, and, most of all the members, are willing to put into the exercise, on their level, as well as for the two senior levels of government on theirs. Structures may help, structures may change, but only individuals can build community. So it has been in the past and so it will be in the future.

You have not only a glorious history to remember and to recount, but also *a great history to be accomplished!* Look to the future, where the Spirit is sending you in order to do even greater things.⁶

⁶ JOHN PAUL II. Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: *Vita Consecrata*, March 25, 1996, in AAS, 88 (1996), p. 484.

Appendix 1

DISTRICTS IN OTHER INSTITUTES

1.1. Institutes With No Equivalent Division

- 1.1.1. The Redemptorists: *Constitutions et Statuts de la Congrégation du Très-Saint-Rédempteur*, [Rome, Gouvernement général], 1984.
- 1.1.2. The Jesuits: *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus: Translated, with an Introduction and a Commentary by George E. Ganss*, St. Louis, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970.
- 1.1.3. The Franciscans: *Règle et Constitutions générales de l'Ordre des Frères mineurs*, Rome, Curia Generalis O.F.M., 1958.
- 1.1.4. The Dominicans: *Livre des Constitutions et ordinations de l'Ordre des Frères Prêcheurs*, Lyon, Secrétariat provincial de la Province dominicaine de Lyon, 1989.
- 1.1.5. The Congregation of the Holy Cross: *Constitutions of the Congregation of the Holy Cross*, 1857, Le Mans, Etiembre and Beauvais, 1859.
- 1.1.6. The Basilians: *Constitutions of the Basilian Fathers of Toronto*, Toronto, [The Fathers], 1943.
: *Basilian Way of Life: the Basic Document of the Basilian Fathers*, Toronto, [The Fathers], 1983.
- 1.1.7. The Marists: *Constitutions de la Société de Marie*, Tours [France], Impr. Maison Mame, 1952.
- 1.1.8. The Blessed Sacrament Fathers: *Règle de vie: Congrégation du Saint-Sacrement*, [Rome, Maison généralice, 1985].
- 1.1.9. The White Fathers: *Constitutions et lois: Société des missionnaires d'Afrique, Pères Blancs*, Rome, La Société, 1981.
- 1.1.10. Société des Saints Apôtres: *Constitutions de la Société des Saints Apôtres*, 15 août 1965, [Montréal, Société des Saints Apôtres], 1965.

1.2. Analogous Systems

- 1.2.1. The Resurrectionists: *Constitutions of the Congregation of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, Rome, [Resurrectionists], 1982.

1.2.2. The Priests of the Sacred Heart: *SCJ Rule of Life: General Directory*. [Rome, 1986].
: *SCJ Provincial Directory, Anglo-Canadian Province*. Priests of the Sacred Heart.
Toronto, 1996.

1.2.3. Claretians: *Documentos Capitulares*, 18 Capitulo General, Barcelona, 1973.

1.3. Districts in the Society of the Divine Word

Constitutions of the Society of the Divine Word

Part Four Government of Our Society

V. Local Government¹

1. *The Local Superior and His Council*

636² The term “local superior” is used for both the rector of a house and the superior of a district. By a district is meant a community of confreres assigned to parishes or engaged in other ministries and not ascribed to a house, but who have been combined into a unit by the provincial superior with the consent of his council.³

636.1 It is the duty of the rector with the consent of his council to discuss the daily schedule with all who live in the house and then in agreement with the provincial superior to determine the times for prayer, work, meals, and recreation.

636.2 It is the duty of the district superior to discuss with the members of the district the number and type of gatherings to be held so that a community spirit can be fostered. He will further discuss the implementation of community living in the individual stations.

636.3 The local superior according to our proper law oversees all the property of the community. With his council, the treasurer and other officials he provides for the proper administration of the community’s temporal goods.

636.4 When there is sufficient reason, local superiors have the right to grant dispensations from

¹ *The Constitutions of the Society of the Divine Word*, Rome, [Tipographia Istituto Salesiano Pio XI], 1983, pp. 124-128.

² The numbering system is taken from the SVD documentation.

³ The word “district” does not have the same meaning here as it has in ecclesiastical documents where it normally means the grouping of houses which have a superior delegated for certain matters. See “district” in the glossary. [This footnote is part of the SVD Constitutions, not an addition of the thesis’ author.]

disciplinary prescriptions of the constitutions and directory for individual confreres in particular cases and for the whole community in an individual instance and for a short time.

In other instances and generally in matters of greater importance, local superiors should not grant dispensations without previously consulting the provincial superior. It is left to the provincial superior's prudent judgment to decide whether it is fitting to grant a dispensation or not.

- 636.5 Confreres who are guests in a house are also subject to the local superior; all other guests and employees are subject to him insofar as their presence affects the well-being of the community.
- 636.6 If the community is involved with an educational or other kind of institute, a clear delineation of the rights and duties of each entity and their mutual relationship is to be put in writing to facilitate community living.
- 636.7 The local superior who must be at least three years in perpetual vows is designated for a three-year term according to the regulations of the provincial chapter. A rector can be redesignated for a second term but usually not for a third consecutive term. A district superior can be redesignated repeatedly.
- 636.8 The *praeses* of a residence has authority delegated by the provincial superior; he is appointed by the provincial superior who first consults the community and obtains the consent of his council; his rights and duties are also delineated by the provincial superior with his council's consent.
- 637 Depending on the size of the house or district, the local superior has a council consisting of two or four members of whom one is vice-superior and one is admonitor.
 - 637.1 The local superior should meet with his council at suitable intervals to discuss the concerns of the community. At the beginning of their term of office, they should decide when and how often they will meet.
 - 637.2 The local treasurer, when possible, should not be a member of the local council.
 - 637.3 All members of the local council must be present and vote collegially with the local superior in cases such as the following, which are to be forwarded with the voting result to the provincial superior and his council for decision:
 - a) recommendation of candidates for admission to postulancy, novitiate, temporary vows and ministries;
 - b) recommendation of candidates for perpetual vows, sacred orders and for their first appointments;
 - c) proposal for the dismissal of a confrere in temporary or perpetual vows; proposal for

the dismissal of a postulant or novice:

- d) approval of the yearly budget, the yearly financial report as well as applications for raising the budget;
- e) approval of extraordinary expenditures which exceed the competence of the local superior with his council, such as for building plans and major repairs.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN OUR CONSTITUTIONS AND OTHER SVD DOCUMENTS⁴

DISTRICT A group of confreres who live in different places, parishes or mission stations, united into one community by the provincial superior with his council. In our proper law, therefore, "district" refers to a local community whose members do not live in a religious household yet enjoy the same privileges and duties as those who do.

DISTRICT SUPERIOR The local superior of a district which has been constituted a local community. (See also "District"). In our proper law, therefore, the terms "district" and "district superior" do not have the same meaning as they have in other ecclesiastical documents. (See C 636).

LOCAL COMMUNITY (see C 636 ff): Group of confreres who live in a house or a district. (See also "District superior").

Handbook For Superiors⁵

D. Government of Our Society

D-11 DISTRICT SUPERIOR

The district superior leads and governs the district community in a spirit of loving service, encourages, supports and visits the members so that they truly grow together into a community sharing the mission of the Divine Word. He strives to form the life and activity of the district community along the lines of the Constitutions (cf. c 636; 217-220; 605-608; 611).

⁴ *Constitutions of the Society of the Divine Word*, p. 153.

⁵ *Handbook For Superiors*, Society of the Divine Word, Rome, 1987, pp. 157-160.

1. Authority

- 1.1 The district superior heads a community of confreres assigned to parishes or engaged in other ministries and not ascribed to a house, but who have been combined into a unit by the provincial superior with the consent of his council (c 636).
- 1.2 He has authority over all in the district community, but is to respect the rights conferred on some members by reason of office or by higher authority (c 636).
- 1.3 In the framework of the Constitutions he oversees all the property and goods of the district community. With his council he provides for the proper administration of the district community's temporal goods (c 636.3).
- 1.4 The district superior is appointed for three years and may be reappointed repeatedly (636.7). His appointment takes place according to provincial regulations (c 630.3h).
- 1.5 Depending on the size of the district, the district superior has a council consisting of two or four members of whom one is vice-superior and one is admonitor (c 637).
 - 1.5.1 Whatever is said regarding the rights and duties of a local council holds true, *mutatis mutandis*, for a district council; regarding those rights and duties see c 6.12.1-5; 637.3; 638.1.
 - Cf. D-12 COUNCILS, p.161; d-14 COUNCILLORS, p.169
 - 1.5.2 The district superior should meet with his council at suitable intervals in order to discuss the concerns of the district. At the beginning of their term of office, they should determine when and how often they will meet (c 637.1).

2. Rights

The district superior, in general, has such rights and powers as are bestowed on him by our Constitutions and is, by reason of our own proper law, a local superior (c 636).

- 2.1 The district superior is an *ex officio* member of the provincial chapter if the district qualifies to send at least one delegate to the chapter (c 628.3)
- 2.2 When there is sufficient reason, he has the right to grant dispensations from disciplinary prescriptions of the Constitutions; for individual confreres in particular cases and for the whole district community in an individual instance and for a short time (c 636.4).

In other instances, and generally in matters of greater importance, he should not grant dispensations without previously consulting the provincial superior. It is left to the provincial superior's prudent judgement to decide whether or not it is fitting

to grant a dispensation (c 636.4).

- 2.3 He has the right to receive regular financial reports from the members of the district in accord with Society directives (c 637.3d).
- 2.4 He has the right to give permission for travel to members of the district according to prevailing regulations.

3. Duties

In general, his duties are the same as the duties of a rector as indicated in our Constitutions with the corresponding differences for a house and district kept in mind (cf. C 217-220, 305, 605-608, and 611 with their Directory articles).

- 3.1 At the time of appointment he shall receive in writing a summary of those duties and responsibilities, if there are any over and above what is to be found in the Constitutions, which have been delegated to him by the provincial superior and the provincial council.
- 3.2 Each member of the district should be an object of his solicitude. However, care for the troubled, the sick and the aged should claim his special attention (c 305.2; 307).
- 3.3 From time to time he should visit those confreres who live alone (c 303.5).
- 3.4 He should not allow a confrere to work in conditions that endanger his well-being. Rather, he is to do all that is necessary to remedy such a situation (c 305.3).
- 3.5 He is to discuss with the members of the district the number and type of gatherings to be held so that a community spirit can be fostered. He will further discuss the implementation of community living in the individual stations (c 636.2).
- 3.6 He sees to it that confreres of the district fulfil their obligations as religious missionaries and pastors of souls; still, he is not to interfere unduly in the direction and administration of parishes.
- 3.7 If there are confreres in temporary vows in the district, he is to supervise their formation and spiritual guidance, unless someone else is directly responsible for them. He is to vote with his council prior to their admission to further profession by the provincial superior (c 637.3).
- 3.8 He sees to it that the required days of recollection occur at least four times a year in accord with provincial regulations and with full participation by the district community (c 409.3).
- 3.9 He takes care that all confreres make their annual retreat in line with our Constitutions and provincial regulations (c 409.2).

- 3.10 He is to be honest and conscientious in the distribution of Society subsidies. Mass offerings and the like, whenever he is responsible for these matters as delegate of the provincial superior and his council.
- 3.11 He is normally the official intermediary between the members of the district and the provincial superior. Accordingly, his opinion regarding members must be solicited in all matters affecting them, but especially concerning their transfer inasmuch as he usually knows the confreres and their situation much better.
- 3.12 He has such other duties as are delegated to him by the provincial superior and his council.

4. Administration of temporal goods

- 4.1 Within the framework of the Constitutions and his delegated powers, the district superior has authority over whatever property or goods the district may have. With his council he supervises the proper administration of the district's temporal goods (c 636.3). Where circumstances so warrant, a district treasurer may be appointed.
- 4.2 The district superior is given financial competence in line with the limits of competence established for local superiors of the same province.
- 4.3 He is to seek the views of the members of the district regarding the feasibility, advisability, execution and order of priority of important projects within the district. He should do this before projects are submitted to higher superiors for approval and/or financing and before the projects are initiated.
- 4.4 He sees to it that members of the district render an account of monies received for projects as well as for other purposes, such as private gifts, stole fees, etc.

5. Organizational Accountability

- 5.1 The district superior is directly accountable to the provincial superior and his council. He should therefore maintain close and regular contact with him.

D-21 FORMS FOR THE TRIENNIAL REPORTS⁶

NOTE: These FORMS are not a questionnaire as such. They are meant rather as a guide to facilitate

⁶ *Handbook for Superiors*, pp. 183, 185.

the work of those concerned.

III. District Superior

1. Are you a full-time district superior?
Do you have a special district house?
2. Overall condition of the district
 - membership; activities, well-being, etc.
 - living conditions: finances, ease of communications, distances to be travelled, road facilities, etc.
 - growth; achievements/failures during the last three years
3. Religious missionary spirit
 - prayer life
 - recollections and meetings
 - vows; personal relations within the district, with other communities, with lay people; life-style and issues related to poverty; availability, openness, teamwork
 - implementation of Constitutions, chapter resolutions, visitation protocols, other previous evaluations
 - apostolic zeal, relation to others; bishop, other priests, other religious, lay leaders, etc.
 - missionary orientation and pastoral care for vocations
4. Special aspects, concerns, problems, planning, proposals.

Appendix 2

CORRESPONDENCE: FABRE TO SÉMÉRIA

As the whereabouts of the original hand-written French text is unknown, the 1956 typed transcription by some scholastics, found in Archives Deschâtelets, Dossier Ceylan, has been used. Obvious spelling and typographical errors have been corrected by this author so that it might read more easily.

* * * * *

L.J.C. ET M.I.

Paris, le 13 mars 1865

Monseigneur et Bien Bon Père,

Des voyages d'abord, des fatigues ensuite et enfin les affaires les plus pressantes et les plus pénibles m'ont empêché de répondre, comme je l'avais voulu, à votre bonne lettre du mois de décembre que j'ai reçue ici en janvier. Je voulais tout d'abord vous remercier des vœux et des souhaits que vous avez daigné faire pour moi à l'occasion de la Nouvelle année. Hélas! mon Bien aimé Seigneur, j'ai un bien grand besoin que vous me veniez en aide par vos bonnes prières pour que je puisse porter les fardeaux que vous avez contribué à m'imposer et qui devient toujours plus lourd et plus pesant. Le Bon Dieu daigne nous envoyer beaucoup d'épreuves et des épreuves bien douloureuses, et bien terribles, que sa Sainte Volonté soit faite; Je ne demande pas que ces épreuves s'éloignent, je demande seulement à ne pas les attirer moi-même et à les supporter pour le bien de cette chère famille pour laquelle je serai heureux de souffrir et de me dévouer jusqu'à la fin de mes jours, pourvu que je puisse y faire un peu de bien, y entretenir l'esprit religieux, l'esprit de notre Saint État, mais que la chose est pénible et difficile! probablement parce que je n'ai pas ce qu'il faut pour cela et c'est là pour moi une course incessante d'ennuis et de peines. Aidez-moi par vos bonnes prières acquérir ce qui me manque, à être l'instrument docile et dévoué des miséricorde du Bon Dieu. – De mon côté je demande au Bon Dieu le secours de ses grâces les plus abondantes enfin que vous puissiez remplir toujours avec consolation et avec succès la belle et difficile mission que le Seigneur a daigné vous confier, que notre Divin Sauveur bénisse votre ministère! Puissiez-vous toujours voir la grâce triompher dans les âmes! Puisse votre santé se maintenir toujours bonne et assez forte pour faire face aux exigences si multipliées d'un ministère hérissé de tant de difficultés. Je demande tout cela à Notre Bon Maître, à notre Mère Immaculée, à Saint Joseph notre glorieux protecteur.

J'ai envoyé au P. Temborini la lettre du P. Bonjean que vous aviez la bonté de me faire passer; ce Père l'a reçue et elle pourra dans l'occasion lui être d'une grande utilité. Il s'en est déjà servie et je vous fais passer la copie d'un passage d'une de ses lettres par lequel vous pourrez voir qu'il ne perd pas son temps et qu'il sait profiter de toutes les occasions. Je lui recommande toujours la plus grande prudence et la plus grande réserve pour ne pas donner lieu à croire encore ce qu'on a

cru avec si peu de raison et de fondement.

Je vous remercie de l'excellent idée que vous avez conçue pour régulariser le plus qu'il sera possible la position de nos Pères qui se trouvent dispersés deux à deux dans plusieurs missions. J'approuve pleinement votre projet de désigner une localité qui servira de Maison proprement dite à deux ou trois résidences plus voisines et dont le Supérieur aura à exercer vis à vis de ces résidences et des Pères qui y seront les fonctions de Supérieur local. Cette mesure ne pourra qu'exercer l'influence la plus salubre et la plus efficace pour fortifier la discipline régulière; elle diminuera un peu votre travail et vos préoccupations. Sous tous les rapports je ne puis que donner à ce projet l'approbation la plus complète et la plus entière. Il faudrait que vous eussiez la bonté de préparer avec vos Consultants un projet de règlement adapté aux localités, aux circonstances, pour tout bien préciser afin d'éviter les incertitudes et les tiraillements qui sont toujours pénibles, et nuisibles. A mon sens, un point essentiel de ce règlement devrait être que tous les Pères de la dépendance d'une de ces Maisons qu'il s'agit d'établir pussent se réunir au moins une fois tous les trimestres dans la maison pour y faire un jour de retraite, faire leur direction au Supérieur de la Maison, puis présenter les comptes, et tenir le conseil local du moins pour les deux Assesseurs avec le Supérieur. Je vous donne là quelques idées; à vous qui êtes sur les lieux et qui connaissez mieux les hommes et les choses de voir ce qu'il y a de praticable [sic] dans ce que je vous dis. Il est bien fâcheux que nous n'ayons pas pu traiter cette question pendant votre séjour ici, de vive voix on s'entend toujours mieux.

Je vous prie aussi de profiter de la première réunion de votre conseil pour traiter les questions relatives au temporel dont j'ai eu l'occasion de vous parler il y a quelques mois. J'attends sur cette question votre avis et votre pensée toute entière pour le bien de la famille.

Malgré nos ennuis, nos embarras et nos difficultés, nous allons tous, Dieu merci, assez bien. Le Bon P. Tempier se conserve et je demande au Bon Dieu qu'il puisse se conserver en bonne santé longtemps encore.

Soyez assez bon pour offrir mes sentiments les plus dévoués à tous nos Pères, aux frères et aux soeurs. Permettez-moi de vous offrir à vous même. Monseigneur bien Bon Père, l'assurance de mes sentiments et de reconnaissance sans bornes en N.S. et M.I.

Signé: Fabre O.M.I. Sup. Général

(Copie conforme à l'original conservé aux Archives de la Maison Général, Rome.)

Appendix 3

CORRESPONDENCE: SÉMÉRIA TO FABRE

The French text followed by an English translation. As the whereabouts of the original handwritten French text is unknown, the 1956 typed transcription by some scholastics, found in Archives Deschâtelets, Dossier Ceylan, has been used. Obvious spelling and typographical errors have been corrected by this author so that it might read more easily.

* * * * *

Letter to the Most Rev. Father Superior General concerning the proposed District Superior.

Jaffna le 1er[sic] 7bre[sic] 1865.

Mon Révérendissime et bien aimé Père,

Depuis plusieurs mois je me proposais de vous parler des Supérieurs que selon nous, il serait très avantageux, sous tous les rapports d'établir dans quelques districts de notre vicariat, et je désirais d'autant plus la faire que déjà vous avez bien voulu approuver en principe et d'une manière générale un tel projet. Mais tantôt pour une raison tantôt pour une autre je me suis vu obligé d'ajourner cette question, quoiqu'elle ait bien son importance. Vu la distance des lieux, la difficulté des communications, la différence des moeurs et des usages de quelques-uns de nos districts, vu aussi le nombre de nos missionnaires, il est bien difficile, ou plutôt impossible au vicaire des missions je ne dirai pas tout à fait de correspondre de temps en temps par lettres avec chacun de nos Pères, mais de les aider autant qu'il le faudrait de les surveiller, en un mot de pourvoir suffisamment par lui même à tous besoins spirituels et corporels. Ces différentes considérations nous ont fait concevoir l'idée de la nomination des supérieurs en question, qui tout en partageant d'une manière plus directe la sollicitude du vicaire des missions pourront diriger d'une manière plus suivie et plus conforme à nos saintes Règles les missionnaires qui seront confiés. Voici donc, mon très Rév. Père, ce que nous croyons pouvoir vous proposer et devoir soumettre à Votre examen et à votre décision.

1-On réunira sous la direction du même supérieur plusieurs missions ou résidences limitrophes, où au moins quatre de nos Pères, y compris le supérieur, seront employés. En dessous de ce nombre il n'y aura qu'un préfet de résidence, quoique un ou deux de nos pères soient placés dans une mission voisine et différente. Le susdit supérieur sera appelé supérieur de district.

2-Tout ce que nos Règles et constitutions prescrivent relativement aux supérieurs locaux tant vis-à-vis du supérieur général et du provincial ou vicaire des missions qu'à l'égard de leurs sujets, et à ceux-ci vis-à-vis de leur supérieur respectif, doit être observé par les supérieurs et les missionnaires de district, sauf les modifications érigées par l'éloignement et autres circonstances qui seront indiquées ci-après sans préjudice de celles qui par l'expérience seront reconnues comme nécessaires.

3-Le vicaire des missions nommera dans chaque district deux assesseurs, un admoniteur et un procureur. Ces deux dernières fonctions pourront être confiées aux assesseurs. Ce ne sera que par

exception et *ad tempus* que le supérieur pourra être chargé de la procure.

4-Hors le temps destiné à la visite de ses églises, le supérieur sera, autant que possible, [dans] sa résidence ordinaire dans la localité qui lui offrira la plus grande facilité pour correspondre tant avec les missionnaires de son district qu'avec le vicaire des missions.

5-II veillera avec une paternelle sollicitude tant à l'avancement spirituel qu'à la santé corporelle de tous ceux qui lui sont confiés stimulant, au besoin, réglant et modérant leur zèle pour qu'aucun n'entreprenne ou ne poursuive des travaux au-dessus de ses forces.

6-II visitera de temps en temps leurs résidences pour voir si tout y est dans les conditions voulues d'ordre, de propreté, de salubrité, de simplicité et de pauvreté religieuse etc. Si quelqu'une de ces conditions manquait il aviserait au moyens les plus efficaces pour y pourvoir dans le plus court délai.

7-II aura (un) soin tout particulier pour que chaque missionnaire, accompagné ou isolé, dans les temps ordinaires comme durant la visite de ses chrétientés se conforme le plus exactement possible aux prescriptions de nos Stes Règles, et tout spécialement à tout ce qui est indiqué (page 173) dans l'appendice aux constitutions pour les missions étrangères.

8-De temps en temps il convoquera ses missionnaires dans le lieu de sa résidence, ou dans le lieu le plus propice pour vaquer ensemble durant une journée aux exercices de la retraite. Si quelqu'un n'avait pu absolument s'y rendre il y suppléera le plus tôt possible sous la direction du supérieur ou d'un autre missionnaire désigné par le supérieur: et à la retraite suivante il sera convoqué de préférence à tous les autres.

9-Le supérieur profitera de la circonstance de la retraite pour entendre ses missionnaires en direction, pour leur adresser quelques paroles d'édification et pour faire la conférence spirituelle ou coulpe.

