

## **Constitution 5**

### **Consecration and Commitment**

43. We accept the Lord's call to pledge ourselves publicly and perpetually as members of the Congregation of Holy Cross by the vows of consecrated celibacy, poverty and obedience. Great is the mystery and meaning within these vows. And yet their point is simple. They are an act of love for the God who first loved us. By our vows we are committed to single-hearted intimacy with God, to trusting dependence upon God and to willing surrender to God. We wish thus to live in the image of Jesus, who was sent in love to announce God's rule and who beckons to us to follow him.
  
44. We profess vows for the sake of this same mission of Jesus. In consecrated celibacy we wish to love with the freedom, openness and availability that can be recognized as a sign of the kingdom. In consecrated poverty we seek to share the lot of the poor and to unite in their cause, trusting in the Lord as provider. In consecrated obedience we join with our brothers in community and with the whole church in the search for God's will. We do not imagine that those who commit themselves in other ways to the following of Jesus are thereby hindered in their service of neighbor. On the contrary, we find in them willing and complementary partners in shared mission. We want our vows, faithfully lived, to be witness and call to them as their commitments, faithfully lived, are witness and call to us.
  
45. We dedicate ourselves as well to be prophetic signs through these vows. We are sojourners in this world, longing for the coming of the new creation as we seek to be stewards on this earth. The world is well provisioned with gifts from God's hand, but the gifts are often worshiped and the Giver is ignored. We want to live our vows in such a way that our lives will call into question the fascinations of our world: pleasure, wealth and power. Prophets stand before the world as signs of that which has enduring value, and prophets speak and act in the world as companions of the Lord in the service of his kingdom. We pray to live our vows well enough to offer such witness and service.
  
46. Our vows bind us together in community. We commit ourselves to share with one another who we are, what we have and what we do. Thereby we form a community as did those who first believed in Christ's resurrection and were possessed by his Spirit. The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul. No one claimed as private any possession as everything they owned was held in common. With one mind they shared the same teaching, a common life, the breaking of the bread, and prayer.

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### **Consecration and Commitment** continued ...

47. By our vow of celibacy we commit ourselves to seek union with God in lifelong chastity, forgoing forever marriage and parenthood for the sake of the kingdom. We also promise loyalty, companionship and affection to our confreres in Holy Cross. Openness and discipline in prayer, personal asceticism, compassionate service, and love given and received in community are important supports toward the generous living of this commitment. Our hope and our need are to live blessed by faithful and loving relationships with friends and companions in mission, relationships reflective of the intimacy and openness of God's love for us.
48. By our vow of poverty we submit to the direction of community authority in our use and disposition of property, for we commit ourselves to hold our goods in common and to share them as brothers. All enumeration for our services, all income, gifts and benefits are ours to share or dispose of as a community. In all of this, our hope is that the common purse will be expressive of true reliance upon one another in Holy Cross and will free our hearts for possession by the Lord.
49. At the same time by this vow we forgo the use and enjoyment of our own material goods. Though any of us may own or acquire private property, we put it at a distance from our lives by assigning to others its administration, use and benefits. Inheritances, legacies and gifts, which by their very nature or by the intent of the donor are meant to be the personal property of a member of the community, are presumed to be his own. To accept or renounce an inheritance or legacy requires permission from one's local superior or director. As for gifts, this permission is required only to accept them. To dispossess himself of his property in whole or in part, a member in perpetual vows must have permission from the superior general and follow civil formalities.
50. By our vow of obedience we commit ourselves to adhere faithfully to the decisions of those in authority in Holy Cross according to the constitutions; we owe obedience to the Pope as well. We forgo the independent exercise of our wills in order to join with brothers in a common discernment of God's will as manifested in prayer, communal reflection, scripture, the Spirit's guidance in the church, and the cry of the poor. This vow includes the entirety of our life in Holy Cross, and through it we hope to discover and accept the Lord's will more surely.

## Constitution 5

### Consecration and Commitment continued ...

51. Our vows not only bind us in community; they are to mark our life as community. Open and generous and hospitable love is to characterize our houses and our service. As a congregation and in each of our local communities we are committed to the use of few belongings and to simple living. In the discernment of God's call we are a brotherhood at the service of the universal church under the pastoral direction of the Pope; and we are no less responsive to the needs of the local churches wherever we live and work. In what regards worship, pastoral ministry and our labor for the kingdom we are under the pastoral authority of the bishops.
52. We live our consecration in many lands and cultures. Our commitment is the same wherever we are, but we seek to express it in a manner rooted in and enriched by the varying contexts and cultures in which we live. In this way we hope to make our witness and service more effective for the kingdom.
53. When we profess our public vows, we declare

***I (name) stand in the presence of Jesus Christ,***  
the Son of God and my Lord,  
in the assembly of his church,  
amid the Congregation of Holy Cross ***and before you,***  
***(name and office of the person receiving vows)***  
to profess my dedication and my vows.  
I believe that I have been called by  
the Father and led by the Spirit  
to offer my life and my life's work  
in the service of the Lord  
for the needs of the church and the world.

***Therefore I make to God forever/for...year(s)***  
***the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience,***  
***according to the constitutions of the Congregation***  
***of Holy Cross.***

May the God who allows and invites me to make this commitment  
strengthen and protect me to be faithful to it.

54. The religious pronouncing the vows may propose for the approval of the provincial or his delegate modifications in this formula except in the invariable portion set forth in italics.

## **Constitution 5**

### **Consecration and Commitment** continued ...

55. Our consecration is a public one, for we are called to stand forth in service and witness. It is desirable therefore that we ordinarily be known and seen as members of the congregation. In conformity with the customs in the local church and the decision of our provincial chapters, we wear attire appropriate for religious. The symbol of the congregation, the cross and anchors, is worn to identify us as members of Holy Cross.