

DECREE PROMULGATING CONSTITUTIONS AND DIRECTORY

Prot. No. 83/2018

“Since no community can exist except under the guidance of laws, nor would it be possible for one to live without law in this earthly existence: because of this, you [...] will strive to observe these very few Statutes for your inner peace and the security of your consciences” (NV, I 1)—in this manner our holy Father Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński, Founder of our Congregation, justifies the need for religious laws for his Institute. The inner peace and security of conscience depend not only on observing the law, but also on adapting it to the changes both in the Church and in the world. In response to the teachings of the Church and the signs of the time, the 57th General Chapter, celebrated in Rome between Feb. 6-23, 2017, undertook the toil of amending our Constitutions and Directory, previously ratified in 1986 and adapted to the requirements of the Second Vatican Council. The text of our by-laws adopted during this Chapter was consequently presented to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, which, after making some of its own changes, ratified the renewed Constitutions and Directory by its decree of Sept. 8, 2017.

The main motive for undertaking work on our Constitutions and Directory was the current teaching of the Church addressed to all religious institutes, as well as the events, which our Congregation experienced during the last 30 years. Particularly important here is the apostolic exhortation *Vita Consecrata* which states: “...there is a pressing need today for every Institute to return to the Rule, since the Rule and Constitutions provide a map for the whole journey of discipleship, in accordance with a specific charism confirmed by the Church” (VC, 37). No less inspiring were events of the said period that concerned our community directly: the beatification of Archbishop George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, Renovator of our religious community (in 1987), the beatification of two of our confreres—Frs. Anthony Leszczewicz and George Kaszyra, together with other martyrs of World War II in 1999; the beatification of our Father Stanislaus, Founder of the Congregation (in 2007), the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Renewal of our Congregation (in 2009), and finally, Father Stanislaus’ canonization (in 2016).

All these circumstances, marked by an intense work of the Holy Spirit in our religious community, brought about a deeper reflection on the charism of the Congregation and prompted us to seek a more adequate description of its identity and mission. In this context, the Church’s appeal to rethink our by-laws anew made us all more aware of the *kairos* for our Congregation and prompted—first the issuance by the General Chapter, in 2011, of the decree to create a Committee on Constitutions and Directory, and then, during the last Chapter, to develop and adopt changes in our by-laws. The guiding idea was to read the charism of the Congregation in the context of modern times and in fidelity to the founding spirit and the patrimony shaped throughout history, particularly through the work of Renewal. The knowledge of the Holy Spirit’s work in our religious community found its expression in legal form through changes to our by-laws made by the 57th General Chapter. The ratification of the new version of our Constitutions and

Directory by the Holy See confirms the legitimacy of the Congregation's path and legal solutions adopted by the Chapter. This becomes particularly important with regards to difference in wording, related to the identity and mission of the Congregation between the new and previously published Constitutions, which continues to be deeply rooted in the original tradition.

By the present decree, acting in accordance with Church law (CCL can. 8), I promulgate the Constitutions and Directory of our Congregation and encourage all of us—inspired by the example of our holy Fathers—to observe [diligently] these very few Statutes for your inner peace and security of your consciences (NV, I, 1), and to “strive to know, love, and imitate Christ more and more from day to day” (C 5). Let each one of us accept these renewed by-laws as “as a rule of life according to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Preamble).

May the Mother of the Lord, whose spiritual sons we are, continue to implore for us for all the favors we need on this road of life, whose path is set out in the Constitutions and Directory. Let the mystery of her Immaculate Conception be “a special sign, strength, and joy” (C 2) for our vocation. May Saint Stanislaus intercede for us that we may recognize the challenges of the modern world and fulfill our mission in the Church faithfully and in accordance with the Marian charism. May Blessed George, our Renovator, implore for us the grace of renewing and deepening of our relationship with God—the foundation of our vocation. May the example of our Blessed Martyrs, Anthony and George, enflame us to serve the Church eagerly and courageously, even laying down our lives if necessary. Let us beseech our patron saints that we may—supported by their example and intercession—give both individual and communal witness to holiness to the contemporary world and thus contribute to its salvation.

Rome, May 18, 2018

On the solemnity of our holy Father Stanislaus Papczyński.

Andrzej Pakuła, MIC
Superior General