10-Avant de se séparer on tâchera de faire aussi la conférence théologique, dont le sujet pourra être: s'il y a lieu, la solution de cas plus ou moins difficiles qui seront présentés depuis la dernière réunion.

11-Non seulement dans ces réunions périodiques, mais aussi lorsque dans les temps ordinaires deux de nos missionnaires se trouveront réunis ils feront tous leurs exercices en commun. Dans tout le district, le supérieur donnera la bénédiction après la prière du soir lorsque ou moins deux des nôtres se trouveront avec lui.

12-Chaque année les supérieurs s'entendront avec le vicaire des missions pour savoir, si, combien et quels pères de leur district doivent se rendre au chef lieu du vicariat pour assister à la retraite annuelle: ils détermineront aux autres l'époque la plus opportune pour vaquer à ces saints exercices sous leur direction.

13-A part les lettres qui concernent le St. ministère le supérieur de district a les même obligations que les supérieurs locaux par rapport aux lettres. Néanmoins lorsque un missionnaire se trouve éloigné de la résidence de son supérieur il pourra, mais sans abus, écrire et lire les lettres revues, sauf à lui en communiquer le contenu à la première occasion.

14-Le supérieur veillera à ce que chacun tienne un compte exact des honoraires des messes, des recettes et des dépenses, et écrive séparément les comptes de la mission et ceux des églises de sa juridiction. Pour les dépenses personnelles, d'entretien, d'habillement pour les missionnaires et leurs domestiques, de frais de bureau etc, c'est au supérieur de district que chacun doit s'adresser pour demander les permissions requises. Ces permissions, bien entendu, ne sont pas absolument exigées pour les dépenses journalières que chaque missionnaire isolé ou plus ou moins éloigné doit faire pour son entretien et celui de ses serviteurs. Pour ce qui regarde les dépenses à faire pour les églises, presbytères, écoles ou autres oeuvres de la mission c'est au vicaire apostolique que chacun doit s'adresser soit directement soit par l'entremise de son supérieur respectif et il doit attendre sa réponse avant de rien entreprendre.

15-II est strictement recommandé aux supérieurs de veiller tant par eux mêmes que par leur procureur

à ce que les missionnaires de leur district ne manquent d'aucune chose plus ou moins nécessaire. Pour éviter des retards toujours regrettables et qui souvent peuvent être nuisibles à la santé et au décorum des missionnaires [*sic*] en fera les provisions en temps opportun et un peu à l'avance. Il y aura dans chaque district, et même dans chaque résidence (surtout dans ceux qui ne sont guère habités que par les indigènes) un petit dépôt de médecines pour les maladies les plus usuelles.

16-Dès qu'un missionnaire tombe malade on s'empressera d'en avertir le Vicaire des missions pour que celui-ci le fasse transporter, s'il le faut, là où il pourra être mieux soigné. En attendant le supérieur ou tout autre avisera sans la moindre retard à lui procurer tous les remèdes et tous les soulagement nécessaires ou utiles; et si le cas est tant soit peu pressant, le premier missionnaire qu'en est averti prendra immédiatement toutes les mesures nécessaires et opportunes que sa charité saura lui inspirer.

17-Conformément à l'esprit de nos sainte règles, le supérieur de district convoquera de temps en temps ses assesseurs d'abord pour réviser les comptes, que chacun préalablement averti, a dû envoyer ou porter avec lui, et ensuite pour examiner s'il n'y aurait pas dans le district quelque abus à corriger, ou quelque amélioration à introduire pour le bien spirituel ou temporel tant des missionnaires que des chrétiens. Pour ces derniers points cependant, c'est à dire avant de procéder à la correction de certains abus ou d'introduire certaines améliorations surtout parmi les chrétiens il est de rigueur: 1-de consulter le missionnaire respectif; 2-de tout soumettre à l'appréciation du vicaire apostolique.

18-Les circonstances et les besoins des différents districts de notre vicariat apostolique n'étant pas les même, il est impossible de préciser les époques, auxquelles les réunions de ces conseils, aussi bien que celles pour les retraites etc dont il a été parlé plus haut, doivent avoir lieu. On doit donc donner à cet égard une certaine latitude aux supérieurs et s'en remettre à leur prudence et à leur zèle. Cependant on les exhorte fortement à tenir pour que ces réunions différentes aient lieu au moins six fois l'an. Il est bien entendu que les supérieurs pourront et devront profiter de l'occasion des retraites pour réunir en conseil leurs assesseurs, et même consulter, s'ils le jugent à propos, les autres missionnaire présents. Mais ils auront bien soin que les jours de retraite soient exclusivement consacrés aux exercices spirituels. Après ces réunions on s'empressera de rendre compte de tout au vicaire des missions et de faire connaître au Procureur vicarial l'état de la caisse avec tous les détails voulus sur les recettes et les dépenses. Pour ce qui est des messes célébrées à l'intention du vicaire des missions, on doit en rendre a compte, sans y manquer, à la fin de chaque mois.

19-Les supérieurs sont chargés, comme délégués du vic. apostolique, d'installer les nouveaux missionnaires dans leur mission, ou pour mieux dire dans une des principales églises de leur mission. Ils veilleront à ce que les jeunes missionnaires aient les moyens d'acquérir avant tout les connaissances nécessaires pour exercer fructueusement le St Ministère dans ce pays. Il veilleront également à ce qu'il y ait dans la conduite des missionnaires et dans la direction des missions la plus grande uniformité, ayant égard cependant à la différence des temps, des lieux, des usages, etc. Si le vicaire des missions était différent du vicaire apostolique il faudrait que le premier prie celui-ci de donner aux supérieurs de district la juridiction spirituelle sur toutes les églises de leur district, tout en recommandant à ces mêmes supérieurs de ne guère s'immiscer extérieurement dans la direction des églises ou missions différentes de celles qui lui ont été spécialement confiées.

20-Lorsque un missionnaire changera de mission ou de résidence il ne portera avec lui que ce qui est à son usage personnel. Par conséquent les supérieurs s'entendront avec le vicaire des missions pour qu'il y ait dans chaque résidence ce qui est nécessaire ou utile tant pour le culte divin que pour les meubles, la commodité des voyages, etc.

21-Ce qui a été dit des supérieurs de district est aussi applicable, mutatis mutandis, aux directeurs de résidence. Lorsque deux de nos Pères sont envoyés dans la même mission, ou simplement pour

exercer transitoirement le St Ministère dans quelques églises, le plus ancien d'oblation remplira de droit les fonctions de préfet de résidence, si le vicaire des missions ne l'a pas désigné nommément. 22-A l'époque des chapitres généraux les supérieurs convoqueront tous les pères de leur district....

Mais ici je dois m'arrêter ne pouvant rien formuler par moi-même. Je dois donc simplement me borner à demander si les maisons dont il est ici question et dont les membres sont habituellement dispersés et éloignés les uns des autres doivent être considérés comme régulièrement constitués et jouissant de tous les privilèges de nos maisons proprement dites. Ainsi à l'époque des chapitres généraux les supérieurs de district peuvent-ils, doivent-ils convoquer leurs missionnaires en chapitre particulier et procéder à l'élection d'un d'entre eux pour assister conjointement avec le supérieur au chapitre vicarial? Ou bien le vicaire des missions doit-il réunir indistinctement en chapitre, comme nous l'avons fait jusqu'ici, tous les missionnaires qui peuvent y assister et demander aux autres leur vote par écrit pour l'élection du député au chapitre général? Ne sachant trop que dire sur tout cela je me permets seulement de vous faire observer que je prévois que si les supérieurs de district doivent tenir le chapitre particulier (ou ne pas le tenir, puisque le plus souvent ils n'auront que trois pères sous leur juridiction), le chapitre vicarial sera bien réduit à sa plus simple expression. En effet, il arrivera que ni le supérieur ni le député du district (supposé que le nombre des missionnaires permette de faire canoniquement l'élection de ce dernier) ne pourront se rendre au chapitre vicarial. Il est également fort possible qu'un des consultants vicariaux soit forcément absent et de plus que l'autre consultant soit le supérieur de la maison de Jaffna. Dans ces cas qui certes ne sont pas chimériques, le chapitre vicarial ne serait composé que de 4,5 ou 6 membres, y compris le vicaire des missions. Et cela arriverait à peu près toujours, si les Pères des environs de Jaffna qui peuvent être appelés sans difficulté au chapitre vicarial, et qui seraient naturellement placés sous la juridiction du supérieur de Jaffna ne devaient nommer qu'un seul député etc. Je comprends que ce ne sera que dans cinq ou six ans que cette question devra être résolue. Toutefois puisque l'occasion s'en est présentée j'ai crû devoir vous l'exposer et vous la soumettre d'autant plus que par la décision que vous donnerez nous connaissons si les maisons dont il s'agit et que, faute d'autre terme, j'appellerai maisons de district, jouissent ou non des mêmes droits et privilèges que les maisons canoniquement constituées. Et puisque je parle de cela j'ajouterai que selon nos Stes Règles il paraît que la maison qui sert de résidence au vicaire des missions est considérée comme une véritable maison. Or les Pères qui se trouvent dans des résidences plus ou moins éloignées sont placés sous la juridiction du supérieur local, ou du district de Jaffna, appartiennent-ils à la maison au même titre que ceux qui l'habitent habituellement, surtout pour ce qui regarde les chapitres particuliers et vicariaux, de manière que tous réunis ils n'ont que la faculté d'élire un député au chapitre vicarial? etc.

Mais laissons ces petits détails, dont on pourra s'occuper en temps opportun...

Agréez, mon Révérendissime Père, etc.

(Séméria)

Letter¹ to the Most Reverend Father Superior General regarding the future District Superiors...

Jaffna, 1 September², 1865

My Most Reverend and dearly beloved Father,

I have been meaning to speak to you for several months regarding the establishment of superiors in some of the districts of our vicariate, a concept which, according to us, would be beneficial in all respects. I have been further encouraged to address you concerning this project since you have already, in principle and in a general manner, chosen to approve it. But, for one reason or another, I found myself having to postpone the matter in question, even though it was important in its own right. Taking into account the distances between locations, the difficulties in communication, the differences in manners and customs in some of our districts, and the number of our missionaries, it is quite difficult, nay, almost impossible, for the Vicar of Missions, not so much to correspond with the occasional letter to each Father, but to help and watch over them as much as they should. Succinctly, to sufficiently care for all their spiritual and physical needs by himself. Considering these factors, we have come up with the idea of nominating the Superiors in question. They would, by sharing more directly in the solicitude of the Vicar of Mission, govern the missionaries assigned to them in a more consistent way and in accordance with our Holy Rules. Here then, my Most Reverend Father, are the ideas we have chosen to submit for your review and ultimate decision.

1. Under the guidance of the same Superior, we will unite several missions and bordering residences, where at least four of our Fathers, including the Superior, will be stationed. If there are fewer than four Fathers, a residential director³ will be appointed, even if one or two of our Fathers is assigned to a neighbouring and different mission. The aforesaid Superior will be called 'District Superior.'

2. Everything prescribed by our 'Rules and Constitutions' concerning the local Superiors, with respect to the superior general and the provincial or vicar of missions as well as concerning their subjects, and also the latter's affiliation with their respective superior, must be observed by the superiors and the missionaries of the district. The sole exceptions are the modifications introduced because of distance and other circumstances listed further on, without prejudice to those changes which experience has deemed necessary.

3. The Vicar of Missions will appoint two assistants⁴ in each district, an admonitor, and a treasurer.⁵ These latter two functions can be confined to the assistants. It shall only be temporary by

¹ Literal translation by Michelle and Louise Poirier, Ottawa: colloquial adjustments by Dawn Das Neves and the author.

² Literally, 7bre

³ Literally, prefect.

⁴ Literally, assessors.

⁵ The archaic term "procureur" is used in the original.

way of exception that the Superior is in charge of the treasurer's office.

4. Other than the time set aside for the visiting of his churches, the superior will be stationed in an area which will allow the greatest communication with the missionaries of his district as well as with the Vicar of Missions.

5. He will oversee, with a fatherly concern, the spiritual growth as well as the physical well-being of those in his charge. Also, if needed, he will regulate and moderate their zeal so that no one undertakes more than he can handle.

6. He will visit their residences, from time to time, to ensure that all conditions (order, neatness, good health, simplicity and religious poverty, etc.), are met. If one of these aspects is being neglected, he will then admonish the residents as quickly as possible, in order to ensure that remedial action be taken immediately.

7. He will take particular care that each missionary accompanied or alone, follows our Holy Rules in his personal daily life as well as during visits from his parishioners,⁹ and that he takes special care in following what is outlined on page 173 in the appendix of the Constitutions for the foreign missions.

8. From time to time he will call his missionaries to gather in his residence or in the most suitable place, so that he may join them in the exercises of a spiritual retreat-day. If, for some reason, someone really cannot attend the meeting, he will make up for it as soon as possible, either with the Superior or with another missionary assigned by the superior: at the next retreat-day, he will be invited to participate with precedence over all the others.

9. The superior will take advantage of the retreat to see his missionaries in action, to address them with a few words of edification, to give a spiritual conference, or to lead the Chapter of Faults.⁷

10. Before adjourning the retreat, a theological conference will be held, if possible, and the subject could be, if fitting, the resolution of any problems having arisen since the last meeting.

11. Whenever there are two or more of our missionaries together, whether it is in these regular retreats or during everyday life, they are expected to do these spiritual exercises together. It will be a district-wide practice that the superior will give his blessing after the evening prayer whenever there are two or more of our missionaries in his company.

12. The superior will meet with the vicar of missions on a yearly basis, in order to discuss who from their district, if any, will be attending the annual retreat at the designated headquarters of the vicariate. The Superior and the vicar of missions will determine the most opportune time for

⁹ The original has "chrétientés".

⁷ In the North American English-speaking areas of the congregation this exercise was simply known by its French name, "coulpe".

members of the district to attend these spiritual exercises, which will be conducted under their direction.

13. Apart from those letters that concern the Sacred Ministry, the district Superior has the same obligations as the local Superiors in relation to correspondence. Nevertheless when a missionary finds himself away from his superior's residence, he can (without abusing the privilege), receive and send correspondence, as long as he informs his superior of their content as soon as possible.

14. The Superior will ensure that each missionary keeps an exact record of mass stipends, receivables, and expenditures, and keeps a separate account for the Oblate mission and for the churches within his jurisdiction. As for personal expenses, which include living expenses, clothing allowance for the missionaries and their staff, office expenses, etc.... it is from the district superior that one must seek these permissions. It is well understood that these permissions are not required for daily expenses made by isolated or more remotely-located missionaries for their living expenses as well as those for their staff. In order to make purchases for the churches, the presbyteries, the schools, or for any other mission-related tasks or duties, one must request permission from the Vicar Apostolic either by communicating directly with him or by going through one's local superior and one must await the vicar's reply before taking any action.

15. It is strongly recommended that the superiors themselves, as well as through their treasurers, ensure that the missionaries from their district are not lacking anything that is relatively essential. In order to avoid unfortunate delays which can often prove to be harmful to the good health and decorum of the missionaries, the proper provisions will be made well in advance. There will be a small storage of medicine to treat common ailments found in every district, as well as in each residence, especially in those areas solely inhabited by native Ceylonese.

16. As soon as a missionary becomes ill the vicar of missions will be immediately notified so that he may move the missionary, if need be, to a facility where the latter can receive better care. Meanwhile, the superior, or anyone else, will notify [the Vicar] without delay in order to provide the sick with the necessary medication and care. If time permits, the first missionary notified will immediately take all the necessary and opportune measures called for by his fraternal charity.

17. In accordance with the spirit of our holy rules, the district Superior will call his assistants together from time to time primarily in order to: examine the accounts of those who, having been previously notified, were to have sent them or delivered them in person. Afterwards, they will verify if there is any 'misuse' of funds in the district which may require correction; or to introduce some improvements for the temporal or spiritual well-being of the missionaries as well as the Christian Faithful. Notwithstanding these latter recommendations, in other words, prior to proceeding with the corrections of certain misuses or with the introduction of certain improvements, particularly among the Christian faithful, the procedure to be followed is: #1 - to consult the respective missionary, and #2 - to submit everything for evaluation to the vicar apostolic.

18. The circumstances and needs of the various districts of our Vicariate Apostolic being different, it is impossible to set beforehand the specific times during which the meetings of these councils, as well as the retreats, mentioned previously, must take place. We must therefore grant a certain latitude to the Superiors and to leave the decision to their wisdom and zeal. However, we

strongly encourage them to hold these different meetings at least six times a year. It is clearly understood that the Superiors can and must take advantage of the occasion of these retreats to gather their assistants, and even to consult, if they find it an opportune time, the other missionaries present. But they must take great care that the days for the retreats be devoted to spiritual exercises. After the meetings Vicar of Missions will be informed of all happenings and the Vicarial Treasurer will be informed of the financial situation with all the required details of the receipts and expenses. Regarding the Masses celebrated for the intention of the Vicar of Missions, they will be accounted for, without fail, at the end of each month.

19. The Superiors, as delegates of the Vicar Apostolic, are required to install new missionaries in their mission, or to rephrase it, to install them in one of the principal churches of their mission. They will ensure that the young missionaries will have the means to acquire first and foremost all the necessary knowledge required to exercise the sacred ministry profitably in that country. They will equally ensure that the conduct of the missionaries, as well as the direction of the missions, be of the utmost uniformity, consideration being given, however, to the differences in time, in place, and in use, etc. ...

If the Vicar of Missions is someone other than the Vicar Apostolic, the former would have to request that the latter give the superiors of the districts the spiritual jurisdiction over all the churches in their district, as well as recommend that these same superiors not outwardly interfere in the direction of the churches or the different missions not specifically entrusted to him.

20. When a missionary moves from a mission or takes up residence elsewhere, he will take with him only his personal belongings. Consequently, the superiors will have an agreement with the Vicar of Missions that each residence will have whatever is needed and is useful for divine worship as well as the furnishings and the means of transportation, etc....

21. Whatever was said about the district superiors is also applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to the directors of residences.

Whenever two of our Fathers are sent to the same mission, or simply to exercise transiently the sacred ministry in some churches, the priest senior in oblation will fulfil the functions of the director of the residence, if the Vicar of Missions has not already designated someone.

22. During the time of preparation for a General Chapter, the Superiors will call together all the priests of their district.....

But here, I must stop, not being able to precisely formulate this on my own. I must therefore simply limit myself to asking if the houses [i.e. districts] in question, whose members are usually scattered and distant from one another, are to be considered as houses constituted according to law and enjoying all the privileges of our houses, *stricte dicta*... .

Appendix 4

Règlement provisoire du district

As the whereabouts of the original hand-written French text is unknown, the 1956 typed transcription by some scholastics, found in Archives Deschâtelets, Dossier Ceylan, has been used. Obvious spelling and typographical errors have been corrected by this author so that it might read more easily.

* * * * *

J.C. et M.I.

Circulaire: règlement provisoire du district de Mannar & Mantotte

Art.1- Les articles 1.2.4.5.10.12.13.14.15.16.17.18.23 du parag. *de superioribus localibus* de nos saintes Règles.

Art 2- L'article c'est modifié par la substitution du mot *districtus* au mot *domus*.

Art.3- Le supérieur devra une fois par mois, lorsque cela pourra se faire sans déplacement, appeler chacun de ses sujets en direction selon les articles 9.10.11.12.13 du parag. de nos saintes règles *de sacramentis et directione* modifiés par le canon suivant du dernier chap. gén. Canon 45, les articles 9.10.11.12 et 13 seront remplacés par les suivants:

art.9- Manifestatio conscientiae, etsi summopere consulenda, apud nos facultativa habetur, et ad publicas constitutionum transgressionem vel progressum in cirtutibus[sic]¹ restringitur. Attamen semel in mense unusquisque de societate coram superiore se sustet, ut monitiones et consilia accipiat que juxta sapientiae dictaminae unicuique sunt profutura.

art.10- Ad maiorem in pietate et in perfectione profectum, quisque nostrum diligent proprio motu studebit intima cordis aut suo superiori adaperire, aut sapienti moderatori inter perspicuos societatis sacerdotes electo, ut illi perspectus sit sicut ipse sibi.

art.11- Superioribus, ait S. Ignatius, subditi amnino perspecti sint, quod non tantum ad utilitatem subditorum quae maxima sane est, verum ad bonum quoque generale societatis attinet ut superior eos quibus varia commissurus est munera dignoscat, sicque congregationis honor sudditique salus minime periclitentur.

art.12- quocirca necesse est, etc...

¹ Probably should read *virtutibus*.

art.13- Omnes insuper de societate tenentur culpas superiori patefacere, defectus et imperfectiones etc. etc.

Comme il lui sera impossible de convoquer ainsi auprès de lui une fois par mois chacun de ses sujets, il remplira cette obligation quand les circonstances le rapprocheront de qq. un d'eux.

- Art.4- Le supérieur profitera des occasions qu'il pourra avoir pour visiter les résidences des Pères afin de voir si tout est dans les conditions voulues d'ordre, de propreté, de salubrité, de simplicité et de pauvreté religieuse.

- Art.5- Il veillera avec une paternelle sollicitude à l'avancement spirituel de tous ceux qui lui sont confiés, stimulant et au besoin réglant leur zèle pour qu'ils n'entreprennent ou ne poursuivent pas des travaux au dessus de leurs forces. Il aura soin que chaque missionnaire se conforme en tout temps et en tous lieux et aussi exactement que possible aux prescriptions de nos saintes règles et spécialement à celles de la P.173 dans l'appendice aux constitutions pour les missions étrangères.

- Art.6- Le supérieur n'a pour le moment qu'un assesseur; un autre lui sera donné quand le nombre des missionnaires du district dépassera 4.

- Art.7- Le supérieur ne peut s'absenter de son district sans la permission expresse et écrite du vic. des missions.

- Art.8- Le supérieur réunira les Pères de son district au moins 3 fois l'an. Cette réunion prendra 3 jours qui seront ainsi employés: le 1er[sic] jour, retraite du mois, instruction du supérieur, 2 méditations communes, l'une le matin, l'autre avant midi, office, examen particulier conférence de la coulpe; après l'office de matines, vers 4 heures du soir, la retraite sera clôturée. Le 2^{me} jour, conférence théologique, selon le programme et les règles qui seront tracées plus tard; révision des recettes et dépenses des résidences, balance de la caisse du district en conseil de tous les pères présents. On devra s'informer si les comptes des messes ont été envoyés régulièrement chaque mois au proc. vic. selon les règlements en vigueur. Le 3^{me} jour sera employé à conférer selon l'esprit de l'art.16 parag. IV chap. II part.1 des choses qui regardent l'administration des chrétientés, la prédication, les catéchismes, les sacrements, la conduite des âmes, etc. et à une récréation nécessaire. On exhorte les Pères à attacher la plus grande importance à ces réunions, et à leur faire céder les exigences du ministère. Le sup. fixera les époques les plus convenables à ces réunions et les fera connaître au vic. des missions. Il faut des raisons majeures pour empêcher cette réunion.

- Art.9- Tous les pères présents aux réunions périodiques, seront par mesure provisoire admis à être membres du conseil qui s'y tiendra.

- Art.10- Les missionnaires sont exhortés à faire leur retraite mensuelle régulièrement seuls, ou en compagnie d'un confrère.

- Art.11- Toutes les fois que deux pères se trouveront ensemble, ils feront tout les exercices en

commun.

- Art.12- Dans tout le district, le supérieur donnera la bénédiction après la prière du soir, lorsqu'au moins 2 des nôtres se trouveront avec lui, et ces derniers sont exhortés à faire dans ces occasions la coulpe prescrite, art. 7 parag. 2, chap. 2 part.2. de nos saintes Règles.
- Art.13- Les Pères de ce district seront appelés successivement 2 par 2 à la retraite de Jaffna.
- Art.14- Le supérieur a le droit d'ouvrir les lettres reçues par ses sujets, et de recevoir ouvertes les lettres envoyées par eux. Mais, vu l'éloignement des Pères, cette règle ne recevra guère d'application qu'au temps des réunions. Les missionnaires doivent sentir qu'ils sont obligés de tenir le supérieur au courant de leur correspondance, et qu'ils ne doivent lui en rien cacher à moins qu'il ne s'agisse (chose très rare en ce pays) des lettres de conscience. Néanmoins on n'écrit pas aux prêtres séculiers outre-mont que pour affaires courantes sans le faire passer par le supérieur.
- Art.15- En l'absence du supérieur et de l'admoniteur, le Père le plus ancien d'oblation fait l'intérim avec les conditions indiquées à l'article 18 du parag. 6 *de superioribus localibus*.
- Art.16- Le supérieur exercera les fonctions de proc. du district jusqu'à ce que le nombre des pères permette de nommer un proc. cependant s'il trouvait plus commode de faire tenir ces comptes par un autre, il pourrait le faire après avoir fait agréer ce père au vic. des Missions.
- Art.17- Le supérieur aura 1-un compte courant des recettes et dépenses; 2-un carton où seront recueillis les décrets des chapitres généraux, les actes de visite, les délibérations de conseils locaux; 3-un inventaire des meubles appartenant à la communauté.
- Art.18- Aucun Père ne peut faire de prêt sans la permission du sup. Le sup. ne pourra prêter lui-même plus 5 livres par an sans la permission du vic. des Missions ou du vic. apost.
- Art.19- Le sup. veillera à l'exécution des règlements faits par le vic. des missions, et le vic. ap. pour les comptes de la congrégation, du vicariat et des églises. Il suivra dans le rendement de ses comptes la méthode indiquée dans la note ci-jointe. Il fixera selon les mêmes règlements les dépenses d'entretien, d'habillements, de domestiques, frais de bureau, etc. de chacun, et les aumônes que chacun pourra faire. C'est au sup. que l'on s'adressera pour les permissions regardant les dépenses autres que les dépenses journalières. Le sup. fera fixer par le vic. des missions la somme totale des aumônes à distribuer dans tout son district.
- Art.21-² Le sup. ou son proc. s'entendra avec le proc. vic. pour les provisions à faire lui-même et celles à faire par l'entremise de ce dernier, de façon à combiner l'économie dans les dépenses, et la facilité dans les achats; mais tous les articles demandés en Europe le seront par l'entremise du proc. vicarial.

² There is no Art. 20-

- Art.22- Le sup. est spécialement chargé de veiller à la santé des Pères et de pourvoir à tous leurs besoins matériels. Il usera d'une sage prévoyance pour que aucun des Pères ne soit jamais privé de ce qui lui est nécessaire. Il accordera dans les limites de la pauvreté religieuse les adoucissements que les mauvaises santés demanderaient. Il pourra fournir aux missionnaires éloignés les médecines d'un usage plus fréquent. Dès qu'un missionnaire tombera malade, il lui procurera au plus tôt les secours de l'art, le fera transporter, s'il y a lieu, dans un logement plus commode et avertira sans délai le vic. des missions.
- Art.23- Le vic.ap. nomme le sup. archiprêtre pour tout son district avec pouvoir d'absoudre des cas réservés Nos. 5 & 6; et lui confie la haute administration et direction des chrétientés et des missionnaires du district. Le sup. installe les nouveaux missionnaires, veille à ce que tous se conduisent dans l'administration des sacrements et le gouvernement des chrétientés d'après des principes uniformes. C'est à lui qu'on s'adressera dans les cas embarrassants, lui qu'on consultera dans tous les changements à introduire, et toutes les oeuvres et confréries à établir, etc. On ne mettra personne hors de l'église, on n'imposera aucune amende ou pénitence extraordinaire sans sa permission.
- Art.24- Il est expressément défendu d'écrire dans les journaux, de rien faire imprimer, de faire aucune démarche devant les tribunaux sans l'assentiment du sup. dans les cas graves et non urgents, celui-ci aura soin d'en référer au vic. ap.
- Art.25- On ne recevra dans ce district que 2 journaux au plus, l'un local, l'autre européen, et ces journaux devront être approuvés par le Vic. des Missions.
- Art.26- On ne fera aucun voyage hors du district sans la permission du sup. ni hors du vicariat, sans celle de l'évêque.
- Art.27- Le sup. s'efforcera d'entretenir la bonne harmonie entre nos Pères et les missionnaires étrangers au vicariat ou du vicariat, veillant en même temps à ce qu'il ne s'établisse aucune relation contraire aux intérêts de la congrégation.
- Art.28- On suivra pour l'administration les règles tracées dans la circ. No.1.
- Art.29- Le P. admoniteur remplace auprès de son compagnon le sup. du district pour toutes les permissions courantes. Il préside les exercices, il ouvre les lettres, excepté celles du vic. des missions, de l'admoniteur vicarial, du proc.vic. et du sup. local.
- Art.30- Le règlement sera lu à toutes les retraites.

Jaffna, 24-2-1869

+ Christophe, O.M.I. Ev. Médéa, vic. ap. Jaffna
Vic. des missions de Ceylan.

Appendix 5

Chapitre Général, 1893¹

DÉCLARATIONS

3. En attendant la formule réclamée de l'Administration générale, où seront définis les caractères distinctifs d'une maison régulière, d'une maison incomplète, d'une résidence et d'un district, voici, sur ce sujet, ce qui a été déclaré avec l'assentiment du Chapitre:

Une *maison régulière* est celle qui, constituée par ordonnance du Supérieur général, a reçu:

1. l'autonomie administrative prévue par la Règle; 2. un conseil composé du supérieur et de deux assesseurs; 3. et qui compte au moins cinq membres prêtres. Elle est représentée au Chapitre provincial par son Supérieur et par un délégué élu. L'ordonnance du Supérieur général est rédigée à triple exemplaire, et conservée dans les archives des trois administrations: générale, provinciale et locale.

Une *maison incomplète* est celle qui, fondée comme la précédente par ordonnance du Supérieur général, réalise les deux premières conditions, mais non la troisième. Elle est représentée au Chapitre provincial par son Supérieur, mais elle n'a pas droit à un délégué.

La *résidence*, qui sera désormais, elle aussi, fondée par ordonnance du Supérieur général, est essentiellement privée d'autonomie administrative; elle n'a ni supérieur ni conseil, mais seulement un directeur. Elle est annexée à une maison proprement dite, et elle relève du supérieur de cette maison, à moins qu'elle ne soit directement placée sous la tutelle du Provincial. Dans le premier cas, elle vote avec la maison dont elle dépend; dans le second cas, avec celle qui lui est indiquée, ordinairement la plus voisine.

Dans son gouvernement, le directeur de résidence peut, en général, faire tout ce que peut un supérieur sans son conseil. Il ouvre et ferme les lettres; il contrôle la correspondance; il préside l'exercice de la coulpe; il donne les permissions et les obédiences pour le saint ministère. Quand le Supérieur est présent à la résidence, il y exerce tous les droits d'un supérieur dans sa maison. Lui seul bénit la communauté après la prière du soir. Quand le directeur de résidence est de passage dans la maison de laquelle il dépend, il prend place immédiatement après le Supérieur. Mais cette distinction est purement honorifique. C'est le premier Assistant qui, en l'absence du Supérieur, fait les prières, préside l'office, bénit la table, donne les permissions.

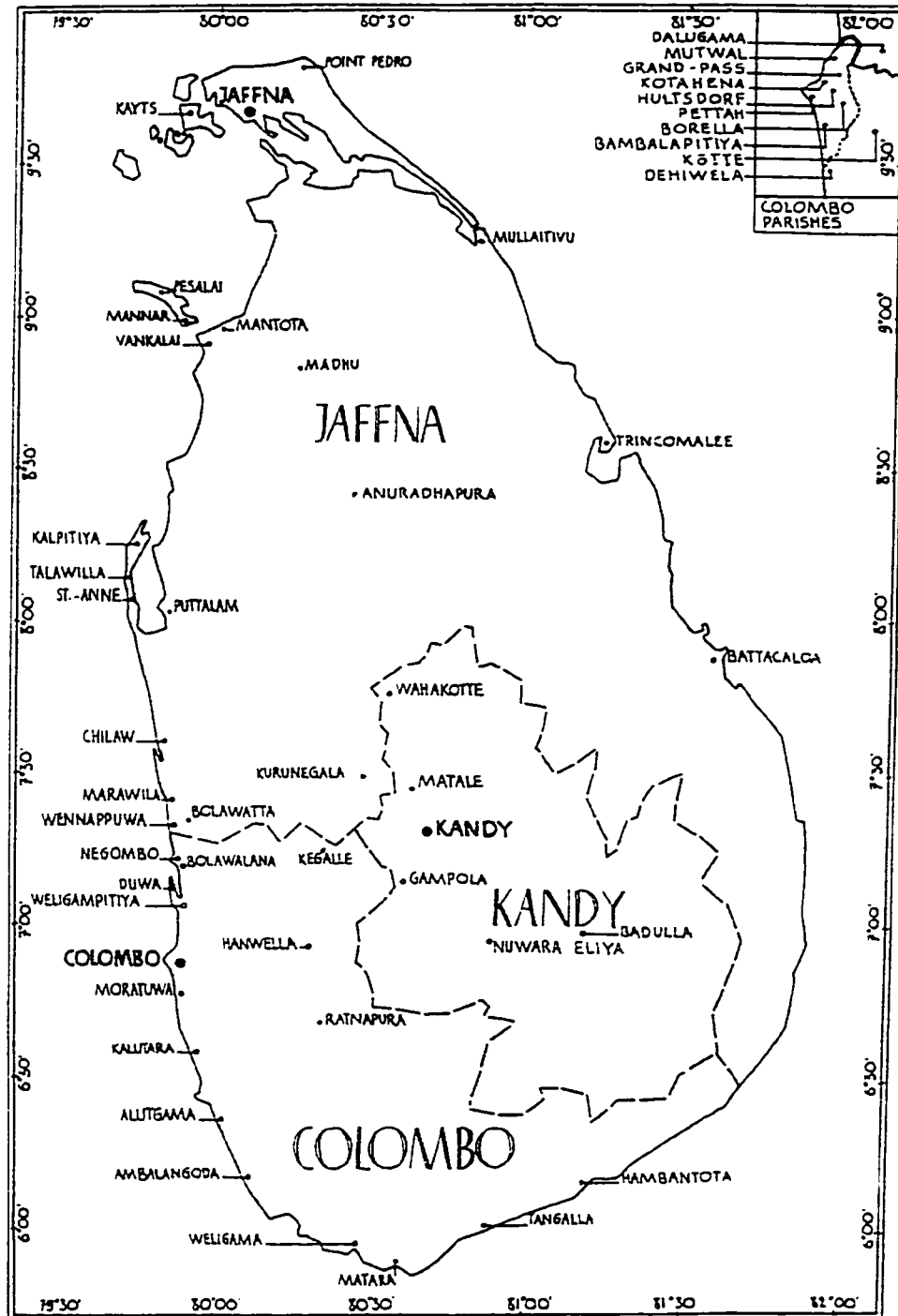
Dans les Missions Étrangères, nos Pères, dispersés à de grandes distances les uns des autres, ne peuvent pas toujours former des maisons régulières, complètes ou incomplètes, ni même des résidences proprement dites. Ils se mettent alors en relation, autant que possible, avec le Vicaire de mission [*sic*];² ils s'administrent eux-mêmes selon les instructions reçues de lui, et ils votent

¹ G. COSENTINO, *Nos Chapitres Généraux*. Ottawa, Éditions des Études Oblates, 1957, pp. 133-134.

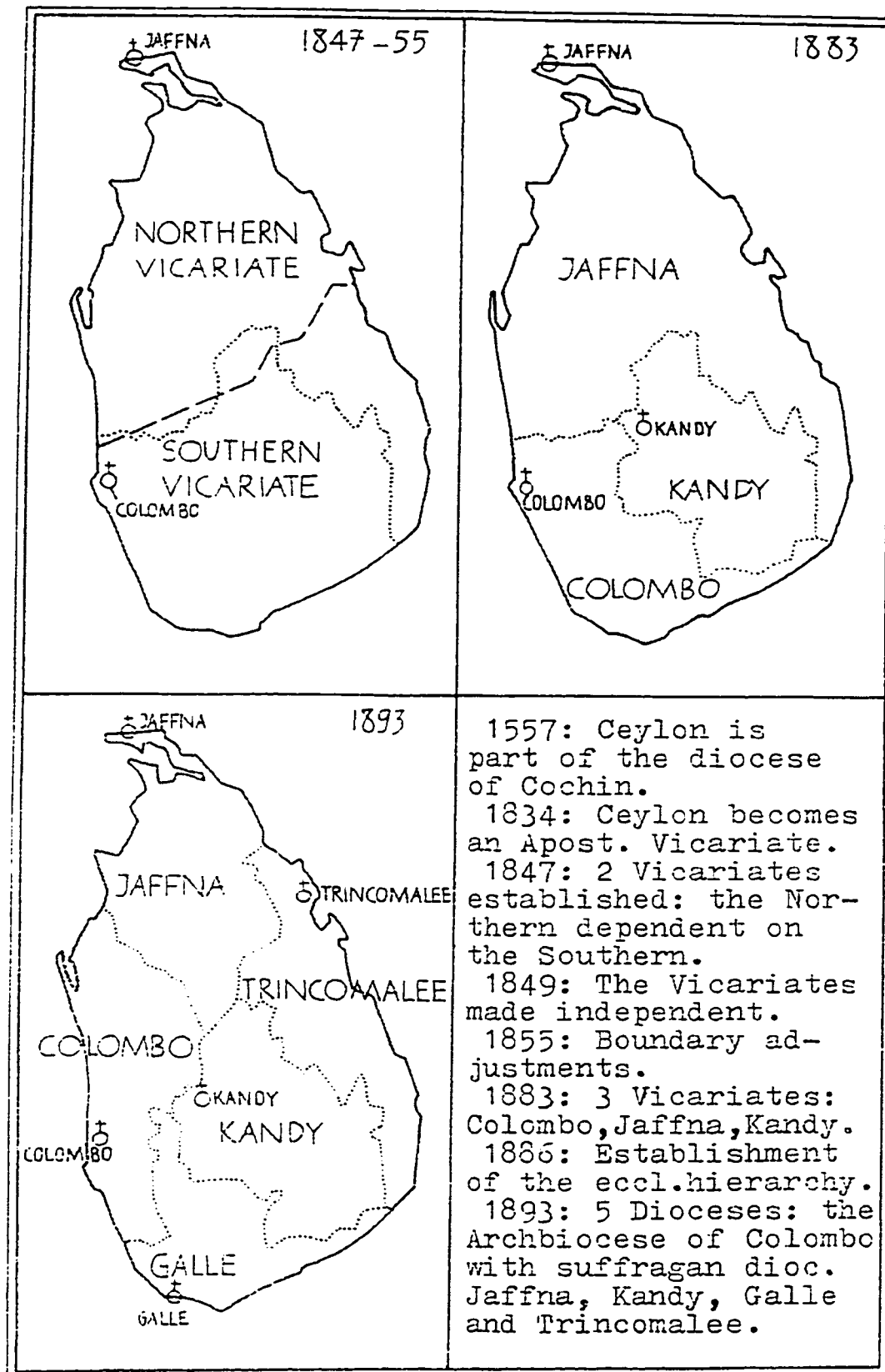
² This may be a misprint as the office is normally referred to as *Vicaire de missions*.

individuellement, et par écrit, au chef-lieu du vicariat pour le délégué de la Mission au Chapitre général. Quand les relations le permettent, le vicariat est divisé en *districts*, et chaque district forme comme une communauté dispersée, comprenant essentiellement un supérieur, deux assistants et un plus ou moins grand nombre de sujets. Le chef-lieu du district est alors, selon son importance et sa constitution, maison régulière, maison incomplète, simple résidence ou même simple poste; mais toujours il y a, dans le district, un supérieur et deux assistants, réunis ou dispersés, auxquels les affaires importantes sont déférées, et qui en donnent leur avis. Sous l'autorité du Supérieur, tous les Missionnaires du district ne forment qu'une communauté; ils s'administrent eux-mêmes selon les instructions reçues, et s'ils sont plus de quatre, ils ont droit d'être représentés au Chapitre vicarial, comme les maisons régulières, par leur Supérieur et par un délégué; ils votent, au chef-lieu du district, par écrit ou autrement.

Appendix 6 MAPS OF CEYLON¹



¹ R. BOUDENS. "Catholic Missionaries in a British Colony: Successes and Failures in Ceylon, 1796-1893." in *Nouvelle Revue de science missionnaire*, Immensee [sic], 1979, pp. 173-174.



Appendix 7

PERSONNEL NOS. 3 TO 22

Personnel Nos. 3 to 9

The third *Personnel*, that of 1887, lists the vicariate of St. Albert, in the Canadian North West Territories (NWT), now the Canadian Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, as having districts. The District of St. Albert was a house with five attached residences. The superior lived in the house as did his first assistant; the second assistant lived the residence in nearby Edmonton. It was the first district to have a council listed. The District of Carlton in Saskatchewan, NWT, had five residences, with its superior in the residence in Prince Albert. The District of Battleford, Saskatchewan, had two residences for a total of three members, with its superior in Cold Lake, Saskatchewan. The District of Calgary, with five widely-spaced residences, had its superior, the legendary Albert Lacombe, at the residence in Calgary. The District of Cumberland, Saskatchewan, had three residences, with nine members, but no superior.¹

The same *Personnel* lists, for the vicariate of Jaffna, the same divisions as previous *Personnel*. The vicariate of Colombo, where Archbishop Bonjean had been transferred, had no district divisions as yet. The vicariate of Natal had dropped its district divisions.²

The fourth *Personnel*, of 1895, lists only the vicariate of Jaffna with districts, the same five.³

The fifth *Personnel*, of 1899, lists the vicariate of Jaffna with two districts. The first, Jaffna, is a house with attached residences, as before. The second, Mannar-Mantotte, has four members in four residences, but no superior. The vicariate of Colombo has three districts. The so-called District of Colombo is in actuality a house with attached residences; the District of Wennapuwa is all residences and missions with the office of superior vacant; the District of Negombo has seven missions and a superior with two councillors; the District of Maggona, all missions, has a superior.⁴

Personnel, no. 6, December, 1904, has districts for the vicariates of St. Albert, Canada; Jaffna, Ceylon and Colombo, Ceylon.⁵

¹ See *Personnel* #3, 1887, pp. 50-56.

² See *Personnel* #3, 1887, pp. 50-56.

³ See *Personnel* #4, 1895, pp. 77-88.

⁴ See *Personnel* #5, 1899, pp. 87-97.

⁵ See *Personnel* #6, 1904, pp. 55-59, 71-80.

Personnel, no. 7, 1907, divides into districts the vicariate of St. Albert and Saskatchewan,⁹ Canada; the vicariate of Mackenzie, Canada; the vicariates of Jaffna and Colombo in Ceylon.⁷

Personnel, no. 8, 1911, has the renamed Alberta-Saskatchewan vicariate, Canada, partially divided as before. The vicariate of Ceylon is now divided into two parts, the Archdiocese of Colombo and the Diocese of Jaffna. Both parts are divided into districts.⁸

Personnel, no. 9, 1921, after the promulgation of the Code, has districts in the Second American Province, i.e.: Southern USA; Alberta-Saskatchewan Province, Canada, including north-central USA; the vicariate of Ceylon, Colombo and Jaffna, and the vicariate of Natal, South Africa.⁹ Districts had been approved for any area, province or vicariate, containing scattered missionaries since the Constitutions and Rules of 1910, but this was the first time so many provinces implemented them.

Personnel, No. 10, 1927; Nos. 11 to 20

For the first time a district is defined and explained in a special note at the beginning of the *Personnel*.¹⁰ This edition points out that, when a house, formed or unformed, has residences, missions, or isolated posts attached to it, it is not a district according to the Oblate rule, even if the title of district is in common usage in the area or even within the *Personnel*. The confusion in application continues to exist today.¹¹ The 1927 edition lists as having districts, the Second American Province; Manitoba Province, Canada; Alberta-Saskatchewan Province, Canada; St. Peter's of New Westminster Province, Canada; St. Mary's of Regina Province, Canada; Vice-province of St. Henry of Belleville, USA; vicariate of Athabaska, Canada; Keewatin vicariate, Canada; vicariate of Ceylon; vicariate of Natal; the vicariate of Basutoland.¹² Whether or not all of these districts were such, *stricta dicta*, according to the Oblate Constitutions and Rules cannot be answered from a simple reading of the *Personnel* and is not of concern here. The fact remains that, from this point onwards, the district was more and more utilized in both expanding and established provinces and vice-provinces as well as in vicariates of missions.

⁹ The vicariate is divided into two parts: the St. Albert part is divided into districts, the Saskatchewan part is not. (see *Personnel* #7, 1907, pp. 64-76).

⁷ See *Personnel* #7, 1907, pp. 77-93.

⁸ See *Personnel* #8, 1911, pp. 60-67, 83-95.

⁹ See *Personnel* #9, 1921, pp. 51-58, 67-79, 99-125.

¹⁰ See *Personnel* #10, 1927, pp. 3-6.

¹¹ The Southern Ontario District of St. Peter's Province, Canada, is actually a house, Breen Oblate Community, with residences, stations and individuals attached.

¹² See *Personnel* #10, 1927, pp. 65-131.

Personnel, Nos. 21 and 22

The trend continued until after the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent revision of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules in 1982/87.¹³ In areas of the Congregation, notably North America and parts of Europe, the number of Oblates began to decline and some district communities were established to bring together with a sense of community those men who found themselves in much smaller houses and residences, or even living alone.

In the 1987 *Personnel*, no. 21, districts are listed for the Provinces of France-Midi, France-Nord, Belgium South, the Polish Vice-province of France-Benelux, the Dutch Vice-province; in Canada, the Provinces of St. Peter's, Manitoba, St. Mary's and Assumption Vice-province; in the United States, the Southern, Central, and Western Provinces; in Latin America, the Haiti, Pilcomayo (Paraguay), Mexico and Argentine Vice-provinces; in Asia, the Provinces of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), Philippines, the Vice-province of Japan and the General Delegation of Jaffna (Sri Lanka); in Africa, the Provinces of Lesotho and Cameroun-Tchad, the Vice-provinces of Transvaal, Natal Windhoek and Kimberley-Bloemfontein and the Delegation of Senegal.¹⁴

By the time of the 1992 General Chapter, one-fourth of the Congregation was living in district communities.¹⁵

In the 1993 *Personnel*, no. 22, there were districts listed for the Provinces of France-Midi, France-Nord, Belgium South, the Polish Vice-province of France-Benelux, the Dutch Vice-province and the Delegation of Scandinavia; in Canada, the Provinces of St. Peter's, Manitoba, and Grandin, and the Vice-provinces of St. Mary's and Assumption; in the United States, the Southern, Central, and Western Provinces; in Latin America, the Haiti, Pilcomayo (Paraguay), Chile, Mexico, and Argentine Vice-provinces; in Asia, the Provinces of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), Philippines, the Vice-provinces of Japan, Indonesia and Jaffna (Ceylon), and the General Delegation of Thailand; in Africa, the Provinces of Lesotho, and Cameroun-Tchad, the Vice-provinces of Natal, Kimberley-Bloemfontein, Namibia, Transvaal and Windhoek, and the Delegations of Senegal and Figuil.¹⁶

Canadian and the United States of America Regional¹⁷ Survey, 1994

At the time of the survey for this thesis there were, in existence or being established, districts in the Region of Canada for the Provinces and Vice-provinces of St-Rosaire, St. Peter's, Assumption, Manitoba, Grandin, St. Mary's and St. Paul's; that is, all but St-Joseph. In the United States Region, there were districts in the Southern, Central and Western Provinces and Vice-provinces: all but the Eastern and Northern.

¹³ This, the most thorough revision since the time of de Mazenod, was made by the General Chapter of 1982, and was then fine-tuned by the Chapter of 1986 to bring it into line with the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

¹⁴ See *Personnel* #21, 1987, pp. 12-371.

¹⁵ *Acta Administrationis Generalis O.M.I.*, Romæ, Domus generalis, 15 (1992), p. 187.

¹⁶ See *Personnel* #22, 1993, pp. 8-372.

¹⁷ In the Oblate Congregation, the worldwide apostolate is divided into six geographic regions, Canada and the United States of America being two of them. The others are Africa-Madagascar, Latin America, Europe, and Asia-Oceania. (see *Personnel* #22, 1993, p. iv).

Appendix 8

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SUPERIOR OF A DISTRICT AND THE DIRECTORS OF RESIDENCES [1954]

INTRODUCTION:

The norms that govern the position of a Director of a Residence and of a Superior of a District are drawn logically from the prescriptions of our Constitutions. First of all we will take up the question of the DIRECTOR of a RESIDENCE, and secondly of the SUPERIOR of the DISTRICT.

DIRECTOR OF RESIDENCES:

Article 513 lays down the fundamental principle of the authority of a Director of a Residence as follows:

“Committitur (Residentia) Directori, cujus quidem auctoritati Superioris localis assimilatur sed per statua specialia, sive generalis sive particularis, est ulterius determinanda.”

This Article implies three principal things:

- 1) A Residence is confided to the immediate GOVERNMENT of its Director: “Committitur Directori...” and not to the Superior to whom the Residence may be subject either because it is united to this House “Alicui domui conjungitur...” Article 515, or because it is incorporated in a District which has at its head a Superior of the District.

It follows then that the Subjects of a Director should have the same relations with him that any Subject can have with his immediate SUPERIOR and Vice Versa, unless there is a positive and legitimate restriction of such relations.

- 2) The authority of a Director is similar to that of a Local Superior “Auctoritati Superioris localis assimilatur...”

It follows then that this authority has the same character, quality and extension in so far as its object is concerned, as that of a local Superior. However, here the Rules lay down a prescription, for this authority is similar to that of a local Superior “SINE CONSILIO” as is very clear from the context of the two Articles 604 and 605.

Art. 604: “Superior Domus in qua non adsint saltem duo alii sacerdotes, ejus assessores, eadem agere potest ac alii Superiores absque consensu sui Consilii; quoad cetera omnia ad Provincialem recurrere debet.”

Art. 605: “Eadem potestate gaudet Director Residentiae, iis tamen exceptis... etc.”

This restriction is very important for financial questions which often require the intervention of the Local Council.

- 3) Finally, this authority of the Director, similar to that of a Superior without his Council, is susceptible of RESTRICTIONS decreed by the Provincial: "...ulterius determinanda" "Quae Provincialis..." Art. 605 in Consilio. (Art. 515, 516 cum 515)

These restrictions could be made by reserving certain matters (otherwise within the competence of the Director) either to the PROVINCIAL himself or to the SUPERIOR of the HOUSE or the DISTRICT: "Exceptis quae Provincialis ... sibi vel Superiori Domus aut Districtus reserveverit" Art. 605.

CONCLUSION:

We can sum up the authority of a Director of a Residence as follows:

- a) The Director has in his hands the IMMEDIATE GOVERNMENT of the Residence, i.e., (Committitur Directori: Art 513) of both the Institute and its Personnel, with ORDINARY POWER, not delegated either by the Superior or the Provincial who however names him. (Art 531 #4)
This fundamental arrangement constitutes his "Juridical Status" and cannot be modified in its substance: This would be derogatory to our Constitutions.
- b) The AUTHORITY of the Director is similar to that of a Superior of a House (Art 513) but WITHOUT COUNCIL (Art. 603 with 604). It is extended to everything which such a Superior can do, *except the things which* the Provincial has reserved to himself or which he has reserved to the Superior. (Art 605 with 515 and 516)
Such reservations must be made in EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL (Art. 515). The Director will refer those matters requiring the vote of a Local Council to his hierarchical Superior, - the Superior to whom he is subject or to the Provincial.
- c) The RESTRICTIONS of his authority can be made either by GENERAL STATUTES for all the Residences or by PARTICULAR STATUTES for each one of them. (Art. 513)
- d) It is to be noted that a Director does not enjoy the prerogatives of a Superior when there is question of a Local or Provincial Chapter. (Art. 564, 567, 569)

SUPERIOR OF A HOUSE OR DISTRICT - - - and a Residence subject to him

The Constitutions establish the principle of a certain JURIDICAL SUBORDINATION of the Residence to the Superior on whom it depends. ("Domui conjugitur..." Art 515; "sub aliquo Superiore..." Art. 516) but they do not define the extent of that authority except for the Council of the District which "is equivalent to a House" - - - "Domibus aequiparatur" (Art. 516).

There is no text which likens the authority of a Superior over a Residence to the authority which he exercises over his own Subjects in a House.

In formulating the nature and the extent of this authority we must here bear in mind two points:

- a) On the one hand, to attribute to the Superior that which fundamentally belongs to the office of Superior since the Constitutions give him the title of Superior. their purpose is to accord him the prerogatives, - those at least which are consistent with the Special Rules treating of the Constitutions of Residences, - and not the NAME ONLY.
- b) On the other hand, we must here apply analogically the "regula Juris": "Generi per species derogatur": i.e., withdraw from the Superior (considered here as the genus) that which, according to the Constitutions, is acquired by a Residence. (The species)
If he is called Superior, he is such not because of his relation to his Subjects, but because of his relation to a Juridical Constitution (A Residence whose fundamental laws must be safeguarded; otherwise one would destroy the juridical institution itself).

Keeping before us these DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES we can make the following deductions:

- 1) A Superior cannot take in hand the immediate government of a Residence, neither of the Institution and its finances nor of its personnel, the Residence being autonomous even though subordinate, having its own immediate Superior, the Director. Nor can the Provincial change the Juridical Status which is established by the Constitutions.
- 2) Nor can a Superior govern the Residence indirectly, i.e., by giving orders to the Director. For the Director is not the delegate of the Superior: but he governs in virtue of an "ordinary" authority with his own proper responsibility, even though subordinate to the Provincial and the Provincial to the Superior General. Here again the Provincial cannot modify this order of things.
- 3) Therefore, while the Superior does not govern the Residence --- neither directly nor indirectly --- his role is one of *vigilance* and *supervision*: he can and should exercise a general supervision, and when necessary express his views and demand the observance of the Constitutions and the regulations made by the competent authority of the Provincial according to Articles 515, 516, and 605.
- 4) Matters which require the approval of the Local Council must be referred by the Director to the SUPERIOR who will confer with his Council in accordance with Article 516 "Districtur hujusmodi, quoad Superioris Consilium, domibus aequiparantur."
He is indeed its immediate Superior and it is therefore normal to leave to the Superior this normal function of his office. This applies not only to the incurring of expenses which exceed the power of the Superior without his Council but also for the rendering of accounts of the Residence.
- 5) Finally, the Superior can intervene directly in those matters which the Provincial in Extraordinary Council has reserved to him. (Art. 515, 516, 605)

SPECIAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) The question may be raised as to whether the Subjects of a Residence are obliged to celebrate their Masses according to the intention of the Director or of the Superior.

Unless the Provincial and his Council have made provision to the contrary, the Subjects are to celebrate according to the intention of the DIRECTOR WHO IS TRULY THEIR IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR and whose authority is similar to that of a Superior. Article 209 of our Constitutions is to be understood in this manner. Nevertheless, it remains true that the Provincial could organize matters in another way. He could reserve these intentions to the Superior, or even to himself. Ordinarily it would not seem opportune that he do so.

- 2) Another question that might be raised is this: May the Local Superior (Superior of the District) assign the Fathers of the various Residences to undertake certain activities and send them to various places for purposes of the Ministry, etc.?

The answer is in the negative. Subjects of a Residence are entrusted to the charge of the Director whose right it is to exercise authority over them. It would be a usurpation of power on the part of the Superior if he were to step in and take over in this way. It would be to the detriment of the authority of the Director.

The Provincial himself should not arrange matters in any other way. He would be acting contrary to the basic and essential meaning of the Residence and the authority of its Director. He would be bringing about a loss of prestige of the Director and would be rendering the latter's administration ineffective. It stands to reason, however, that the Local Superior (Superior of the District) may solicit such services from the Director himself to whom it would belong to assign his subjects for various tasks accordingly as he judges opportune.

Rome, November 4, 1954

Appendix 9

STATUTES REGARDING THE DISTRICT AND DISTRICT SUPERIOR IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

A: Document of the Vice-Province of Kimberley-Bloemfontein¹

The District Community (i.e., Bloemfontein/Kimberley South and Kimberley North) is the basic cell of our community Oblate life. It supports us in our religious and apostolic endeavours and nurtures the different dimensions of our life: human, Christian, religious and missionary (c 37–40). In spite of great distances, the District Community is a visible sign of our togetherness and belongingness as religious (c 38); in the face of every growing demands on us in our daily life's work, it encourages us in our apostolic commitment. By sharing our experiences, our horizons are widened, our outlook on the missionary task is enlightened and we are helped to realize the call issuing forth from the priorities of our Province and respective Dioceses.

The binding link and guide is the District Superior.

- 1 In the role of Superior, he is the head and bond of unity for the District:
 - The regular visit to individual Oblates, particularly the aged and disabled, is an important aspect of his ministry.
 - The Superior brings us together for monthly recollections, for other occasions and creates a warm, welcoming atmosphere.
 - He leads us in common prayer and spiritual exercises. In doing so, he animates and directs community life.
- 2 His is a special responsibility. He is entrusted with the task of looking after the well-being of the individuals in his district:
 - To ensure that each individual has regular medical check-ups, vacations, recreation, rest, sufficient money for personal needs;
 - To care for the spiritual growth of each individual: commitment to the Oblate Rules and Constitutions, ongoing formation as a continuous process, attendance at special courses.
- 3 In his position as Superior or **primus inter pares**,² he tries to co-ordinate apostolic activities, to animate missionary projects and to foster personal talents and charisms for the good of the

¹ "District Communities: Report of a Mini-Survey" in *OMI Documentation*, 168 (1989), pp. 11-12.

² This means "first among equals," which is certainly not the canonical meaning of the term 'superior.'

local Church.

- 4 It is his responsibility to see to it that Oblate and Diocesan money is properly used according to the spirit of the Oblate Rules and Constitutions and administered according to the particular situation of the Oblates in the diocese.
- 5 The Superior forms a team with his Assistants in order to animate the spirit of the District Community and to create an atmosphere of Oblate life.
- 6 In order to provide proper liaison with the Provincial and the Superiors of other districts, he joins them in regular meetings once or twice a year:
 - To discuss matters of common interest.
 - To confer on matters of common concern with regard to the mission of the Province.
 - To explore possibilities of improving community life.
 - To co-ordinate and elaborate monthly retreats, and
 - To exchange views on problems encountered.

The Superior will be consulted regarding questions of transfers and change of work.

- 7 In the election of a Superior and his Assistants, our Province follows the procedure of the consultative vote:
 - Superior: "...seek the views of the Community concerned regarding the current situation and the qualities needed for leadership of the group."
(R 89).
 - Assistants: "The Provincial in Council, after consulting the local Community, appoints at least two assistants who constitute the Superior's Council." (c 91).

B:

**Excerpts from the
Administrative Directory of the
Vice-Province of the Transvaal³**

[1-3 Omitted]

- 4 The district community is a living cell of the Congregation. District communities are a way of supporting one another in our religious and apostolic life.

³ *Administrative Directory of the Vice Province of the Transvaal*, OMI Provincial House, Johannesburg, 1989, pp. 3-4, quoted in F. SANTUCCI, "Districts as Expressions of Apostolic Community" in *Vie Oblate Life*, 53 (1994), pp. 117-118.

F. Santucci uses these excerpts as the concluding section of his article. To explain why he chose this ending he says:

"I conclude this paper by quoting the sections of the Directory on District Communities. I do so because they are a fruit of the lived experience of the Vice-Province, and not only an ideal to strive for. In this experience we see a concrete example of the development of the concept of districts from being seen merely as a unit of government to being seen as apostolic community."

- 5 The chief animator of the district community is the superior who, together with his consultors is immediately responsible for the life of the district community. In this ministry he shares in the responsibility of the provincial superior.
- 6 The superior and his council form a team for the collegial animation of the district community and therefore they meet as often as necessary for the purpose of planning district meetings, evaluating district life and maintaining unity with the rest of the province.
- 7 Each district together with its superior meets once a year in order to plan ahead for the events of the community, especially for the regular programme of renewal and prayer; and in particular the time table for the monthly recollection; this plan serves as a guide to the superior and his council in the animation of the district.
- 8 The tasks that fall within the competence of the district superior and his council are the following:
 - 8.1 the animation of a unity of heart and mind in the district chiefly through visiting the members regularly, organising the monthly recollection and other gatherings which bring the members together.
 - 8.2 looking to the individual needs of the members, e.g., regular rest and recreation, spiritual renewal, authorising personal expenditure for clothing, library, medical and holiday.
 - 8.3 co-ordinating the apostolic works within the district, i.e. holiday supplies, sharing of resources and the direction of certain projects which give witness to our mission to the most abandoned.
 - 8.4 taking personal responsibility for, or appointing someone to take responsibility for transmitting information from the provincial office to the members of the district, e.g. notification of death or illness.
 - 8.5 recommending the expenditure of parish funds for works which fall within the competence of pastors of parishes (cf. *Financial Directory*).
- 9 Minutes outlining the theme of each meeting and the general points covered in the sharings are kept in a file in the care of the district superior and copies are sent to the provincial office.
- 10 The district superior and other local superiors within the district are encouraged to co-operate as much as possible especially in co-ordinating the regular meetings of the various communities when matters of common concern are considered.

Appendix 10

THESIS QUESTIONNAIRES

OBLATE QUESTIONNAIRE: District Superior¹

When completed this questionnaire is confidential. The information contained is to be used in a Ph.D. thesis in Canon Law, Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Canada, and the anonymity of all respondents will be respected.

Name of Province:² _____

Today's date: _____

1. I have been District Superior³ for _____ year(s).

My district is/was mainly:

- ☐ Mission territory
- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Mixed Urban and Rural.

Ideally a district has not more than __ and not less than __ members.⁴

My district has/had __ members.

2. In the past I have been:

Provincial from _____ to _____.

District Superior from _____ to _____.

¹ The other two were entitled:
OBLATE QUESTIONNAIRE: General Administration
OBLATE QUESTIONNAIRE: Provincials/Vicars

² Members of the general administration were asked to give their position.

³ Members of the two senior levels of government were asked about the types of districts existing in their home provinces even if they had never been a district superior.

⁴ This question was asked only on the questionnaire to the general administration and the provincial/vicars.

3. My province has (or will have) a particular statute for each one of its districts as required in Rule #86.

Yes___ No___ Unknown___

* * * *

4. As far as I know, the reasons for the introduction of districts in my province were:⁹
5. Were there any modern changes in the application of the concept of districts and district superiors in your province, especially after the ideas of the Second Vatican Council were deliberated in the General Chapters which followed and finally expressed in the Constitutions and Rules of 1982/1987? If yes, please explain the changes you see.
6. Do you agree that the office of district superior is evolving into a new position over the last ten years?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

If yes, how is it evolving?

7. Do you agree or disagree that the district superior runs his district community in the same way as a house superior runs his house community?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Can you explain why you agree or disagree?

8. The district superior is a purely nominal position and he should not interfere in the affairs of the members. Members are to relate directly with the provincial in all Oblate matters.

⁹ The general administration questionnaire had inserted here the following:

"For the following questions, please answer them in light of the above experiences and for areas of the congregation at large which you have dealt with in your ministry but do not limit your answers to your own region/province. If it is important for the understanding of your answer to a specific question to indicate the name of the region/province concerned, please do so.

"Provincials and district superiors from the regions of Canada and the United States will be asked to fill in similar questionnaires."

¹⁰ The spaces which were left blank in the questionnaires for the respondents' replies are omitted from this appendix.

8.1. This is the way things are now in reality.

Strongly			Strongly
Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree

8.2. This is the way things ought to be.

Strongly			Strongly
Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree

Please explain the above two answers:

9. The district superior has now become a purely nominal position because the members do not relate to him, but to the provincial, in all Oblate matters.

Strongly			Strongly
Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree

Please explain your answer:

10. District communities are established to foster the growth of community and apostolic life. To your knowledge:

10.1 Does this work in small scattered communities in a large area?

Very			Not at
Much	Fairly Well	Not Much	All

10.2 Does this work in small communities in urban areas?

Very			Not at
Much	Fairly Well	Not Much	All

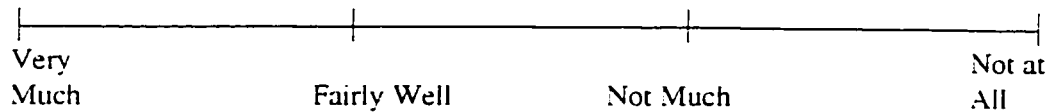
10.3 Does this work in a mixed rural and urban area?

Very			Not at
Much	Fairly Well	Not Much	All

Please explain any of the above answers:

11. Does a district community facilitate change in its members and small communities in the following ways?

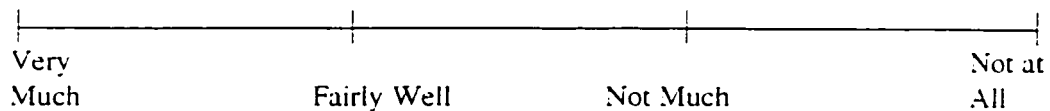
11.1 Small residences regain a sense of being part of a larger community.



11.2 Individuals in solitary apostolates are reintegrated into a larger community.



11.3 All members of the province, not just houses, are assisted by having a local superior to whom they can personally relate.



Please explain further any of the above answers:

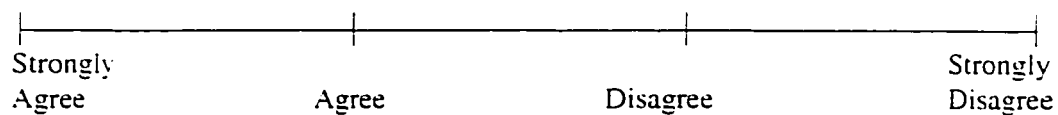
11.4 Besides these, other reasons for having districts in my province are:

12. If there is no improvement in community life following from district communities it is, in my opinion, because:

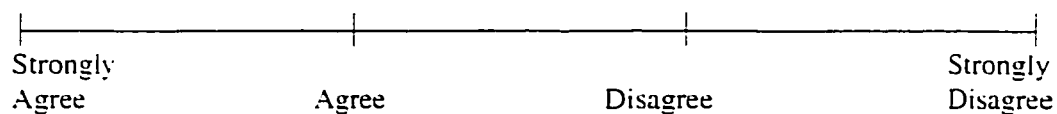
12.1 there is no real commitment among the members to create/build community:



12.2 the appearance of a community on paper is all that is desired:



12.3 it is a method of legitimizing lone-wolf apostolates (a lone-wolf is one who lives alone by choice, rather than because of the needs of the apostolate).



Please explain further any of the above answers:

12.4 Other reasons for the lack of improvement in district community life are:

13. In my experience (or viewpoint) a district superior, *under the provincial*, has:

13.1 an active and effective input into the apostolate and vision of his district;

Strongly			Strongly
Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree

13.2 an active input into the spiritual life of his district;

Strongly			Strongly
Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree

13.3 an appropriate and effective input into the financial affairs of his members:

Strongly			Strongly
Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree

13.4 an active role in problem-solving within his district:

Strongly			Strongly
Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree

13.5 the primary responsibility for the health (spiritual, physical and mental) of the members of his district:

Strongly			Strongly
Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree

13.6 an active role in the ongoing formation of the members of his district.

Strongly			Strongly
Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree

13.6.1 Appropriate areas of input for a district superior in any of the above areas are:

13.6.2 Inappropriate areas of input for a district superior in any of the above areas are:

13.7 *Besides* any of the above, it is appropriate for a district superior to have an active role in:

.....

13a.⁷ In order for the concept of district superior to be successfully applied, the provincial must share his authority in a real way.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

13b. As a member of the governing structure of the province, the district superior has the right to an appropriate input into the visioning of the province.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

13c. Depending on the needs of the district and its members, the qualities needed in a suitable district superior vary.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please explain this answer:

.....

14. Do you agree that an active district superior is, actually at the present time, an unnecessary level of authority between the member and the provincial?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

⁷ The general administration and provincial/vicar's questionnaires had these three extra questions (13a, 13b and 13c) inserted here without deleting question 13.

15. The district itself could be an excellent way of monitoring and supporting the good health (spiritual, physical and mental) of its members.

Very Much Fairly Well Not Much Not at All

16. If all members of the districts deal directly with the provincial on all Oblate matters, this gives too much centralized power to the provincial administration and ignores subsidiarity.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please explain this answer:

16.1.⁴ If all members of the districts deal directly with the provincial on all Oblate matters, this puts an inappropriate strain on the person of the provincial.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please explain this answer:

17. Do you agree on the necessity of having the district superior as a useful intermediary level of authority between the member and the provincial. (subsidiarity)?

Please explain this answer:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

18. If a formed canonical house has only a few members, and when individuals and residences are attached to it, then the result is more like a district than a house.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

19. If you agree that the concept and practice of districts and district superiors are evolving, what are the items concerning them that you would like to see written into provincial policies, guidelines etc.?

⁴ This question was asked only of the two senior levels of government.

19.1" It would be useful to have the General Administration issue guidelines for items to be covered by provincial statutes for a district (Rule #86)

20. A district council is an important part of local government.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Why is this so?

21. Although a district council can be all of the members of the district, if the district is small (Constitution 91), what would you consider good reasons for having this type of council in a larger district?

22. Are there any good reasons for discontinuing the use of districts in specific areas? If so, what are they?

23. With an increase in the authority of district superiors do you foresee an inevitable loss of independence by residential directors?

Very Much Fairly Well Not Much Not at All

Please explain your answer:

23.1 Do you agree that such a shift, when it does occur, could be beneficial to the community life of the district?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please explain your answer:

24. How often should regular district meetings be held in order for a true district community life to remain viable?

24.1 A district should not be so large geographically that regular meetings can not be held; it should be a natural grouping of people capable of achieving an end.

Agree Disagree

" Only the general administration and the provincials were asked this question.

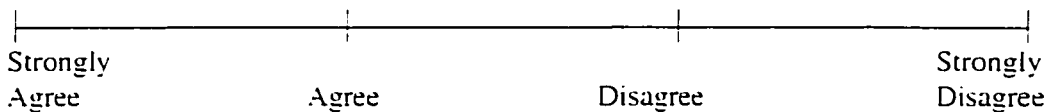
Please explain your answer:

24.2 All aspects of community life (human, Christian, missionary/apostolic, economic) must be both lived by the group and dealt with in the district community meetings.



Please explain your answer:

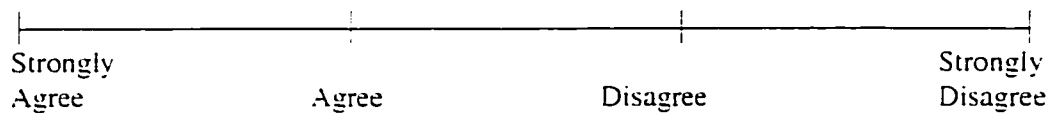
25. Do you agree that there is sufficient preparation of Oblates who are to undertake the office of district superior?



Please explain your answer:

25.1 Was there *any* preparation? Yes__ / no__.

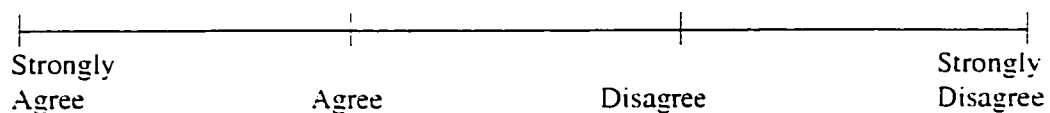
25.2 This preparation is the primary responsibility of the provincial; do you agree that it would be feasible to have the region also involved in this preparation?



Please explain your answer:

25.3¹⁰⁰ Do you agree that the preparation of district superiors should be encouraged by some positive action of the general administration? If so, what action?

26. Do you agree that district superiors should be consulted, to the same degree that house superiors are, before district personnel changes are made?



Please explain your answer:

¹⁰⁰ This question was asked only of the general administration.

26.1 When personnel changes are made by the provincial, he must provide for the adequate staffing of the apostolates. In a district community the provincial must also provide for an adequate pool of members from which a suitable and capable district superior can be chosen.

|-----|-----|-----|
 Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please explain your answer:

27. How often does your district celebrate the eucharist together per year? _____

28. Is it reasonable in present day North America to require all provinces to maintain three formed canonical houses, even if there are not enough personnel to adequately staff them, rather than legitimizing the option of having a combination of actually functioning formed houses and/or districts, as long as they total three units?

Yes, three formed houses should be required. _____

No, three formed houses and/or districts are sufficient. _____

Comments:

29. I thank you very much for participating in this study. Would you like a copy of the answers to the questionnaire when the thesis is finished? If so, please fill in your name and address on the last page. I will separate it from your answers to preserve confidentiality.

Yes___ No___

30. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the subject of district and district superiors?

Appendix 11

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONS AND RULES: OCTOBER 1996 DRAFT FOR THE 1998 GENERAL CHAPTER: EXCERPTS PERTAINING TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES

PART III

Organization

The Spirit of Government

C71 United as brothers in one apostolic community, we are all equal before God our Father who distributes charisms and ministries so that we can serve his Church and its mission. Our organizational structures, accordingly, are set up in function of that mission.

R71a Our collaborative structures of government presuppose a significant level of human and spiritual maturity and personal commitment.

R71b In addition to the spiritual characteristics of an authentic missionary body, a number of other significant values are to be integrated in our governance structures.

Among the values these structures are to promote, the principal ones are: (1) respect for the dignity of the persons involved; (2) flexibility, allowing for adaptation in various parts of the world according to circumstances; (3) integration of discernment in decision-making; (4) subsidiarity, within the context of a well-functioning centre, allowing for decisions to be taken at the most appropriate level; and (5) strong leadership and consistent forms of accountability at all levels.

C72 The good government of the Congregation demands that we participate appropriately in it through responsible collaboration. Such participation is to be encouraged at all levels.

All of us are coresponsible for the community's life and apostolate. As a body, therefore, we discern the Spirit's call and seek to achieve consensus in important matters, loyally supporting the decisions taken. Such shared decision making can best take place in a collegial and trust-filled atmosphere.

R72a Oblate government structures shall favour our presence as a missionary body and promote the participation and coresponsibility of the members of the Congregation. Likewise, animated by a spirit of service, our government must be structured in such a way as to foster true interdependence and profound communion within the Congregation.

R72b Our government structures should also be value-based, cost effective, as regards persons, time and finances, and foster the development of appropriate resources.

C74 In as much as superiors are stewards of the Lord, they are accountable at each level of government to higher authorities; they will also keep the community they serve informed of what they do. Our administrations are therefore subject to a two-fold review.

CHAPTER ONE

Structures of the Congregation

Section One

Administrative Structures

C75 The Congregation has four levels of organization; local, provincial, regional and general. While the aim of the regional level is primarily one of inter-provincial coordination and collaboration, the other three levels are governmental. Our unity of mind and heart is assured by effective communication and interdependence.

The governmental process presupposes living apostolic communities, fully recognized and respected in their relative autonomy. The higher levels should be in close contact with the lower, providing support, coordination and leadership.

C76 The Congregation's vitality and effectiveness depend largely on the local community. It is at this level that our missionary presence is expressed by our living of the Gospel, and by proclaiming and revealing it to the world.

C77 Members of the Congregation live community in different ways. Some reside together in constituted houses, while others are gathered in a district; both are under the responsibility and animation of a local superior.

Whatever is stated in the Constitutions and Rules about local superiors applies equally to superiors of constituted houses and of district communities, saving exceptions foreseen by the Church's common law or by the particular statute of the district.

R77a When a constituted house meets the conditions specified in the common law of the Church, it can be canonically established with the rights and obligations pertaining thereto.

C78 A Province is an autonomous governance unit grouping several local communities of Oblates at the service of the Church within a determined territory.

R78a As a general principle, province territories are not to overlap.

C79 To coordinate our missionary presence and endeavours, several local communities of Oblates may be joined together as a delegation. Each delegation develops its missionary focus in such a way as to create a shared identity.

Section Two
Superiors: General Norms

C81 Our Superiors are a sign of the Lord's loving and guiding presence in our midst. They call us to live out our Oblate missionary vocation and provide us with the support we need. They lead the community, in a spirit of coresponsibility, making decisions, supporting initiatives and implementing policies, according to the norms of the Constitutions and Rules. Superiors must know how to delegate authority as well as assign responsibility.

C82 Superiors, and all among us at the service of authority, are to be men of faith and prayer. In humility and true obedience they will seek enlightenment from God and from their brothers' counsel. They should manifest the following qualities:

- a sensitivity to persons, being open to everyone and respectful of each person's rights;
- an ability to animate a community so that it can share and dialogue in a climate of mutual trust and acceptance;
- a spirit of discernment and a capacity for making decisions once consultation has been carried out;
- an apostolic spirit, fully committed to evangelization, that can challenge the community to respond to the needs of the mission;
- a sense of unity that respects legitimate diversity and enables persons in authority to coordinate their own community activities and to cooperate with others in the apostolate;
- a deep love of the Church and the Congregation.

C83 An Oblate appointed or elected superior, vicar or replacement of a superior, must have finished his first formation, completed the required period after perpetual profession, and been ordained a priest.

Beyond these conditions, to be appointed local superior, an Oblate shall have been professed perpetual vows in the Congregation for at least one year; to be appointed or elected superior of a province or a delegation, he must have actually completed three years of perpetual vows in the Congregation; to be elected Superior General, he must have completed five years of perpetual vows in the Congregation.

R83a An Oblate brother who has completed at least one year of perpetual vows in the Congregation may, with the necessary indult, be appointed superior of a local community.

C84 [Profession of Faith by Superiors]

R84a In our Congregation the major Superiors are the Superior General, the Vicar General, the provincials, the vicar provincials and the superiors of delegations.

R84b The appointment, confirmation, or prorogation in office of any superior should be made in writing. His rights and duties begin on the day he officially takes office; they cease on the day his successor officially replaces him.

R84c Unless a higher authority determines otherwise, when a superior is absent or hindered from exercising his office, or when the post becomes vacant, he is replaced by his vicar if there is one, or by a councillor in the order of appointment, or by the person designated as his replacement. Otherwise, in a local community he is replaced by the priest who is senior by oblation.

R84d

R84e The superior's role is so important that suitable training is necessary. That is why superiors will meet from time to time among themselves and with resource persons. This will permit them to exchange experiences, deepen their understanding of their task, help them evaluate their effectiveness and learn appropriate methods of animation and dialogue.

C85 Superiors are assisted by a council which expresses in its own way the members' concern for their community and its common good. Matters to be considered in council are our mission and ministries as Oblates, our religious life, and temporal affairs. The superior and council will be attentive to the needs and desires of the community and of its members.

C87 Financial administration is entrusted to the treasurer under the direction of the superior and council.

CHAPTER TWO

The Local Community

Nature and role

C90 Local communities are the living cells of the Congregation. They are the primary units of our missionary presence where life and mission find their inspiration and their expression. As such, they help all Oblates to become more prayerful and reflective and to live the Gospel fully, thereby freeing them for ever greater fidelity to their calling.

Every Oblate has the right and duty to belong to a local community and to participate in its life and mission.

C91 The local community is based on the model of Jesus Christ, forming his Apostles. By sharing their faith experiences with one another, the members grow in their apostolic life and are better able to express their missionary goals in the context of the province's priorities.

R91a An essential dimension of our life and mission, the local community focuses in a particular way on the person with his dignity, strengths and numerous gifts. It also supports him in moments of weakness, trial and disappointment.

R91b The local community is a place of fraternal charity and apostolic zeal. This presupposes; sharing of life, prayer, mission, and material goods; commitment and accountability for each other and to each other; hospitality, as an expression of our family spirit; involvement with the local Church, and openness to collaboration with the laity and others.

R91c As well as sharing in our mission, Oblate associates and cooperators can, at times, be invited to participate in some elements of our community life.

C92 The local superior has a vital role to play in fostering and animating community. Indeed, the quality of local superiors is a determining factor for the Congregation's life. At the service of his brothers, the superior brings the community together to evaluate its experience, to give itself objectives for its common life and apostolic projects, and to ensure their implementation.

Structures and functioning

C93 The local community, whether a constituted house or a district, consists of at least three Oblates. It is established by the provincial in council, in accord with the norms of the Church's common law. These same norms will be respected should the community want to change its apostolic goals and especially in cases where we intend to close a local community.

R93a In the case of a novitiate, or of a post-novitiate formation community, its establishment requires the approval of the Superior General in Council.

R93b

R93c District communities are governed by their particular statute, determined by the provincial in council.

R93d The suppression of an established house is reserved to the Superior General in council at the request of the provincial in council. The suppression of a constituted house which has not been established, pertains to the provincial in council, as does the suppression or modification of a district community.

C94 The local superior animates and directs the community to further the apostolate and the best interest of the members. He invites their collaboration and maintains close liaison with the provincial as well as fraternal contact with the other communities of the province.

R94a Since the superior's charge includes concern for his brother Oblates' well-being and personal growth, he will be open and available to all and will not hesitate, if need be, to raise questions of a personal nature in an atmosphere of respect and confidence.

Superiors will manifest special concern for members who are isolated or who live alone for reasons of ministry (cf. C. 38).

R94b The community meeting, convened by the superior, is a privileged means of building community. It provides an opportunity for the members to be called to live up to their Oblate vocation and it provides them with the support they need in their ministry.

C95 The superior of a local community is appointed for three years by the provincial in council. He may be reappointed for a second consecutive term and, exceptionally, for a third.

R95a In the case of the superior of a district community, however, greater flexibility is allowed in reference to the number of consecutive terms that may be served.

R95b The permission of the Superior General in council is required for the appointment of the superior of a local community for a third consecutive term.

R95c Before appointing a superior, the provincial will seek the views of the community concerned regarding the current situation and the qualities needed for leadership of the group. He will invite suggestion about a suitable person for the office and consult the candidate chosen before making the appointment (cf. R. 19).

C96 Each local superior is assisted by a council in animating and directing the community to further the apostolate and the best interest of the members.

C97 The provincial in council, after consulting the local community, appoints at least two assistants who constitute the superior's council. A local treasurer will also be appointed in the same way.

In the case of a small community, the provincial in council, instead of naming two assistants, may permit all the members of the community to function as a local council.

R97a The local council is regularly convened by the superior to assist him in animating the life and mission of the community. The following matters also pertain to it:

- to discuss community questions and matters relating to the ministry;
- to address financial issues and to give or withhold its consent on financial questions according to the norms established by the provincial in council;
- to present members for vows; not, however, in the case of novices or scholastics, since this pertains to the formation personnel.

R97b In important matters affecting the entire community, the superior will seek the opinion of all the members before making a decision with his council. The community will be kept informed of decisions taken in council.

CHAPTER THREE

The Province, Delegation and Mission

Section One The Province

C98 - C104

C105 In his animation of the province the provincial superior works closely with the members of the council, with the superiors of local communities and with those in charge of formation. He plans with them, supports them in their difficulties and discusses with them the province's life and ministries.

C105 - C109

C110 The provincial is assisted by a council of at least three councillors. They share in the government of the province by their advice to the provincial, and by their vote as required.

He requires the advice or consent of the council in those matters determined by the common law of the Church or by the Constitutions and Rules.

An extraordinary provincial council, grouping together the local superiors, may be convened as an important means of collaboration in the animation of the province.

R110c In a grave and urgent case the provincial in council is empowered to act in the administration of a local community in order to do something usually done by the local superior, or to correct or annul any of his acts or decisions.

C111

C112 For the greater participation in the life and mission of the province, the provincial in council will set up consultative committees, determining their composition, functions and terms of reference.

Likewise, according to the needs and possibilities, he will organize congresses or similar meetings, at least once during his term of office, in order to promote a common vision and determine common principles for mission.

Similarly, he shall organize regular meetings with the local superiors of the province.

R112a - R112b

R112c After appropriate consultation with the members, each province will develop and promulgate a provincial directory which determines specific applications of the Constitutions and Rules, as well as approved procedures. This directory shall be revised periodically, as needed. The text is submitted to the Superior General for approval.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Region

C125- C126

C127 The conference of the region is composed of the provincial, delegation and mission superiors of the territory. It is a means of assisting the various components to share resources of all kinds with one another and with the Congregation.

C128

C129 [Executive of the conference]

R129a - R129b

R129c Meeting at least once a year, the conference coordinates certain joint projects, particularly in the areas of first formation and on-going formation, financial accountability, justice and peace, and mission. For this purpose, committees and task forces may be established.

CHAPTER SIX

Temporal Goods

C156

C157 Our established houses, delegations and provinces, as well as the Congregation as such, have the right to acquire, retain, administer and alienate property. In the case of established houses, however, this right is limited: the limits are fixed by the Provincial in Council.

R157a The special statute of missions, constituted houses and district communities will determine whether they have the right to acquire, retain, administer and alienate property.

C158 Superiors and treasurers will manage Oblate goods in a spirit of poverty and in conformity with the laws of the Church and of the Congregation.

The financial competency of local superiors and their councils is set by the provincial in council; the financial competency of the provincials and their councils is set by the Superior General in council.

R158a In fulfillment of their office, the superiors and treasurers will be guided by the norms of the general finance directory.

The Local Level

C161 The Provincial in Council determines which assets can be managed by individual Oblates and by local communities. He also sets the contributions which local communities are to make to the province.

R161a The local treasurer, under the direction of the superior, administers the community's property. In bookkeeping as well as in bank accounts there must be a clear distinction between the funds and property belonging to a parish, diocese or other organization and those belonging to the Congregation.

The same principles apply to those members of the Congregation who are entrusted with the collection and disbursement of funds.

R161b The provincial will provide for a fraternal sharing of financial resources among the Province's communities.

R161c While respecting the rights of established houses and of benefactors and donors, the temporal goods of all local communities are placed in common, according to directives fixed by the provincial in council.

C162 The provincial treasurer will prudently provide for the needs of the province and its members in a spirit of charity, moderation and detachment.

R162a The provincial treasurer transacts ordinary matters of business, prepares the budget and makes periodic reports.

For acts of extraordinary administration he requires the permission of the provincial who obtains the consent of his council and, if necessary, of higher authorities.

He will be careful not to interfere in the administration of property which belongs to a local community. The provincial superior may, however, delegate him to assist local communities in financial matters.

In assisting local communities, he will promote a spirit of collaboration, accountability, exchange of information and sharing.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Obligation of the Constitutions and Rules

C166 - C168

C169 The general chapter and the Superior General may dispense individuals and communities from disciplinary prescriptions of the Constitutions and Rules for an indefinite period; other major superiors may do the same for a limited period of those under their jurisdiction. Superiors of local communities may occasionally dispense individuals or the community itself. Nevertheless, neither the general chapter nor superiors can dispense from constitutive laws, especially those which pertain to the structures and government of the Congregation, unless an exception is expressly stated.

Appendix 12

CORRESPONDENCE¹ BETWEEN THE *PROPOSED TEXT* OF OCTOBER, 1996, IN ARTICLES PERTAINING TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES, LEFT-HAND COLUMN, AND THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE OF 1994, RIGHT-HAND COLUMN

PART III

C71 ²	(5.2.)4.. ³ 5., 6., 19., 19.1.
R71a	13a, 13b, 24.1, 24.2.
R71b	16., 16.1., 17.
C72	3., 13b, 16.
R72a	19., 19.1., 20., 21.
R72b	24.2.
C74	13.(all), 16., 20., 21.

CHAPTER ONE

Section One

C75	13a, 13b, 16.
C76	2., 3., 4., 5.
C77	1., 2., 3., 6., 7., 10., 13.3., 13.6.2., 18.
R77a	5.
C78	28.
R78a	23., 23.1.
C79	—

¹ There is no intentional correspondence between these two documents, nevertheless, in the writing of this thesis, a certain correspondence became evident, and these are indicated here. In this table, while not every individual response was taken into consideration, general trends were.

² This letter/number combination on the left refers to the corresponding article in Appendix 11.

³ The numbers on the right hand of the page refer to two things. As they stand, without the initial digits "5.2.," they refer to the number of the complete question as found in Appendix 10. Precede the numbers given with the digits "5.2.," as shown in this first reference, and they refer to those sections of chapter 5, part 2, of this thesis, which give a summary of the question, analysis, and selected answers.

Section Two

C81	12.(all), 13.(all), 14.(all)
C82	26.1.
C83	26.1.
R83a	—
C84	—
R84a	—
R84b	6.
R84c	20., 21.
R84e	6., 8., 9., 13a, 13b, 13c, 25.(all)
C85	19., 20., 21.
C87	12.4., 13.3., 13.6.2., 19., 19.1., 20., 24.2.

CHAPTER TWO

C90	2., 3., 4., 5., 6., 9., 10., 11.(all), 12.(all)
C91	24., 24.1., 24.2.
R91a	13.(all)
R91b	23., 16.
R91c	—
C92	13.(all), 14., 15., 16., 17.
C93	2.
R93a	—
R93c	3.
R93d	—
C94	8., 9., 13.(all)
R94a	14., 17., 18.
R94b	24.2., 27.
C95	—
R95a	—
R95b	—
R95c	26.1.
C96	20.
C97	20., 21.
R97a	20., 21.
R97b	24., 24.1., 24.2.

CHAPTER THREE

Section One

C105	13.(all), 16., 16.1., 17.
------------	---------------------------

C110	6.
R110c	—
C112	13a, 13b, 16.
R112c	3., 19., 19.1.

CHAPTER FOUR

C127	25.2., 25.3.
C129	—
R129c	25.2., 25.3.

CHAPTER SIX

C157	12.4., 13.3., 13.6.2., 19., 19.1., 20., 24.2.
R157a	12.4., 13.3., 13.6.2., 19., 19.1., 20., 24.2.
C158	12.4., 13.3., 13.6.2., 19., 19.1., 20., 24.2.
R158a	12.4., 13.3., 13.6.2., 19., 19.1., 20., 24.2.
C161	12.4., 13.3., 13.6.2., 19., 19.1., 20., 24.2.
R161a	12.4., 13.3., 13.6.2., 19., 19.1., 20., 24.2.
R161b	12.4., 13.3., 13.6.2., 19., 19.1., 20., 24.2.
R161c	12.4., 13.3., 13.6.2., 19., 19.1., 20., 24.2.
C162	12.4., 13.3., 13.6.2., 19., 19.1., 20., 24.2.
R162a	12.4., 13.3., 13.6.2., 19., 19.1., 20., 24.2.

CHAPTER SEVEN

C169	6., 8., 9.
------------	------------

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Sources

1.1. General

Acta Apostolicæ Sedis: Commentarium officiale, Romæ, in Civitate Vaticana, Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1909-1928, in 42 vols.

Acta et Decreta Sacrorum Conciliorum recentiorum, Collectio Lacensis, Friburgi Brisgovix, Sumptibus Herder, 1890, 7 vols.

Acta et Decreta sacrosancti œcumenici Concilii Vaticani, Friburgi Brisgovix, Sumptibus Herder, 1892, 7 vols.

Acta et documenta Concilio œcumenico Vaticano II apparando, Series I: *Antepræparatoria*, cura et studio Secretariæ Generalis Concilii œcumenici Vaticani II, in Civitate Vaticana, Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1960-61, 4 vols., 15 parts.

Acta et documenta Concilio œcumenico Vaticano II apparando, Series II: *Præparatoria*, cura et studio Secretariæ Generalis Concilii œcumenici Vaticani II, in Civitate Vaticana, Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1960-1969, 3 vols., 25 parts.

Acta Sanctæ Sedis, Romæ, Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1865-1909, 41 vols.

ALLEN, C., *Law in the Making*, 7th rev. ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964.

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 4th ed., Washington, DC, 1994.

ANDRÉ, M., *Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique*, Paris, Hippolyte Walzer, Libraire-Éditeur, 1888, 3 vols.

Annuario Pontificio per l'anno 1968, Città del Vaticano, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1968.

BRIGHT, W., *The Canons of the First Four General Councils of Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1892.

Bullarii Romani Continuatio Summorum Pontificum, Prati, 1835-1857, 19 vols. in 20.

Bullarum Diplomatum et Privilegiorum Romanorum Pontificum Taurinensis Editio, Augustæ Taurinorum, 1857-1872, 24 vols.

- Codex iuris canonici, auctoritate Iohannis Pauli PP. II. promulgatus, fontium annotatione et indice analytico-alphabetico auctus.* Città del Vaticano, Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1989.
- Codex iuris canonici, auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus.* Vatican City, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983. English translation, *Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition*, translation prepared under the auspices of the Canon Law Society of America, Washington, DC, Canon Law Society of America, 1983.
- Codex iuris canonici fontes.* P. GASPARRI and J. SEREDI. (eds.). Romæ. Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1926-1939, 9 vols.
- Codex iuris canonici, Pii X Pontificis Maximi iussu digestus, Benedicti Papæ XV auctoritate promulgatus,* præfatione, fontium annotatione et analytico-alphabetico ab Eñno Petro Card. GASPARRI auctus, Neo-Eboraci, P. J. Kenedy and Sons, Typographi Pontificii, 1918.
- Codex recognitus (Schema), Liber II, De Populo Dei, De institutis vitæ consecratæ, Ready reference for the 1980 schema of Canons on Institutes of Consecrated Life,* prepared by E. McDONOUGH, Columbus, OH, Springs Press, 1980.
- Communicationes*, vols. 1-15: PONTIFICIA COMMISSIO CODICI IURIS CANONICI RECOGNOSCENDO; vols. 16-20: PONTIFICIA COMMISSIO CODICI IURIS CANONICI AUTHENTICE INTERPRETANDO; vols. 21-: PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM LEGUM TEXTIBUS INTERPRETANDIS. 1969-.
- CONCILIUM TRIDENTINUM, 1545-15630, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent: Original text with English translation*, H. Schroeder, trans., St. Louis, MO, B. Herder Book Co., 1941.
- CONCILIUM VATICANUM II, *Acta synodalia sacrosancti Concilii œcumenici Vaticani Secundi, cura et studio archivi Concilii œcumenici Vaticani II*, in Civitate Vaticana. Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1970-1983, 29 vols.
- Corpus iuris canonici*, ed. Lipsiensis secunda post Æmilii Ludouici Richteri curas ad librorum manuscriptorum et ed. romanæ fidem recognouit et adnotatione critica instruxit Æmilius Friedberg, Lipsiæ, ex officina B. Tauchnitz. 1879-1881, [Lipsiæ, 1928], 2 vols.
- Iuris Pontificii de Propaganda Fide*, Romæ, ex Typographia polyglotta S. C. de Propaganda Fide, 1888-1897, 7 vols.
- JOHN XXIII, "Address to the Roman Cardinals, January 25, 1959," in AAS, 51 (1959), pp. 65-69, English translation in *The Pope Speaks*, 5 (1959), pp. 398-401.
- JOHN PAUL II, "Address to the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of Canon Law, October 29, 1981," in AAS, 73 (1981), pp. 720-724, English translation by J. Coriden, in "Highlights of the Revised Code," in *The Jurist*, 44 (1984), pp. 28-40.
- , "Apostolic Constitution, *Sacræ discipline leges*, January 25, 1983," in AAS, 75 (1983), pp. [vii]-xiv.

- LATHAM, R., *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources*. London, published for The British Academy by The Oxford University Press, 1965.
- LEONIS XIII, PONTIFICIS MAXIMI. *Acta*. Romæ, ex typographia Vaticana, 1901, 23 vols. [*Condite a Christo Ecclesiæ*. pp. 317-327; Dec. 8, 1900.]
- Magnum bullarium Romanum: bullarum, privilegiorum ac diplomatum Romanorum Pontificum amplissima collectio*. Graz [Austria], Akademische Druck-u., Verlagsanstalt, 1964-66, 19 vols.
- MANSI, J., *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*. Paris, Welter, 1901-1927, 53 vols. in 60.
- MORONI, G., *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica da S. Pietro sino ai nostri giorni...* Venezia, Tipografia Emiliana, 1840-1861, 103 vols.
- PAUL VI. "Address to the Council Fathers at the Opening of the Second Session of the Ecumenical Council, September 29, 1963." in *AAS*, 55 (1963), pp. 841-859. English translation in *The Pope Speaks*, 9 (1963), pp. 125-141.
- , Apostolic Letter on the Implementation of the Decrees "Christus dominus," "Presbyterorum ordinis" and "Perfectæ caritatis," *Ecclesiæ sanctæ I, II et III*, August 6, 1966, in *AAS*, 58 (1966), pp. 757-787.
- PONTIFICIA COMMISSIO CODICI IURIS CANONICI AUTHENTICE INTERPRETANDO, *Codex iuris canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli P.P. II promulgatus, fontes annotatione et indice analytico-alphabetico auctus*. Romæ, Libreria editrice vaticana, 1989.
- PONTIFICIA COMMISSIO CODICI IURIS CANONICI RECOGNOSCENDO, *Codex iuris canonici: Schema novissimum iuxta placita Patrum Commissionis emendatum atque Summo Pontifici præsentatum*, in Civitate Vaticana, Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1982.
- , *Codex iuris canonici: Schema Patribus Commissionis reservatum*, in Civitate Vaticana, Libreria editrice vaticana, 1980.
- , *Relatio complectens synthesim animaversionum ab Em.mis atque Exc.mis Patribus Commissionis ad novissimum schema CIC exhibitarum cum responsionibus a secretaria et consultoribus datis*, (Patribus Commissionis stricte reservata), [Città del Vaticano], Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1981.
- PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE REVISION OF THE CODE OF CANON LAW, *Schema of Canons on Institutes of Consecrated Life by Profession of the Evangelical Counsels: Draft, Latin and English*, Washington, DC, Publications Office, United States Catholic Conference, 1977.
- SCHROEDER, H., (ed. and trans.), *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation and Commentary*, St. Louis, Herder, 1937.

TANNER, N., ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, original text established by G. Alberigo [et al.], in consultation with H. Jedin, [London], Sheed and Ward, [Washington, DC], Georgetown University Press, 1990, 2 vols.

VATICAN II, Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen gentium*, 21 November, 1964, in AAS, 57 (1965), pp. 5-67, Chapter 6, *De religiosis*, pp. 49-53, translated in A. FLANNERY, ed., *Vatican Collection: vol. I: Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, rev. ed., Northport, Costello, 1992, pp. 350-423, Chapter 6, "Religious," pp. 402-407.

VATICAN II, Decree, *Perfectæ caritatis*, 28 October, 1965, in AAS, 58 (1966), pp. 702-712, in FLANNERY I, pp. 611-623.

1.2. Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Acta Administrationis Generalis O.M.I., Romæ, Domus generalis, 1972-, 15 vols.

Acts of the General Chapter, 1975, Rome, O.M.I., 290 via Aurelia, [1976].

Administrative Directory, Rome, Casa generalizia O.M.I., 1985.

Administrative Norms and Faculties: Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Circular 235, Rome, [General House], 1967.

Administrative Structures, [Rome], Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, [1972].

Changes to the Constitutions and Rules: as approved by the General Chapter of 1986, [Rome, General House, 1987].

Circulaires administratives des Supérieurs Généraux aux membres de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de M. I., vols. 1 & 2, Paris, Typographie privée O.M.I.; vols. 3-8, Romæ, Domus generalis, 1887-1971.

Constitutiones et Regulæ Congregationis Missionariorum Oblatorum Sanctissimæ et Immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ, Galliopoli, 1828.

Constitutiones et Regulæ Congregationis Missionariorum Oblatorum Sanctissimæ et Immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ, Massiliæ, [Marius Olive], 1853.

Constitutiones et Regulæ Congregationis Missionariorum Oblatorum Sanctissimæ et Immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ, Turonibus, Typis A. Mame, 1894.

Constitutiones et Regulæ Congregationis Missionariorum Oblatorum Sanctissimæ et Immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ, Romæ, in Domo generali, 1910.

Constitutiones et Regulæ Congregationis Missionariorum Oblatorum Sanctissimæ et Immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ, Romæ, in Domo generali Congregationis, 1928.

Constitutiones et Regulæ Congregationis Missionariorum Oblatorum Sanctissimæ et Immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ, a Capitulo Generali XXVII Exaratæ, Romæ, 1966.

Constitutiones et Regulæ Congregationis Missionariorum Oblatorum Sanctissimæ et Immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ, a Capitulo Generali XXVII, Romæ, 1966 (Latin/English version).

Constitutions and Rules of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate: Changes as approved by the General Chapter of 1986, Rome, Casa generalizia, 1987.

Constitutions and Rules of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate: Proposed Text Prepared by the Revision Commission for the General Chapter of 1980, Rome, Casa generalizia, 1979.

When sent to the members of the Institute the *Proposed Text (1980)* contained two inserts:

- A. TACHÉ, *Presentation: "Constitutions and Rules O.M.I." (Proposed Text)*, a short seven-page history of the process;
- *Fontes Textus*, listing in 22 pages the sources from Oblate sources, scripture and documents of the Holy See, for each proposed constitution and rule.

Constitutions and Rules of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Rome, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Casa generalizia, 1982.

The Constitutions and Rules of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary, London, R. & T. Washbourne Ltd., [1912].

The Constitutions and Rules of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary, Rome, 5 Via Vittorino da Feltre, 5, 1930.

DESCHÂTELETS, L., *Principles Governing the Relationship Between the Superior of a District and the Directors of Residences*, [Rome, 1954], letters of the general administration, Archives Deschâtelets.

Dictionnaire des Valeurs Oblates, sous la direction de F. Ciardi, Rome, Association d'Études et des Recherches Oblates, 1996.

Dossier Ceylan, Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa. This loose-leaf three-ring binder is in the Archives and contains nearly a hundred pages of typewritten copies of the correspondence between the Oblate superiors and missionaries in Ceylon and the general administration, and some in the other direction. Most of them were sent during the last half of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th. There are no originals at Deschâtelets, but it is noted that these copies correspond to the originals held in the General Archives, Rome, and were typed by Oblate scholastics during the 1950's. According A. Kedl, OMI, Oblate general archivist, the originals are no longer in Rome and there is no indication what happened to them. There is

no way of differentiating between errors in the original and those made by the copyists. This author only made such corrections as were obvious typographical errors.

État général du Personnel de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée, Paris and Rome, 1880-1993, 22 vols.

FABRE, J., *Letter to Séméria*, March 13, 1865. Copy in "Dossier Ceylan," Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, noted as conforming to the original found in the Oblate Archives, General House, Rome.

LEFLON, J., *Eugène de Mazenod: Bishop of Marseilles, Founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 1782-1861*, F. Flanagan, trans., New York, Fordham University Press, 4 vols.

Monseigneur (Canon) Jean Leflon (1893-1979), was a renowned historian of the Catholic Church in France in the 19th century. Born in Vouziers (Ardennes), France, he studied at the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice and received the degree of *Docteur ès Lettres* from the Sorbonne. When he wrote this work he was a professor at the Catholic Institute of Paris. His works, *Monsieur Emery*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1945-46), and *Étienne-Alexandre Bernier, évêque d'Orléans* (Paris, 1938), were both crowned by the French Academy and the latter received the *Grand Prix Gobert*. The volumes on Saint C.J.E. de Mazenod, O.M.I. (canonized in 1995), were undertaken at the behest of Father Antonelli, O.F.M., head of the historical section of the Congregation of Rites and formed a necessary part of the processes of beatification and canonization. The translator, Francis D. Flanagan, O.M.I., was a member of the faculty of Our Lady of Hope Missionary Seminary, Newburgh, New York, U.S.A., and his assistant was Francis Wallis, O.M.I., St. Patrick's College, and Springhurst Residence, Ottawa, Canada.

MAZENOD, DE. E., *Constitutiones, regulæ et instituta Societatis Missionariorum oblatorum Sanctissimæ et Immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ*, P. Duval ed., Rome, Maison Général O.M.I., 1951.

———, *Les Saintes Règles, expliquées d'après les écrits, les leçons et l'esprit de M^{sr} Charles-Joseph-Eugène de Mazenod*, A. YENVEUX, ed., 2 vols. Paris, 1903; Ms. 7 vols., 1878-1903. Fragments of de Mazenod's writings arranged in order corresponding to the articles of the Constitutions and Rules. Many of the original documents used are no longer extant.

———, *Selected Texts Related to the O.M.I. Constitutions and Rules*, P. Sion, ed., Rome, Oblate General House, 1984.

Missionaries in Today's World: General Chapter 1986, Rome, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, [1986].

MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA REGION, *Report of the Region to the Inter-Capitular Meeting*, Bangkok, 1995, unpublished material from the Oblate General Archives, Rome.

MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE: ASIA-OCEANIA REGION, *Apostolic Community*,

Bangkok, 1995, unpublished material from the Oblate General Archives, Rome.

Necrologium Patrem et Fratrem Congregationis Missionariorum Oblatorum B. Mariæ Virginis Immaculatæ, Rome, General House, 1983.

Personnel du Vicariat de Ceylan en 1875, in *Dossier Ceylan*, Archives Deschâtelets.

POST-CAPITULAR COMMITTEE ON STRUCTURES, *Inter-Capitular Text: Basic Rationale Statement*, Addendum: *Consultation Results*, Bangkok, 1995, unpublished material from the Oblate General Archives, Rome.

———, *Revised Text of Part III of the Constitutions and Rules: Proposed for the 1998 General Chapter*, a restricted document for consultation, photocopied, Rome, Oblate General House, October, 1996.

———, *Inter-Capitular Text: Basic Rationale Statement*, Bangkok, 1995, unpublished material from the Oblate General Archives, Rome.

———, *Revised Text*, Rome, Oblate General House, 1996.

SALAUN, G., "Memo: Institution des Supérieurs de Districts", in *Dossier Ceylan*, Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, undated, probably 1865. Copy marked "conforme à l'original conservé aux Archives de la Maison Générale, Rome".

SÉMÉRIA, S., *Letter to Fabre*, September 1, 1865. Copy in "Dossier Ceylan," Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, noted as conforming to the original found in the Oblate Archives, General House, Rome.

1.3. Religious in General and Other Institutes

Basilian Way of Life: The Basic Document of the Basilian Fathers, Toronto, [Mission Press], 1983.

CONGREGATIO PRO INSTITUTIS VITAE CONSECRATAE ET SOCIETATIBUS VITAE APOSTOLICAE. *Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor*, in *Origins*, 23(1994), pp. 693-712.

The Consecrated Life and Its Role in the Church and in the World: Lineamenta for the Ninth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, in *L'Osservatore romano, English Edition*, 48 (2 Dec. 1992), pp. 5-6.

Constitutions de la Société de Marie, Tours, Maison Mame, 1922.

Constitutions de la Société de Marie, Tours [France]. Impr. Maison Mame, 1952.

Constitutions de la Société des Saints Apôtres, 15 août 1965, [Montréal, Société des Saints Apôtres], 1965.

- Constitutions et lois: Société des missionnaires d'Afrique, Pères Blancs*, Rome, La Société, 1981.
- Constitutions et Statuts de la Congrégation du Très-Saint-Rédempteur*, [Rome, Gouvernement général], 1984.
- Constitutions of the Basilian Fathers of Toronto*, Toronto, [The Fathers], 1943.
- Constitutions of the Congregation of the Holy Cross*, 1857, Le Mans, Etiembre and Beauvais, 1859.
- Constitutions of the Congregation of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, Rome, [Resurrectionists], 1982.
- The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus: Translated, with an Introduction and a Commentary by George E. Ganss*, St. Louis, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970.
- Constitutions of the Society of the Divine Word*, Rome, [Tipographia Istituto salesiano Pio XI], 1983.
- Dizionario degli istituti di perfezione*, diretto da G. Pelliccia e da G. Rocca, [Roma], Edizione paoline, 1974-1988, 8 vols.
- Documentos Capitulares*, Claretians, 18 Capitulo General, Barcelona, 1973.
- Handbook For Superiors*, Society of the Divine Word, Rome, 1987.
- JOHN PAUL II, *Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: Vita Consecrata of the Holy Father, John Paul II to the Bishops and Clergy, Religious Orders and Congregations, Societies of Apostolic Life, Secular Institutes and all the Faithful, on the Consecrated Life and its Mission in the World*, [Vatican City, Libreria editrice vaticana, 1996]. In AAS, 88 (1996), pp. 377-486.
- Livre des Constitutions et ordinations de l'Ordre des Frères Prêcheurs*, Lyon, Secrétariat provincial de la province dominicaine de Lyon, 1989.
- MARCOCCHI, M., *Colonialismo, Cristianesimo e culture extraeuropee: L'istruzione di Propaganda Fide ai Vicari apostolici dell'Asia Orientale (1959)*, [Milan,] Jaca Books, [1980].
- Ordo Fratrum Minorum: Seraphicæ legislationis textus originales jussu Rmi ministri generalis totius Ordinis Fratrum Minorum in lucem editi*, Florence, ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventuræ, 1897.
- PAUL VI, *Apostolic Exhortation on the Renewal of Religious Life, Evangelica testificatio*, June 29, 1971, in AAS, 63 (1971), pp. 497-526.
- , *Motu proprio, Ecclesiæ sanctæ*, 6 August, 1966, Part II, "Normæ ad exsequendum decretum SS. Concilii Vaticani II, *Perfectæ caritatis*," in AAS, 58 (1966), pp. 775-782.
- , *Norms for Implementing the Decree On the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life*.

Ecclesiae sanctae II, August 6, 1966, in AAS, 58 (1966), pp. 757-787.

PIUS X, Constitution *Sapienti consilio*, June 29, 1908, in AAS, 1 (1909), p. 12.

The Plan for Franciscan Living: The rule and general constitutions of the Order of Friars Minor. [Pulaski Wis., English Speaking Conference of Provincials, 1974.]

PONTIFICIA COMMISSIO CODICI IURIS CANONICI RECOGNOSCENDO, *Schema canonum de institutis vitae consecratae per professionem consiliorum evangelicorum*. Romæ. Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1977. English translation, *Schema of Canons on Institutes of Life Consecrated by Profession of the Evangelical Counsels: Draft*, Washington, DC. Publications Office, United States Catholic Conference, 1977.

Règle et Constitutions générales de l'Ordre des Frères mineurs, Rome, Curia generalis O.F.M., 1958.

Règle de vie: Congrégation du Saint-Sacrement, [Rome, Maison généralice, 1985].

Rule of Life of the Society of Mary, [Dayton, Ohio, Marianist Press, 1981].

SACRA CONGREGATIO DE RELIGIOSIS, *Normæ secundum quas S. Congregatio de religiosis in novis religiosis congregationibus approbandis procedere solet*, Romæ. Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1922.

———, *Normæ secundum quas S. Cong. Episcoporum et Regularium procedere solet in approbandis Novis Institutis Votorum Simplicium*, 28 iunii, 1901, [Romæ, Typis S. Cong. de Propaganda Fidei, 1901].

SACRA CONGREGATIO EPISCOPORUM ET REGULARIUM, *Normæ secundum quas Sacra Congregatio Episcoporum et Regularium procedere solet in approbandis novis institutis votorum simplicium*, Romæ. Typis S.C. de Propaganda Fide, 1901.

SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO RELIGIOSIS ET INSTITUTIS SECULARIBUS, *Essential Elements in Church Teaching on Religious Life*, May 31, 1983, in *Origins*, 13 (1983), pp. 133-142.

SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO RELIGIOSIS ET INSTITUTIS SECULARIBUS ET SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO EPISCOPIB, *Directives on the Mutual Relations Between Bishops and Religious in the Church*, *Mutue relationes*, April 23, 1978, in AAS, 70 (1978), pp. 473-506.

SCJ Provincial Directory, Anglo-Canadian Province, Priests of the Sacred Heart, Toronto, 1996.

SCJ Rule of Life: General Directory, [Rome, 1986].

SYNODUS EPISCOPORUM, *The Consecrated Life and Its Role in the Church and the World: Lineamenta*, Synod of Bishops, IX Ordinary General Assembly, [Ottawa], Libreria editrice vaticana, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1992.

SYNODUS EPISCOPORUM, *The Consecrated Life and Its Role in the Church and the World: Instrumentum Laboris*, Synod of Bishops, IX Ordinary General Assembly, Vatican City, [Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops], 1994.

2. Books

2.1. General

ABBO, J., and J. HANNON, *The Sacred Canons, A Concise Presentation of the Current Disciplinary Norms of the Church*, St. Louis, Herder, 1957, 2 vols.

BACHOFEN, A., *A Commentary on the New Code of Canon Law*, St. Louis, B. Herder Book Co., 6th ed., 1936, 8 vols.

BLACK, H., *Black's Law Dictionary: Definitions of the Terms and Phrases of American and British Jurisprudence, Ancient and Modern*, 6th ed., St. Paul, Minn., West Publishing Co., 1990.

BLAIS, A., "Le sondage," in *Recherche Sociale: De la problématique à la collecte des données*; 2nd ed., Sainte-Foy, Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1992, pp. 361-398.

BOUSCAREN, T., and A. ELLIS, *Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, 3rd revised ed., Milwaukee, Wis., Bruce Publishing, 1961.

Canon Law Digest, T. BOUSCAREN, (ed.), vols. 1-3; vols. 4-6: T. BOUSCAREN, and J. O'CONNOR, (ed.), Milwaukee, Bruce; vols. 7-10: J. O'CONNOR, (ed.), Mundelein, Ill., Chicago Province S.J.; vol. 11: E. PFNAUSCH, (ed.), Washington, DC, Canon Law Society of America, 1934-.

CANON LAW SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, *The Canon Law, Letter and Spirit: A Practical Guide to the Code of Canon Law*, Collegeville, MN, The Liturgical Press, 1995.

CAPARROS, E., M. THÉRIAULT, and J. THORN, (eds.), *Code of Canon Law Annotated: Latin-English edition of the Code of Canon Law and English-language translation of the 5th Spanish-language edition of the commentary prepared under the responsibility of the Instituto Martín de Azpilcueta*, Montréal, Wilson & Lafleur Limitée, 1993.

COMITE CANONIQUE DES RELIGIEUX, *Directoire canonique: vie consacrée et sociétés de vie apostolique*, Paris, Cerf, 1986.

———, *Les instituts religieux dans l'Église: directoire canonique*, Paris, Union des Supérieurs Majeurs de France, 1973.

CORIDEN, J., T. GREEN and D. HEINTSCHEL, (eds.), *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, New York, Paulist Press, 1985.

DELAIGNETTE, R., *Christianity and Colonialism*, J. Foster, trans., New York, Hawthorne Books, [1964].

- DELLA ROCCA, F., *Manual of Canon Law*, A. Bruce, trans., Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Company, [1959].
- FLANNERY, A., (ed.), *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, revised edition, Northport, New York, Costello, 1992.
- , *Vatican Council II: More Post Conciliar Documents*, Vatican Collection, vol. II, Northport, New York, Costello, [1982].
- GHIRLANDA, G., *Introduzione al diritto ecclesiale*, [Casale Monferrato], Edizioni Piemme Spa, [1993].
- FOLZ, D., *Survey Research for Public Administration*, Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications Inc., 1996.
- GOUGH, A., *Paris and Rome: The Gallican Church and the ultramontane campaign, 1848-1953*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1986.
- HARRINGTON, R., *The Applicability of the Principle of Subsidiarity According to the Code of Canon Law*, Doctoral diss., Faculty of Canon Law, Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1997.
- LEIGHTON, C., *Catholicism in a Protestant Kingdom: A Study of the Irish Ancien Régime*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1994.
- MCINTYRE, J., *Customary Law in the Corpus iuris canonici*, Doctoral diss., Canon Law Studies, no. 527, Washington, DC, Faculty of the School of Religious Studies, Catholic University of America, 1989.
- NEILL, T. and R. SCHMANDT, *History of the Catholic Church*, Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Company, [1957].
- ÖRSY, L., *The Lord of Confusion*, Denville, New Jersey, Dimension Books, 1970.
- RAHNER K., and H. VORGRIMMER, *Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed., R. Strachan, trans., New York, Crossroad, 1981.
- RYNNE, X., *Letters from Vatican City: Vatican Council II (First Session): Background and Debates*, New York, Farrar Straus & Company, [1963].
- SELLTIZ, C., M. JAHODA, M. DEUTSCH, AND S. COOK, (eds.), *Research Methods in Social Relations*, revised edition, New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Toronto, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, [1959].
- SHELDRAKE, P., *Spirituality and History: Questions of Interpretation and Method*, London, SPCK, 1991.

SHIRER, W., *The Collapse of the Third Republic: An Inquiry into the Fall of France in 1940*, New York, Simon and Schuster, [1969].

Traité de Droit Canonique, publié sous la direction de R. Naz, 2e éd. rev., Paris, Letouzey et Ané, 1955, 4 vols.

VALDRINI, P., (ed.), *Droit canonique*, Paris, Dallaz, 1989.

WENGER, A., *Vatican II, première session*, 1963; *Chronique de la deuxième session*, 1964; *Chronique de la troisième session*, 1965; *Chronique de la quatrième session*, Paris, Centurion, [1966].

WERNZ, F., *Ius canonicum ad Codicis normam exactum, opera P. Vidal*, editio tertia, Romæ, apud Edes Universitatis Gregorianæ, 1943, 8 vols.

WUELLNER, B., *Dictionary of Scholastic Philosophy*, Milwaukee, Bruce, [1956].

2.2. Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

CASSIDY, T., *Roots and Branches: A Diary of St. Peter's Province*, Ottawa, English Oblates of Eastern Canada, 1988.

The Congregation Renewed: A reading Guide for the Constitutions and Rules, Rome, The General House, 1968.

COSENTINO, G., *Histoire de nos Règles*, G. Marchand, trans., Ottawa, Éditions des Études oblates, 1955, 6 vols.

———, *Nos chapitres généraux*, Ottawa, Éditions des Études oblates, 1957.

Études oblates: revue trimestrielle publiée par les Oblats de Marie Immaculée de la province du Canada, Montréal, Maison Provinciale, 1942-1973.

Fontes textus, Rome, Casa generalizia O.M.I., 1980.

Gathering '93: Engaging Our/Selves: Gathering Report, Amprior, ON, Missionary Oblates of St. Peter's Province, 1993.

JETTE, F., *O.M.I., The Apostolic Man: A Commentary on the 1982 Edition of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules*, A. Kedl and A. Lalonde, trans., Rome, General House, 1992.

LEVASSEUR, D., *Les Constitutions et Règles des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée à la lumière de Vatican II*, Ottawa, Éditions des Études oblates, 1967.

- LEVASSEUR, D., *A History of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate: Toward a Synthesis*, vol. I, 1815-1898, J. Rheidt and A. Kedl (trans.), Rome, General House, 1985.
- , *A History of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate: Toward a Synthesis*, vol. II, 1898-1985, J. Rheidt and A. Kedl (trans.), Rome, General House, 1989.
- , *A History of the Oblate Congregation*, Scholastics of Holy Rosary Scholasticate, Ottawa (trans.), Ottawa, Éditions des Études oblates, 1959.
- MAZENOD, E. DE, *Collection: Oblate Writings*, vols. 1-13, Rome, General Postulation O.M.I., 1978-1993.
- , *Selected Texts related to the O.M.I. Constitutions and Rules*, B. Rayappu, trans., Rome, [Spedim Press], 1984.
- Missions de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, Marseilles and Rome, Administration générale, 1862-1971, 339 nos. in 98 vols.
- Missions de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée. Tables analytiques générales: 1862-1971*, 5 vols., [Rome, via Aurelia 290, 1971].
- MORABITO, J., "Je serai prêtre," *Eugène de Mazenod, de Venise à Saint-Sulpice (1794-1811)*, Ottawa, Éditions des Études oblates, 1954.
- My Name is Eugène de Mazenod: Texts Chosen from Bishop Charles Joseph Eugène de Mazenod*, presented and annotated by H. Charbonneau, F. Flanagan, trans., Boston, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Eastern Province of United States, 1976.
- OBLATE CONFERENCE OF CANADA, *Constitution de la C.O.C./OCC Constitution*, 1987 revision, typewritten, Edmonton, Alta, 1987.
- , *Regional Directory: Administration of Temporal Goods*, first draft, Ottawa, private printing, 1991.
- , *Regional Directory: Administration of Temporal Goods*, 1991 [sic], second draft, private printing, actually submitted to the OCC by the OCC-T in July 1992.
- , *Regional Directory: Administration of Temporal Goods*, private printing, 1995.
- OMI-St. Peter's Province: *Personnel Directory*, 1996-1997, Ottawa, St. Peter's Province, 1996.
- PIELORZ, J., *Les chapitres Généraux au temps du Fondateur*, Ottawa, Éditions des Études oblates, 1968.
- Provincial Guidelines*, Ottawa, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, St. Peter's Province, 1982-1993.

REY, A., *Histoire de Monseigneur Charles-Joseph-Eugène de Mazenod, évêque de Marseille, fondateur de la Congrégation des missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, Rome, Maison Générale, 1928, 2 vols.

Selected Oblate Studies and Texts, vol. 1, Rome, General House, 1986.

Vie Oblate Life, Ottawa, Université Saint-Paul, 1974-.

WOESTMAN, W., *The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate: A Clerical Religious Congregation with Brothers*, Doctoral diss., Rome, Angelicum, Faculty of Canon Law, 1984.

———, *The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate: A Clerical Religious Congregation with Brothers*, 2 ed., Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1995.

2.3. Religious in General and Other Institutes

ALLARD, P., *Le canon 578 et son application à la Société de Marie: le patrimoine de l'Institut*, Doctoral diss., Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1990.

ANDRÉS GUTIÉRREZ, D., *El derecho de los religiosos: comentario al código*, 2nd ed., Madrid, Publicaciones Claretianas y Commentarium pro Religiosis, 1984.

ARBUCKLE, G., *Out of Chaos: Refounding Religious Congregations*, New York, Paulist Press, [1988].

BALMÈS, H., *Les religieux à vœux simples d'après le Code*, Italy, San Giorgio Canavese, chez l'auteur, [1921].

———, *Les Religieux à vœux simples d'après le Code*, Paray-le-Monial, Au Secrétariat des œuvres du Sacré-Cœur, 1921.

BASTIEN, P., *Directoire canonique à l'usage des congrégations à vœux simples*, 4e éd., Bruges, Ch. Beyaert, 1933.

BATTANDIER, A., *Guide canonique des sœurs à vœux simples*, Paris, Lecoffre, 1898.

———, *Guide canonique pour les constitutions des instituts à vœux simples*, 5th ed., Paris, Lecoffre, 1911.

BATTELLI, G., *Religious Life in the Light of the New Canon Law*, Nairobi, Kenya, St. Paul Publications, [1990].

BEYER, J., *Le droit de la vie consacrée: commentaire des canons 573-606: normes communes*, Bourges, Éditions Tardy, [1988].

- BEYER, J., *Le droit de la vie consacrée: commentaire des canons 607-746: instituts et sociétés*, Bourges, Éditions Tardy, [1988].
- BOUIX, M.-D., *Tractatus de jure regularium*, 2nd ed., Parisiis, Regis Ruffet et Sociis, 1867, 2 vols.
- BOUSCAREN, T., and J. O'CONNOR, (eds.), *The Canon Law Digest for Religious*, vol. I, 1917-1963, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1964.
- BRENNAN, D., A "Novus habitus mentis" for Religious Superiors: Living with Dualism, Master's seminar paper, unpublished, Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1992.
- CADA, L., et al., *Shaping the Coming Age of Religious Life*, New York, Seabury, [1979].
- CANON LAW SOCIETY OF AMERICA: RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, *Critique of Schema canonum de institutis vitae consecratae per professionem consiliorum evangelicorum*, [Washington, DC, Canon Law Society of America, 1977].
- CANU, J., *Religious Orders of Men*, P. Hepburne-Scott, trans., New York, Hawthorne Books, 1960.
- CLANCY, P., *The Local Religious Superior: An Historical Conspectus and Commentary on the Rights and Duties of the Minor Local Superior in Orders of Men*, The Catholic University of America Canon Law Studies, No. 175, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, DC, 1943.
- COURTOIS, G., *Les états de perfection: documents pontificaux de Léon XIII à nos jours*, Paris, Fleurus, [1958]; translated into English as *The States of Perfection According to the Teaching of the Church*, by J. O'Flynn, Dublin, Gill, 1961.
- CREUSEN, J., *De iuridica status religiosi evolutione*, 2 ed., Romæ, Apud Sedes Pontificiæ Universitatis Gregorianæ, 1948.
- , *Religieux et religieuses d'après le droit ecclésiastique*, 4e éd., Louvain, Desclée de Brouwer, 1930; English translation of 5th ed. as *Religious Men and Women in the Code*, by A. Ellis, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1940.
- DINN, M., L. TESSIER, and E. COURNEENE, *Canonical Documentation on Consecrated Life (1963-1976)*, Doctoral diss., Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1977.
- DORTEL-CLAUDOT, M., *Les structures de gouvernement et de participation des congrégations religieuses. (Cours donné au Centre Sèvres en janvier-février, 1984)*, Pro manuscripto, [Paris], Travaux et Conférences du Centre Sèvres, [1984].
- FLANAGAN, B., *The Canonical Erection of Religious Houses: An Historical Synopsis and Commentary*, The Catholic University of America Canon Law Studies, No. 179, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, DC, 1943.

- FLANNERY, A. and L. COLLINS, *Light for My Path: The New Code Of Canon Law for Religious: Digest, Source Material, Commentary*, Wilmington, DE, Michael Glazier, 1983.
- FRISON, B., *The Constitutions of Religious Institutes and Modern Trends*, Washington, DC, School of Canon Law, Catholic University of America, [1958].
- FUTRELL, J. , *Making an Apostolic Community of Love: The Role of the Superior According to St. Ignatius of Loyola*, St. Louis, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970.
- GALLAGHER, M., *The Common Life: An Element of Apostolic Religious Institutes of Women*, Doctoral diss., Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1995.
- HITE, J., S. HOLLAND and D. WARD, (eds.), *A Handbook on Canons 573-746*, Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, [1985].
- HOSTIE, R., *Vie et mort des ordres religieux: approches psychosociologiques*, [Paris], Desclée de Brouwer, [1972].
- KALLUMKAL, J., *The Patrimony of an Institute According to the Code of Canon Law*, Doctoral diss., Roma, Pontificia Università Lateranense, 1989.
- KARDONG, T., *The Benedictines*, Dublin, Dominican Publications, [1988].
- KELLY, J., *The Legal Status of Mission Stations: An Historical Synopsis and Canonical Commentary*, Doctoral diss., Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, University of Ottawa, 1953.
- KNOWLES, D., *From Pachomius to Ignatius: A Study in the Constitutional History of the Religious Orders*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1966.
- LANSLOTS, D., *Handbook of Canon Law for Congregations of Women under Simple Vows*, 4th ed., New York, Frederick Pustet & Co., 1910.
- , *Handbook of Canon Law for Congregations of Women under Simple Vows*, 9th ed., New York, Frederick Pustet & Co., 1920. [Contains *Conditæ a Christo* in English.]
- LESAGE, G., *L'Accession des Congrégations à l'État religieux canonique*, Ottawa, Les Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1952.
- LOZANO, J., *The Claretians: Their Mission and Spirit in the Church*, J. Daries, trans., vol. 1, Chicago, Claret Center for Resources in Spirituality, 1980.
- MCCOLLUM, M., ed., *Of Clogs and Stocking Feet: Reflections on the Future of Religious Life*, Ottawa, Canadian Religious Conference, 1992.
- MCDONOUGH, E., *Ready Reference for the 1980 Schema of Canons on Institutes of Consecrated Life*, Columbus, OH, Springs Press, Saint Mary of the Springs, 1981.

- MCGRATH, R., *The Local Superior in Non-Exempt Clerical Congregations: An Historical Conspectus and a Commentary*, doctoral diss., Canon Law Studies, no. 351, Washington, DC, Catholic University of America Press, 1954.
- MOLINARI, P., and P. GUMPEL, *Il capitolo VI "De religiosis" della costituzione dogmatica sulla Chiesa*, [Milano], Editrice Ancora Milano, [1985].
- MOORMAN, J., *A History of the Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the Year 1517*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968.
- MORRISEY, F., *Papal and Curial Pronouncements: Their Canonical Significance in Light of the 1983 Code of Canon Law*, Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1992.
- NEVILLE, G., *The Religious Superior's Council in the 1983 Code of Canon Law*, Doctoral diss., Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1988.
- NGUYEN DAN, P., *The Spiritual Patrimony of an Institute of Consecrated Life*, Doctoral diss., Rome, Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, 1989.
- O'CONNOR, F., *Witness and Service: Questions about Religious Life Today*, New York, Paulist Press, [1990].
- O'REILLY, M., *Consecrated Life: Norms (cc. 572-633; 641-746), (DCA 5203 a: Class Notes for the Private Use of Students Only)*, Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1993-1994.
- ÖRSY, L., *Open to the Spirit: Religious Life After Vatican II*, Washington, DC, Corpus, [1968].
- ORTH, C., *The Approbation of Religious Institutes*, The Catholic University of America Studies in Canon Law, No. 71, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, 1931.
- PAPI, H., *Religious in Church Law: An Exposition of Canon Law Concerning Religious*, New York, P. J. Kenedy, 1924.
- SCHNEIDERS, S., *New Wineskins: Re-imagining Religious Life Today*, Ramsey, Paulist Press, 1986.
- SCHOENMAECKERS, M., *Genèse du chapitre VI "De religiosis" de la constitution dogmatique sur l'Église "Lumen gentium"*, Rome, Gregorian University Press, 1983.
- SEVRIN, E., *Les Missions Religieuses en France sous la Restauration, (1815-1830), tome première: le missionnaire et la mission*, Saint-Mandé, Procure des Prêtres de la Miséricorde, 1948.
- SILVESTRI, G. DI, *Life in Common an Integral Part of Religious Life as Exemplified in the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint John the Baptist*, Doctoral diss., Rome, Pontificia Studiorum Universitas a S. Thoma Aq. in Urbe, 1986.

- STORY, N., *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature*, Toronto, London and New York, Oxford University Press, 1967.
- TESTERA, F., (ed.), *Religious Men and Women in the New Code of Canon Law*, Manila, Philippines, Faculty of Canon Law, University of Santo Tomas, 1984.
- TILLARD, J.-M.-R., *Appels du Christ ... appels du monde: les religieux relisent leur appel*, Paris, Cerf, 1978, translated into English as *Dilemmas of Modern Religious Life*, by M. Glazier, Inc., Wilmington, Glazier, [1984].
- , *Dans le monde, pas du monde: la 'vie religieuse apostolique'*, Bruxelles, Lumen vitæ, [1981].
- TYCK, C., *Notices historiques sur les congrégations et communautés religieuses du XIXme Siècle*, [Louvain, 1892].
- WILTGEN, R., (ed.), *The Religious Life Defined: An Official Commentary on the Second Vatican Council Deliberations*, Techny, IL, Divine Word Pub., [1970].
- WITTBERG, P., *Creating a Future for Religious Life: A Sociological Perspective*, New York, Paulist Press, [1991].
- WOODWARD, E., *Poets, Prophets and Pragmatists: A New Challenge to Religious Life*, Notre Dame, IN, Ave Maria Press, [1987].

3. Periodicals, Articles, and Excerpts

3.1. General

- ALLISON, A., "An English Gallican: Henry Holden 1596/7-1662. Part I (to 1648)," in *Recusant History*, 22/3 (1995), pp. 319-349.
- FICHTNER, J., "Tradition (in Theology)," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. XIV, Washington, DC, 1967, pp. 225-228.
- FOX, J., "A General Synthesis of the Work of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law," in *The Jurist*, 48 (1988), pp. 800-840.
- GAUTHIER, A., "Juridical Persons in the *Code of Canon Law*," in *Studia canonica*, 25 (1991), pp. 77-92.
- GREEN, T., "The Canon Law Society of America and the Revision of the Code: Historical Reflections and Continuing Concerns," in *The Jurist*, 53 (1993), pp. 1-21.

- GREEN, T., "Subsidiarity During the Code Revision Process: Some Initial Reflections," in *The Jurist*, 48 (1988), pp. 771-799.
- HOLLAND, S., "The Code and Essential Elements," in *The Jurist*, 44 (1984), pp. 304-338.
- KOMONCHAK, J., "Subsidiarity in the Church: The State of the Question," in *The Jurist*, 48 (1988), pp. 298-349.
- LEFEBVRE, C., M. PACAUT and L. CHEVAILLER, "L'époque moderne, 1563-1789: les sources du droit et la seconde centralisation romaine," in *Histoire du droit et des institutions de l'Église en Occident*, G. Le Bras, [ed.], 15/1 [1976], Paris, Éditions Cujas, pp. 102-106.
- SALMON, J., "Clovis and Constantine. The Uses of History in Sixteenth Century Gallicanism," in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 41/4 (1990), pp. 584-605.
- SHELDRAKE, P., "Revising Historical Perspectives," in *The Way Supplement*, 65 (1989), pp. 66-77.
- STEEH, C., "Trends in Nonresponsive Rates, 1952-1979," in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 45 (Spring 1981), pp. 40-58.
- VAN HOVE, A., "Coutume," in *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, R. Naz, [ed.], Paris, Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1949, vol. 4, cols. 731-755.

3.2. Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

- "Acta of the Congress: Evangelization and the Oblates, Rome, 29 August to September 14, 1982. 'Elements from the Plenary Sessions: A Summary'," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 42 (1983), pp. 359-368.
- AROMI, Oblate General House, Rome, 1940-1966.
- BEAUDOIN, Y., "Msgr. de Mazenod et les Jésuites," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 51 (1992), pp.
- BOUDENS, R., "Bishop de Mazenod and Ceylon," in *Études oblates*, 11 (1982), pp. 168-178, 12 (1983), pp. 312-322.
- , "Catholic Missionaries in a British Colony: Successes and Failures in Ceylon, 1796-1893," in *Nouvelle Revue de science missionnaire*, Immensee [sic], 1979, pp. 126-179.
- , "Le centenaire de l'élection du T.R.P. Fabre," in *Études oblates*, 20 (1961), pp. 308-312.
- BREault, C., "Mission Fulfilled in and through Community," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 43 (1984), pp. 231-238.
- "Changes to the Constitutions and Rules," in *Documentation OMI*, Rome, Casa generalizia, 154 (January, 1988), pp. 1-3.

- CHARLAND, P.-É., "Ignace de Loyola, exercices, adaptation oblate," in *Études Oblates*, 18 (1959), pp.5-84.
- CIARDI, F., "Community and Religious Life To-day," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 49 (1990), pp. E159-E170.
- , "Some Aspects of Community in the Light of Apostolic Life," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 36 (1977), pp.193-213.
- COSENTINO, G., "Les 'Directoires' de la Congrégation," in *Études oblates*, 20 (1961), pp. 272-298.
- , "Existence juridique de notre Congrégation pendant ses dix premières années, (1816-1826)," in *Études oblates*, 12 (1953), pp 3-24.
- , "Missions - vie commune," L.-P.Lavallée, trans., in *Études oblates*, 15 (1956), pp. 275-280.
- , "Les Modifications de 1867 et la troisième édition (1894) de nos saintes Règles", in *Études oblates*, 1951, pp. 249-258.
- , "Les 'Personnels' de la Congregation," in *Études oblates*, 19 (1960), pp. 242-248.
- DESCHÂTELETS, L., "Quelques pensées du père Léo Deschâtelets, o.m.i. à l'occasion du Chapitre général," in *Études oblates*, 39 (1980), pp. 3-20.
- DESNOYERS, A., "Supérieurs," in *Études oblates*, 1 (1942), pp. 187-188.
- "District Communities: Report of a Mini-Survey," in *OMI Documentation*, 168 (1989), pp. 1-12.
- Documentation OMI*, Rome, Oblate Information Service, Rome, Casa generalizia, 1966-.
- EIMER, R., "Community and Religious Life," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 44 (1985), pp. 148-155.
- GAUTHIER, R., "La vie communautaire des Oblats au Canada," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 36 (1977), pp. 371-382.
- HENKEL, W., "The Mind and Heart of Blessed Eugene de Mazenod According to the Instruction on Foreign Missions (1853)," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 36 (1977), pp. 165-176.
- HUEL, R., "Early Oblate Missions in the Canadian North-West: The Evolution of a Missionary Strategy," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 48 (1989), pp. 237-251.
- Information OMI*, Rome, Oblate Information Service, Rome, Casa generalizia, 1966-.
- JETTÉ, F., "La vie religieuse dans le charisme oblat," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 41 (1982), pp.106-113.
- LAFONTAINE, P.-H., "Nature de l'approbation de nos Règles," in *Études oblates*, 6 (1947), pp. 91-116.

- LEVASSEUR, D.. "Les Constitutions et Règles des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée à la lumière de Vatican II." in *Études oblates*, 26 (1967), pp. 97-202.
- Les Missions des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, Rome, Casa generalizia, 1862-1961.
- MUNIER, O. "Spiritualité oblate." in *Études oblates*, 1 (1942), pp. 32-35.
- O'REILLY, M.. "The Approval of the 1980 Constitutions and Rules by the Holy See." in *OMI Documentation*, 124 (1984), pp. 1-12.
- PIELORZ, J.. "Les chapitres généraux 1818 à 1986." in *Vie Oblate Life*, 46 (1987), pp. 169-200.
- , "The Early History of the Charism of the Founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 36 (1977), pp.63-84.
- QUÉRÉ, M.. "The Missionary Oblates in Ceylon 1847-1962 - A Statistical Study," in *Études oblates*, 22 (1963), pp. 216-226.
- RAUSCH, C.. "District Communities: Separating the Wheat from the Chaff." in *Vie Oblate Life*, 54 (1995), pp. 237-244.
- REDDY, T.. "Fr. General and the Renewal of the Congregation," in *Études oblates*, 28 (1969), pp. 168-172.
- RENAUD, A.. "Le renouveau de la Congrégation à la lumière d'*Evangelica testificatio*, présentation," in *Études oblates*, 31 (1972), pp. 3-92.
- RESLÉ, J.. "Aux sources de nos Règles, le p. de Mazenod a-t-il copié s. Alphonse?" in *Études oblates*, 25 (1966), pp. 231-249.
- RUCH, E.. "Apostolic Religious Life: A Slow Evolution in the Congregation." in *Vie Oblate Life*, 46 (1987), pp. 71-85.
- ROY, L.. "The Apostolic Community According to the Superiors General." in *Vie Oblate Life*, 49 (1990), pp. E271-E298.
- SANTOLINI, G.. "Mission Through Apostolic Community According to Our Constitutions and Rules." in *Vie Oblate Life*, 49 (1990), pp. E201-E232.
- SANTUCCI, F.. "Communauté" in *Dictionnaire des valeurs oblates*, Rome, Association d'Études et des Recherches Oblates, 1996, pp. 136-158.
- , "Districts as Expressions of Apostolic Community in the Oblates of Mary Immaculate," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 53 (1994), pp. 103-119.
- SCHWIETZ, R.. "Oblate District Life: Reflections and Questions," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 50 (1991), pp. 157-162.

- TACHÉ, A., "1980 Constitutions and Rules Project: Principles Underlying the Drafting of the Revised Text," in *OMI Documentation*, 90 (1980), pp. 1-8.
- , "Rapport de la Commission pour la révision des Constitutions," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 37 (1978), pp. 199-212.
- "Territorial Units of Governance," in *Committee/Comité Structures (9)*, a document of the 1992 General Chapter of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Rome, Casa generalizia, typewritten.
- WALKOSZ, W., "Community and Mission According to the General Chapters," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 49 (1990), pp. E238-E270.
- ZAGO, M., "Becoming Witnesses in Apostolic Community: Inter-Chapter Meeting: October 1995," in *OMI Documentation*, 208 (1996).
- , "Evaluation et perspectives de la Communauté oblate," in *Études Oblates*, 31 (1972), pp. 67-80.
- , "Oblate Community," in *OMI Documentation*, 172 (1990).
- , "Report of the Superior General on the State of the Congregation to the 32nd General Chapter," circular 325, in *Acta Administrationis Generalis O.M.I.*, 15 (1992), pp. 161-217.
- , "Some Insights on the Fundamental Values of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 36 (1977), pp. 253-283.
- , "The Superior General's Letter to Local Superiors," circular 341, in *Acta Administrationis Generalis O.M.I.*, 19 (1996), pp. 12-14.
- , "Vita Consecrata and the Oblates," in *OMI Documentation*, 214 (1997), p. 15.

3.3. Religious in General and Other Institutes

- ABBOTT, M., "Community," in *UISG Bulletin (Special Supplement)*, 62 (1984), pp. 56-60.
- ALPHONSO, H., "The Origin and Meaning of Jesuit Apostolic Community," in *Gregorianum*, 72 (1991), pp. 357-364.
- ANDRÉS GUTIÉRREZ, D., "Innovationes in parte III libri II novi Codicis, quæ est de institutionibus vitæ consecratæ et de societatibus vitæ apostolicæ," in *Commentarium pro religiosis*, 64 (1983), pp. 5-72.
- , "Natura status religiosi eiusque elementa essentialia teológica-iuridica," in *Commentarium pro religiosis*, 53 (1972), pp. 193-205.

- ANDRÉS GUTIÉRREZ, D., "La vida común religiosa: momentos culminantes de sus evolución histórica," in *Apollinaris*, 50 (1977), pp. 119-148, 378-404.
- ARBUCKLE, G., "Clarifying Community Models: Essential for Refounding," in *Review for Religious*, 50 (1991), pp. 697-704.
- ARDITO, S., "Vita consacrata e vita religiosa nel nuovo Codice di diritto canonico: fondamento ecclesiologico e norme comuni," in *Salesianum*, 47 (1985), pp. 529-554.
- ASCHENBRENNER, G., "Active and Monastic: Two Apostolic Lifestyles," in *Review for Religious*, 45 (1986), pp. 653-668.
- BERGH, E., "La vie commune," in *Revue des communautés religieuses*, 16 (1945), pp. 133-145.
- BEYER, J., "Le nouveau droit des religieux: un projet original et ouvert," in *Concilium*, 97 (1974), pp. 89-99.
- , "Principe de subsidiarité ou 'juste autonomie' dans l'Église," in *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 108 (1986), pp. 801-822.
- , "Prospects for the Reform of Religious Constitutions," in *The Way Supplement*, 26 (1975), pp. 84-96.
- , "La vie consacrée dans l'Église," in *Gregorianum*, 44 (1963), pp. 32-61.
- , "Vita associativa e corresponsabilità ecclesiale," in *Vita consacrata*, 26 (1990), pp. 923-941.
- , "Vita consacrata e vita religiosa dal Vaticano II al Codice di diritto canonico," in *Vita consacrata*, 25 (1989), pp. 317-326, 401-411.
- BRACKEN, J., "Community and Religious Life: A Question of Interpretation," in *Review for Religious*, 31 (1972), pp. 732-741.
- BROCKMAN, N., "The Shadow Side of Charism," in *Review for Religious*, 35 (1976), pp. 229-231.
- CARDEGNA, F., "The Jesuit Community as a Community of Service," in *Woodstock Letters*, 98 (1969), pp. 53-70.
- CASTILLO LARA, R., "De ecclesialitate vitæ religiosæ in Codice iuris canonici," in *Periodica*, 74 (1985), pp. 419-437.
- , "Reflections on the New Code: Institutes of Consecrated Life," in *UISG Bulletin*, 63 (1983), pp. 5-14.
- , "Réflexions sur le nouveau Code: les instituts de vie consacrée," in *le Bulletin U.I.S.G.*, 63 (1983), pp. 5-14.

- CERLETTY, M., "Some Practical Helps for the Development of Constitutions," in *Studia canonica*, 14 (1980), pp. 155-170.
- CIARDI, F., "Theology of the Charism of Institutes," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 46 (1987), pp. 153-168.
- CLARKE, T., "Religious Community," in *The Way*, 10 (1970), pp. 103-112.
- CODY, A., "The New Canons on Consecrated Life and the Mind of the Council," in *Concilium*, 147 (1981), pp. 64-68.
- COGAN, P., "Absence of Local Superior from House," in *Roman Replies and CLSA Advisory Opinions, 1994*, Washington, Catholic University of America, 1994, pp. 112-113.
- COLRAT, M., "Droit universel et droit propre dans les instituts de vie consacrée," in *L'Année canonique*, 28 (1984), pp. 91-100.
- Commentarium pro Religiosis et Missionariis*, publicatio bimestralis, opera et studio MM. Filiorum I. Cordis B. V. Mariæ, Romæ.
- COMYNS, J., "The Juridical Status of Religious Living Outside Their Religious Houses," in *The Jurist*, 12 (1952), pp. 3-25.
- CREUSEN, J., "De iuridica status religiosi evolutione: brevis synopsis historica," in *Periodica*, 31 (1942), pp. 143-155, 216-241.
- , "Les instituts religieux à vœux simples: esquisse historique," in *Revue des communautés religieuses*, 16 (1940), pp. 52-63; 16 (1945), pp. 34-43.
- , "Pouvoir dominatif et erreur commune," in *Acta Congressus iuridici internationalis*, Romæ, Apud Custodiam Librariam Pont. Instituti Utriusque Iuris, 1935-1937, vol. 4, pp. 181-192.
- CUNNINGHAM, A., "Appropriate Renewal and Ecclesial Identity," in *Concilium*, 7-8 (1974), pp. 93-98.
- DAMMERTZ, V., "Vita comune - comunità fraterna - vita in comunità," in *SCRIS Informationes*, 11 (1985), pp. 129-131.
- DORTEL-CLAUDOT, M., "De evolutione status canonici institutorum religiosorum a votis simplicibus a sæculo XVI usque ad novum Codicem," in *Periodica*, 74 (1985), pp. 439-458.
- , "The New Law for Religious," in *UISG Bulletin*, 63 (1983), pp. 42-60.
- DOYLE, T., "The Canonical Status of Religious Institutes: Additional Considerations," in *Studia canonica*, 18 (1984), pp. 347-364.

- DUCHARME, A., "La mission de la vie communautaire aujourd'hui," in *Vie des communautés religieuses*, 51 (1993), pp. 76-86.
- DUMEIGE, G., "La Compagnie de Jésus, communauté apostolique: aspects historiques et institutionnels," in *Cahiers de spiritualité ignatienne*, 1 (1977), pp. 219-230.
- EUART, S., "A Canonical Analysis of 'Essential Elements' in Light of the 1983 Code of Canon Law," in *The Jurist*, 45 (1985), pp. 438-501.
- EVANS, M., "The Apostolic Religious Community," in *The Way*, 16 (1976), pp. 30-38.
- EWEN, M., S. VALLEJO, and P. MOLINARI, "Theological Reflections on Apostolic Religious Life," in *Review for Religious*, 43 (1984), pp. 3-25.
- FRISON, B., "The Challenge of Change: Renewal of Structures of Government in Religious Institutes," in *Studia canonica*, 1 (1967), pp. 224-243.
- , "Renewal of Religious," in *Studia canonica*, 1 (1967), pp. 45-78.
- FUERTES, J., "Religiosus in novo Codice," in *Commentarium pro religiosis*, 69 (1988), pp. 171-184.
- , "La 'vida fraterna' in común de los religiosos y su trayectoria histórica-jurídico," in *Apollinaris*, 55 (1982), pp. 532-568.
- FUTRELL, J., "Discovering the Founder's Charism," in *The Way Supplement*, 14 (1971), pp. 62-70.
- GALLAGHER, C., "The Church and Institutes of Consecrated Life," in *The Way Supplement*, 50 (1984), pp. 3-15.
- GALLEN, J., "The Ultimate Essence of Religious Life," in *Review for Religious*, 31 (1972), p. 298.
- , "Questions and Answers: What Does the New Code Say of Common Life?" in *Review for Religious*, 42 (1983), p. 934.
- GRANFIELD, P., "Changes in Religious Life: Freedom, Responsibility, Community," in *America*, 151 (1984), pp. 120-123.
- GUENNOU, J., "L'Instruction de 1659 aux vicaires apostoliques français," in *Les Missions Catholiques*, 73 (1959), pp. 77-79.
- GUTIÉRREZ, M., "Processus historico-doctrinalis decreti conciliaris de accommodata renovatione vitæ religiosæ," in *Commentarium pro religiosis*, 45 (1966), pp. 17-39.
- , "De ratione episcopos inter et religiosos iuxta Concilium Vaticanum," in *Commentarium pro religiosis*, 45 (1966), pp. 121-148.

- HENRIOT, P., J. APPLEYARD, and J. KLEIN, "Living Together in Mission: A Symposium on Small Apostolic Communities," in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 12, 2 (1980), pp. 1-37.
- HILL, R., "Religious," in *Chicago Studies*, 15 (1976), pp. 316-329.
- HINNEBUSCH, W., "Origins and Development of Religious Orders," in *Review for Religious*, 28 (1969), pp. 910-930; 29 (1970), pp. 59-78.
- HOLLAND, S., "The New Code and Religious," in *The Jurist*, 44 (1984), pp. 67-80.
- , "'Religious House' According to Canon 608," in *The Jurist*, 50 (1990), pp. 524-552.
- , "Religious Life," in *Chicago Studies*, 23 (1984), pp. 77-96.
- IGLESIAS, F., "Vita fraterna in commune," in *SCRIS Informationes*, 16 (1990), pp. 207-226.
- JOHANNING, M., "Mission, A Constitutive Element of Apostolic Life," in *UISG Bulletin (Special Supplement)*, 62 (1964), pp. 50-55.
- JOMBART, E., "L'essence de l'état religieux," in *Revue des communautés religieuses*, 1 (1925), pp. 172-181.
- , "Vie de communauté et vie commune," in *Revue des communautés religieuses*, 14 (1938), pp. 6-10, 38-43.
- KENEL, S., "Challenges Facing Active Religious Today," in *Review for Religious*, 49 (1990), pp. 5-14.
- KOLVENBACH, P., "Le rôle du supérieur dans la communauté ignatienne," in *Vie consacrée*, 61 (1989), pp. 7-22.
- LAPIERRE, M., "Why Religious Life?" in *Studia canonica*, 2 (1968), pp. 289-306.
- LA PUMA, V., "Evoluzione del diritto dei religiosi da Pio IX a Pio XI," in *Acta congressus iuridici internationalis*, Romæ, 1934, vol. 4, pp. 193-203.
- LESAGE, G., "Le principe de subsidiarité et l'état religieux," in *Studia canonica*, 2 (1968), pp. 99-124.
- MACDONALD, S., "Community Dialogue and Religious Tradition," in *Review for Religious*, 46 (1987), pp. 827-839.
- MALDARI, D., "The Identity of Religious Life: The Contributions of J.-M.-R. Tillard Critically Examined," in *Louvain Studies*, 14, 4 (1989), pp. 325-345.
- MARKEY, J., "Towards a Trinitarian Model of Religious Life," in *Review for Religious*, 49 (1990), pp. 22-35.

- MCDONOUGH, E., "Beyond the Liberal Model: 'Quo Vadis?'" in *Studies in Canon Law: Presented to P. J. M. Huizing, J. H. Provost and K. Walf*, (eds.), Leuven, University Press, 1991, pp. 89-119.
- , "Common Life," in *Review for Religious*, 52 (1993), pp. 304-310.
- , "Common Life and Houses," in *Review for Religious*, 52 (1993), pp. 462-468.
- , "The Conciliar Decree *Perfectæ caritatis*," in *Review for Religious*, 53 (1994), pp. 143-148.
- , "Juridical Deconstruction of Religious Institutes," in *Studia canonica*, 26 (1992), pp. 307-341.
- , "*Lumen gentium*'s Chapter 6: Religious," in *Review for Religious*, 52 (1993), pp. 927-932.
- , "The Past Is Prologue: Quid Agis?" in *Review for Religious*, 51 (1992), pp. 78-97.
- "Mission Stations," in *Canon Law Digest*, vol. 4, pp. 191-192.
- MONCION, J., "L'institut religieux et les biens temporels," in *Studia canonica*, 20 (1986), pp. 355-365.
- MORRISEY, F., "The Spirit of the Proposed New Law for Institutes of Consecrated Life," in *Studia canonica*, 9 (1975), pp. 77-94.
- O'CONNOR, D., "Developing Constitutions and Directories," in *Review for Religious*, 37 (1978), pp. 753-776.
- OCHOA, X., "Excursus historico-doctrinalis circa sensum institutionalem consecrationis religiosæ," in *Commentarium pro religiosus*, 55 (1974), pp. 193-221.
- , "Modus determinandi patrimonium constitutionale cuiusvis insituti perfectionis proprium," in *Commentarium pro religiosus*, 46 (1967), pp. 337-350; 47 (1968), pp. 97-111.
- , "Prima principia accommodatæ renovationis vitæ religiosæ," in *Commentarium pro religiosus*, 45 (1966), pp. 265-275.
- O'DEA, T., "Pathology and Renewal of Religious Institutions," in *Concilium*, 10 (1974), pp. 119-127.
- O'MALLEY, J., "To Travel to Any Part of the World: Jerónimo Nadal and the Jesuit Vocation," in *Study in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 16/2 (1984), p. 1-20.
- O'MEARA, T., "Community and Commitment," in *Review for Religious*, 28 (1969), pp. 541-551.
- O'NEILL, U., "Community for Mission," in *The Way Supplement*, 61 (1988), pp. 62-75.

- O'REGAN, J., "Religious Community: Group or Association – or What?" in *Études Oblates*, 28 (1969), pp. 231-239.
- O'REILLY, M., "The Proper Law of Institutes of Consecrated Life and of Societies of Apostolic Life," in *Unico Ecclesiae servitio: Canonical Studies Presented to Germain Lesage, O.M.I., on the Occasion of his 75th Birthday and of the 50th Anniversary of his Presbyteral Ordination*, M. Thériault and J. Thom, (eds.), Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1991, pp. 287-303.
- ÖRSY, L., "Government in Religious Life," in *The Way Supplement*, 2 (1966), pp. 105-106.
- PIAT, M., "Commentaire de la bulle *Conditæ*, de Léon XIII, sur les instituts à vœux simples," in *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 33 (1901), pp. 453-470, 565-573.
- PENNINGTON, B., "The New Constitutions: A Life Charter," in *Studia canonica*, 2 (1968), pp. 77-98.
- REGAN, T., "New Needs... New Paradigms: The Changing Character of Religious Life," in *Review for Religious*, 49 (1990), pp. 220-226.
- RENWART, L., "La vie religieuse active a-t-elle encore sa raison d'être?" in *Vie consacrée*, 50 (1978), pp. 7-21.
- RIGALI, N., "The Community in Relation to the Apostolate," in *Woodstock Letters*, 98 (1969), pp. 33-52.
- RINERE, E., "Community Life and a Small Point of Law," in *Review for Religious*, 44 (1985), pp. 856-859.
- ROTHLUEBBER, F., "The Power of Decision in Religious Communities," in *Studia Canonica*, 4 (1970), pp. 296-307.
- SAID, M., "Particular Law of Institutes in the Renewal of Consecrated Life," in *Review For Religious*, 36 (1977), pp. 924-947.
- , "The Present State of Reform of the Code Concerning the Section *De institutis perfectionis*," in *Studia canonica*, 8 (1974), pp. 213-235.
- SCHLECK, C., "Community Life: Problematic and Some Reflections," in *Review for Religious*, 29 (1970), pp. 532-549, 711-733.
- SCHNEIDERS, S., "Formation for New Forms of Religious Community Life," in *The Way Supplement*, 62 (1988), pp. 63-76.
- SCHROTH, R., "Living Together: The Religious Dilemma - One of the Central Problems in Religious Life Is the Problem of Community," in *Commonweal*, 96 (1972), pp. 258-260.

- Sebastian, F., "Doctrina Concilii Vaticani II de vita religiosa," in *Commentarium pro religiosis*, 46 (1967), pp. 3-18.
- , "Historia capitis VI constitutionis 'Lumen gentium'," in *Commentarium pro religiosis*, 45 (1966), pp. 349-363.
- SOLER, R., "The Community, Spiritual and Apostolic Life of Religious," in *The Way Supplement*, 50 (1984), pp. 16-26.
- STUYT, J., "Mission and Community Life in the Jesuit Refugee Service," in *The Way Supplement*, 79 (1994), pp. 11-20.
- TILLARD, J., "La communauté religieuse," in *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 94 (1972), pp. 488-519; 95 (1973), pp. 150-187.
- , "Vingt ans de grâce ou de disgrâce," in *Vie consacrée*, 58 (1986), pp. 323-340.
- URRU, A., "Principio di sussidiarietà e diritto dei religiosi nel nuovo Codice di diritto canonico," in *Vita consacrata*, 19 (1983), pp. 501-511.
- VERMEERSCH, A., "Religious Life," in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1911 ed., vol. 12, pp. 748-762.
- WALSH, J., "Apostolic Religious Life: A Sea of Uncertainties," in *Review for Religious*, 44 (1985), pp. 552-565.
- WALSH, J., and L. HUGHES, "Canon Law and Religious Life: The Draft of the New Law for Institutes of Consecrated life," translation and commentary, in *The Way Supplement*, 33 (1978), pp. 3-112.
- WILCHEN, J., "Religious Life in the Church," in *Review for Religious*, 31 (1972), pp. 921-930.
- WILLIAMSON, E., "The Notion of Charism in the Religious Life," in *Studia canonica*, 19 (1985), pp. 99-114.
- WOODWARD, E., "Images of Community," in *The Way Supplement*, 71 (1991), pp. 73-83.
- WULF, F., "Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life," R. Walls, trans., in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. II, New York, Herder & Herder, 1968, pp. 301-370.

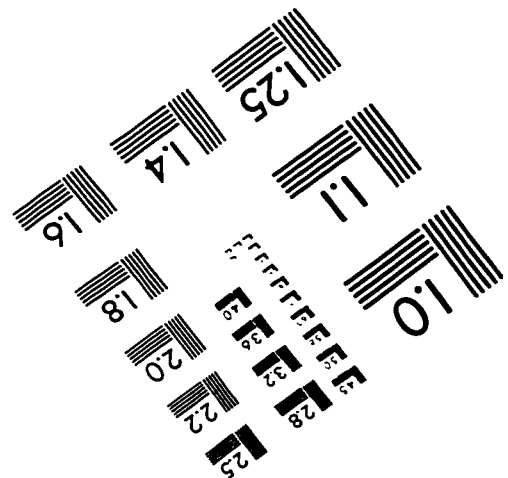
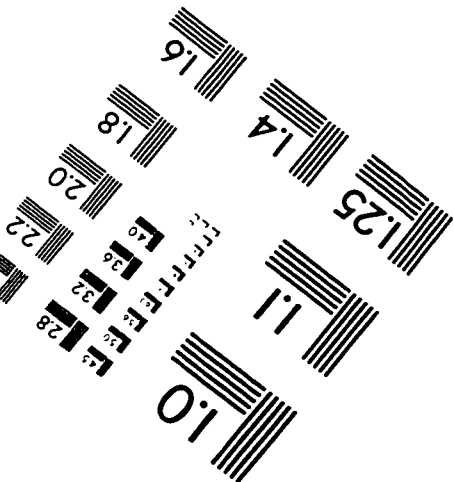
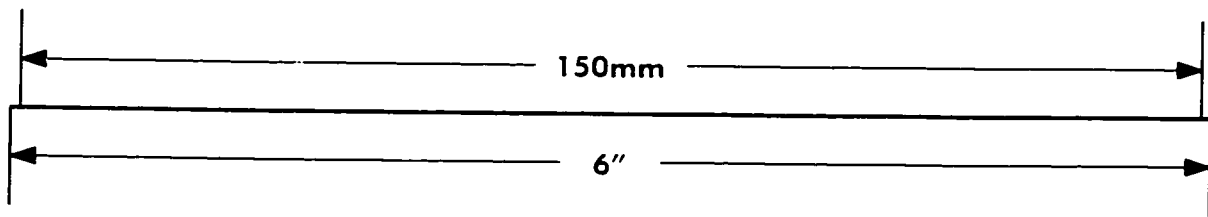
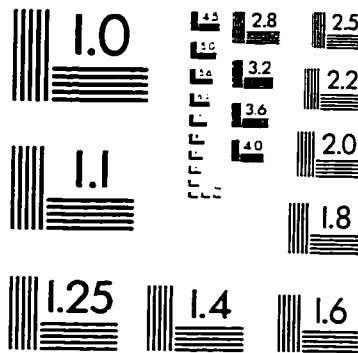
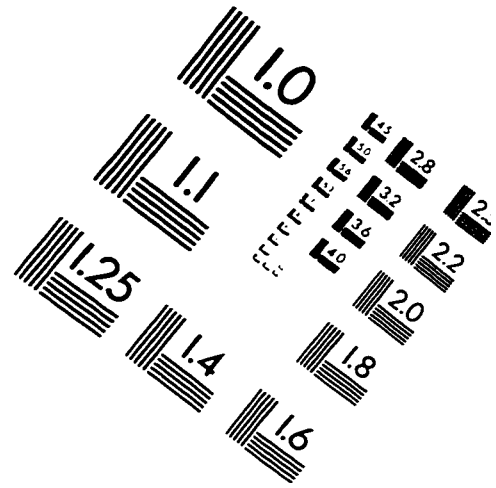
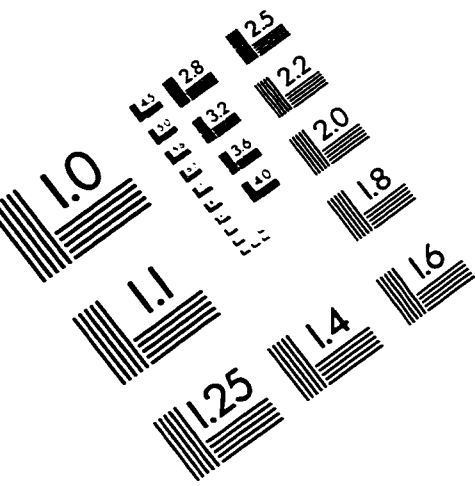
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Thomas Michael Cassidy was born in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, on May 6, 1937. He attended St. George's Primary and St. Patrick's College High Schools, Ottawa, entering the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1956 and making final profession in 1960.

Ordained in 1963 as a member of St. Peter's Province, his assignments have included nine years teaching and as Department Head at St. Patrick's High School, Ottawa, eight years at Galilee Community, Amprior, ON, as Treasurer, Vice-Rector and spiritual director, including five years as Secretary to the Provincial Council. He next served six years in Ottawa as Secretary of St. Peter's Province. For many years he has also taught Oblate history on the pre-novitiate, novitiate and scholasticate levels, and was provincial archivist for 34 years. At present he is Secretary to the Apostolic Nuncio in Canada, Sessional Professor, Faculty of Theology, Saint Paul University, and Judge of the National Appeal Tribunal of the Matrimonial Tribunal. The author of *Roots and Branches: a Diary of St. Peter's Province*, 1989, he is also a founding member of the "Oblate Association for Studies and Research," Rome.

After undergraduate degrees at Ottawa and Carleton Universities, he obtained his Secondary School Teaching Certificate at Queen's University, Kingston, and his coaching papers at Lakehead University, Thunder Bay. In post-graduate studies he obtained his Master of Arts (Religion, Ottawa University, 1965), Licentiate in Canon Law (Saint Paul University, 1993), and Master of Canon Law (Ottawa University, 1993.)

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



APPLIED IMAGE, Inc.
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved