

THE COUNT DOM. MARCELLO ALBERTO CRISTOFANI  
DELLA MAGIONE

BY THE GRACE OF MERCIFUL GOD

MASTER OF THE ORDER OF THE POOR KNIGHTS OF CHRIST  
DUKE OF THE MILITIA TEMPLI

PALATINE COUNT ETC.

*to all the Members of the Order and all those people who will read this script a cordial and respectful regard in the Lord*

The General Chapter of the Order, gathered at Tignale sul Garda on the 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2002, after a deepened examination and impassioned discussion, has approved as a final document - with some adaptations and changes - the Instrumentum Laboris proposed to the same General Chapter by a special Committee named by Us.

Almost twenty-five years on from the foundation of the Militia it is necessary to deal with and to concern ourselves, that its diffusion occurs without losing its purposes and the means as is expressed in the title of the document, "Development and criterions of development", it will serve to regulate the development of the Order according to the criteria of the Rule and, therefore, to be effected with the same value as the Rule.

- After having brought to the main document the corrections that we have held necessary,
- See Chapter IV of the Rule and art. 10, § 4, of the Constitutions,
- of Our power and right and with Our magistral authority we have ratified and

WE RATIFY AND PROMULGATE

the final document "Development and criterions of development" approved by the General Chapter in the session of September 2002 and that, from this day, we confide it to the obedience of everybody and to the brotherly vigilance of the local Superiors and of the Spiritual Counsellors so that the faithful application of the "Criteria" may lead to a development of the Militia consistent to its ideals.

We confirm to the Precptory of Hungary the dispensation from the recitation of the Breviary in Latin language until the publication of the "Officium parvum" of the Militia.

The Chancellor is entrusted with the transcription and notification of this Our Decree. Castello della Magione, the 18<sup>th</sup> of January in the Year of Our Lord 2003, Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter in Rome, twentyfourth of the Militia and of Our Mastership.

*I attest that this Decree, provided of the seal,  
has been registered in the Archive of the most excellent Grand Master and Duke*  
THE CHANCELLOR  
*(dom. Andrea Cappelli)*

## **Criteria for the development of the Militia of the Temple**

*On the solid base of the Rule and the Constitutions, and drawing from the treasure of the Tradition of the Church, the General Chapter of the Militia Templi has identified in an authentic and intense spiritual life, in the deep and humble study of Catholic Doctrine and in the constant and generous exercise of Charity, the three pillars of the life of each Knight and therefore criteria for a serious development of the installation of the Kingdom of Christ in souls and Society and for the sanctification of our own soul.*



### **Spirituality**

The Militia Templi has recognized in the traditional liturgy a valid instrument to withstand the aggression that the contemporary mentality continually brings against Religion and morals through atheism and agnosticism;

#### **The General Chapter**

- Considering ineffective and pernicious every attempt at mediation between the Holy Tradition of the Church of Christ and the modern mentality, according to the same word of the Lord: “Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rm 12,2) and “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world” (Jas 1,27) and Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him” (1 Jn 2,15),

- Ascertaining that approaching the modern sensibility conducts believers to share the irreligious and anti religious tendencies, to become more and more estranged from religious practice eventually sharing its errors and the diffusion of sin,

#### **reaffirms**

the fidelity to Tradition as a faithful transmission of the divine teaching of Jesus, without which there is the risk we will be confronted with a simply human message, convinced that we cannot reach the Truth without the respect, knowledge and adhesion to Tradition.



**1) For this reason since 1993 The Militia of the Temple has adopted, the “Ancient Roman Rite” as the rite proper to the Order for all liturgical celebrations and for the Divine Office, a choice that has brought great spiritual benefits; the Chapter considers this choice as the perfect realization of the statutory goals of**

**the Militia (cfr Constitutions, art. 3, § 1, that identify one of the particular purposes of the Order in the "care of the Liturgy, according to Tradition and the Magistero Pontificio").**

The Militia confirms, therefore, her own appointment in the defense and maintenance of the Latin liturgical Tradition that treasure of the Church, according to the constant teaching of the Magisterium and in conformity with the wish many times happily expressed by the ruling Sovereign Pontiff John Paul II (cfr Apostolic Letter "Dominicae Cena" of February 24th 1980, proper motu "Ecclesia Dei the adflicta" of July 2nd 1988, talked to the Complete one of the Congregation for the Divine Cult of September 28 th 2001).

Then, the Chapter

- Urgently invites all the structures of the Order to carry out this choice at every level and wherever;
- It remembers that the Liturgical Books are those of the "editio typica" of 1962 or, in the absence of this edition of that immediately preceding;
- Invites all to overcome any objective difficulty in obedience and in charity.

**2) The Chapter invites the Knights to take root the love to the Liturgy with the preparation to the service to the altar.**

**3)** In obedience to what is prescribed by the Rule" brothers should confess their sins as often as possible" and" every brother feed himself with the Body of Christ as often as possible" (Rule, Cap.XIV), the Chapter

- Prescribes that every Brother confess himself ordinarily at least once a month;
- It recommends the reception of "Holy Communion" at least weekly and, possibly, every time that he assists at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

**4)** In conformity with Chapters V and XV of the Rule that prescribe it" the Knights should recite the Office according to the uses of the Roman Church, possibly every diurnal hour, but, if this is not possible, at least the intention should be to always recite lauds or vespers ", and this "if possible in common", and also of Chapter VII which requires "to sift the attitude of the Novice to prayer" and to call him" to the constant practice of the Divine Office",

**The Chapter recalls that**

- The recitation of only the Greater Hours or even of just one Greater Hour has to be an exceptional case, in these circumstances we are invited to replace every Hour which hasn't been recited, with a decade of the Holy Rosary
- We consider the voluntary omission of the recitation of the Divine Office a serious offence against the Rule and a wound against the whole Body of the Militia,
- Where a Commandery has been constituted, the community recitation of Vespers is obligatory,
- The superior can temporarily dispense the community from this obligation, provided that the community recitation is guaranteed once a week at least or whenever possible.

**5) The Chapter remembers that equally obligatory for the whole Order is the adoption of the Breviary in the Latin language according to the "editio typica" of**

**1961, to allow in every circumstance that the community's prayer strengthens the unity of the Order and because it is fully in conformity with its militant spirituality.** His Holiness Pope John Paul II, already in the Apostolic Letter "Dominicae Cenaе" of 1980, asked "to give satisfaction, to welcome benignly and with pleasure but also with great respect, to the feelings and desires of those people that, formed with strength according to the arrangement of the ancient Latin liturgy they warn the lack of this' language one' which has meant all over the world the unity of the Church" and he has confirmed more recently that Latin "is the essential condition for an appropriate relationship between modernity and antiquity, for dialogue between different cultures and the reaffirmation of the identity of the Catholic" (cfr speech of February 21 st 2002 to the Congress of the Pontifical Salesian University).

6) In consideration of the above, the Chapter remembers that the observance of the style of life foreseen by the Rule, must concretize every Knight in a particular scanning of his own day that, in conformity with the duties of the really state, facilitates the observance of the same Rule; for this it recommends to the Knights

- To plan the beginning of their own day foreseeing the recite of the first part of the Office and at least a quarter of an hour for the mental prayer;
- To draw, during the day, other moments for the prayer (at the beginning and at the end of the afternoon) and to conclude the day with the soul-searching and the last hour of the Office;
- To recommend to everyone the traditional forms of devotion, in first place the frequent recitation of the Holy Rosary which arms the Knight Templar is privileged to fight with.

7) In obedience to Chap. XIV that states, "Mindful that silence can help to hear better the voice of the Lord and can help listen to it, every brother should annually withdraw himself in solitary prayer and meditation for at least two consecutive whole days", the Chapter exhorts every Knight to complete at least every two years the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius" elaborated by P. Francesco of Paola Vallet, besides the anticipated retreats in preparation for Profession and investiture, and for Easter and Christmas.

8) In conformity with Chap. XII ("Of abstinence and fasting") the Chapter reminds everyone of the compulsory abstinence from meat on every Friday of the year; we consider the voluntary infringement of this obligation of abstinence as a serious breach of the Rule and a wound against the whole Body of the Militia.

9) **In conformity with the Chap. XIV of the Rule that prescribes that "every brother choose a spiritual adviser", the Chapter recommends to those Responsible for the Order at every level (Prelate, Preceptor Capitano, Preceptors, Commanders etc.)** that they take care so that the Priests to whom the Knights entrust their spiritual direction accept the spirit of the Rule, so that the different jurisdictions, of the interior and of the exterior, don't fight but find their synthesis in the Rule to which the Knight has submitted his life, to favor in this way, the harmonic growth of the person.

## II - Study

### 1) The Chapter

- Remembers that knowledge of the Doctrine of the Faith (of Dogma and Ethics) and of the history of the Church constitute the necessary armament of every Knight (cfr Regulates, Cap. VII" The Teacher, or who will receive the task to occupy of it. of the Novices. it will have indeed to increase and to strengthen the knowledge of the Novice on the Saint Catholic Faith, so that he can defend in the world with greater vigor and effectiveness");
- -it prescribes that every Commander or Preceptor of the Order organizes regular courses of Catholic Doctrine for their own Knights (possibly a monthly meeting);
- -it recommends that every Knight personally thinks about his own formation;
- - It trusts to the Rev. Prelate of the order to whom is submitted "the spiritual and religious care of all those belonging to the Militia" (cfr Constitutions, art. XV, § V) and to the High Preceptor to whom is delegated the immediate and permanent formation in chivalry and the ideals of the order, of all the affiliates of the Militia" (ibidem, § XI), the charge to transmit to all the Preceptors and Commanders of the Order a list of proper doctrinal texts.

2) Since the Rule recognizes the importance of knowledge of the history of Chivalry (cfr, Chap. VII" it will be his task to take care of his. of the Novice. chivalrous formation, introducing him to the history of Chivalry, its true ideal, since the memory of this will be his patrimony"), the Chapter

- -prescribes that regular meetings have to be held in every Commandery or Preceptory to study the history of monasticism and the history of the monastic-military Orders; it also recommends that every Knight handles the increase of his own cultural baggage;
- - It entrusts the High Preceptor to transmit to all the Preceptories and the Commanderies of the Order, a list of proper texts for close examination of the matters above.

3) The Chapter finally prescribes that, every time that the Chapters of Commanderies or Preceptories meet, besides the discussion and deliberation of matters merely practical and organizational, the Spiritual Adviser gives a lecture of doctrinal or spiritual character and a Knight gives a lecture on a chivalrous theme.

## III - Charity and Combat

1) **The Chapter recalls that the Rule is the noblest expression of our charity toward God and the next one is combat "under the insignia of Our Lord" (Rule, Cap. V)" for the defense of Holy Church" (Rule, Prologue), or "for the Rights of God and Christianity" (Rule, Cap. The), that is for the defense in the world of the "sovereign rights" of Our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Rule, Chap. II).**

2) **The Chapter recalls that the contribution of the Militia of the Temple and every single Knight to the realization of the Kingdom of Our Lord Jesus Christ cannot consist in a simple occasional voluntary act, but it has to become the principal purpose of life, being assumed in a formal and irreversible way, "once forever" (Rule, Cap. I) without any possibility of return" (Rule, ibidem).**

3) **The Chapter firmly recalls the Knight to the integral observance of the Rule, freely chosen "to sanctify him in it" (Rule, Chap. The; cfr also Chap. V) mindful that "if one observes the whole law but stumbles in one single point, he becomes guilty of all" (Gc 2,10). The Rule of the Militia of the Temple is proposed not to tax anybody, and therefore it can be accepted or not; nevertheless, when a person has chosen of his own wish to observe the Rule, he turns it for himself into something obligatory, conforming his own life to the same Rule and therefore renouncing the liberty of what he was previously free to accept or refuse (cfr St. Bernard "De praecepto et dispensatione"); the Rule must be loved for love of itself, because through the observance of the Rule the Knight saves his own soul (Rule, Cap. The). **The Chapter, therefore,****

- Recommends to those who have authority in the Militia of the Temple not to betray the responsibility that they first of all have in front of God and to use the institute of dispensation with great prudence, considering if the subject applying draws real spiritual advantage from the same;
- It recommends to the Knights not to ask for a dispensation unless in real need, to avoid being judged disobedient from the same God, who, seeing into hearts, doesn't allow them to deceive him with a dispensation torn from the superior and thus staying ineffective in his eyes.

4) **The Chapter, aware of the fact that combat takes the modern Templar into two fields, "inside of himself", to fight against his own desires" (Rule, Prologue) and "outside himself", it recalls the observance of the hard discipline of obedience "frank, free and loyal" (Rule, Cap. II) Humble (Rule, Cap. III) Constant (Rule, Cap. You), firm (Rule, Cap. XIV), definite and prompt (Rule, Cap. XIX).**

5) **The Chapter encourages the initiatives that the central or peripheral Organs of the Militia of the Temple assume or want to assume for the purpose of realising works of mercy both spiritual and material (Rule, Cap. IV)**

- Toward young people, "as a service made to the Church and Civil Society" (Constitutions, art. III, § 3);
- Towards the Christians of the Holy Land through the Custody of the Holy Land;
- For welcoming the Pilgrim.

#### **The Chapter**

- Recommends the initiative, approved by the Consiglio Magistrale, to found a permanent program of assistance for the Christians of the Holy Land, consistent in dispatch to the Magistral Elemosineria from the Almoners of every Preceptory of the established percentage on the donations normally harvested for the poor men;
- It invites all the Elemosinerie also to seek offers for this purpose out of the Militia;

- It wishes for a greater vitality of the " Jacques de Molay Foundation for Templar works of Charity", so that, equipping itself with a larger economic and financial base, it might be able to assist more effectively the needs of the apostolate of the Militia and those of the next one.

**6)** Attended that to art. III § III of the Constitutions of the Militia of the Temple is individualized what particular purpose of the same Militia" the diffusion of the spirituality and the culture of Chivalry and her own specific activity also through publications, periodic etc.", **the Chapter**

- Encourages the initiative of formative and informative publications from the local bodies of the Militia;

- It prescribes that a copy of every publication is sent to the Captain of the Preceptory before its diffusion, so that it gets the necessary authorization which will be obtained after three months from its reception, [*because of the juridical discipline of the silence-assent;*]

- It wishes for a greater vitality of the "Academy of St. John Institute of Studies and its research on the History of the Order of the Temple and the other Military orders."

**7) The Chapter invites the Preceptories and the Commanderies to foresee and to organize initiatives and activities for the families of the Knights in which the same Knights have to give the first testimony of their chivalrous choice.**

**8) The Chapter, recommends finally the promotion of demonstrations and the organizing of initiatives with other local bodies for the defense of the Faith and the Catholic Church, [*the adhesion and the share to those promoted by other Catholic Institutions giving communication of it to the competent Legacy*]**

## **IV - Reception and formation of Novices**

Within the criteria of the development of the Order particular attention must be reserved to the formation of Novices; the General Chapter recalls therefore the norms related to the reception and formation of Novices emanating from the Captain of the Preceptory.

**1) Every Commandery has to name a Teacher of Novices; if a Commandery is not founded and the number of Knights doesn't allow for its institution, the Teacher of Novices of the local Preceptory makes up for this and the Teacher of Novices will be selected from between those knights with an intense spiritual life, eucharistic and marian, with a good training in the theological and historical-chivalrous culture of the order;**

**2) The Teacher of Novices, and with him the other Knights, will take care to clearly introduce, to everybody who asks to be admitted to the Order, the tasks and all the difficulties of our walk, especially to discourage those who draw near" to satisfy material desires "and who profess esoteric doctrines and other extravagances (Rule, Cap. VII); the Teacher of Novices will talk for a long time with someone who asks to be admitted, making him explain well his motivations for this**

choice and also attempts to get to know the life, the customs, the character, the spiritual life of the Applicant and ascertains if the applicant is sincerely prepared to change his own life with entry into our Order, from the moment of admission to the Novitiate;

**3) We remember that when someone asks to be admitted to the Order, the Rule must be delivered to him requesting him to attentively meditate on it for at least one month, and imposing upon him the obligation not to discuss the subject before this period ends;**

**4) The admission to the Novitiate must be processed through the proper channel; with the application for membership must be included the following documents: a) certificate of baptism and of confirmation, b) if the applicant is married, the certificate of religious marriage and the written authorization of their consort to undertake the walk in the Militia, c) written presentation of his own Bishop or at least of his own Priest, d) certified of state of family, e) curriculum vitae.** Therefore the whole documentation will be sent to the Chancellery of the Magistral Center which will return a copy for the file of the Commandery or of the Preceptory;

**5) During the walk of the Novitiate, the Teacher helps his Novices to know deeply and to live with coherence our Rule, studying it, meditating on it and living it together with them; he should first of all "increase and strengthen the knowledge of the Novice of the Holy Catholic Faith" (Rule, ibidem); he should help him to acquire a solid spiritual life, eucharistic and marian, fed by frequency to the Sacraments of Confession and Communion (Rule, Cap. XIV), from devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, from the "constant practice of the recitation of the Divine Office, in common or alone" (Rule, ibidem) and of the Holy Rosary, and taking care of the formation of a suitable historical-chivalrous culture "introducing him to the history of Chivalry, its true ideals, since the memory of this will be his patrimony" (Rule, ibidem); sustains in him a good knowledge of the characteristics of the Order, of its purposes, of its life, of its spirituality; he should cultivate in him the love of service toward neighbor, the generous appointment in Holy Church and in civil society;**

**6) The Teacher of the Novices will take once a month, or as soon as possible, a meeting with his Novices, not only to introduce to them the themes of the Rule, but also to listen to them, to advise them, to comfort them and, if necessary, to reprove them;**

**7) We remember that the Novice is bound to follow the same life as the Knights, participating in the life of his Commandery, sharing the community life, initiatives etc.;** equally he has to attend the Divine Office; the Novices have also to share the retreats, together with the Knights, in preparation for Christmas and Easter and we recommend them to participate in the Spiritual Exercises, as for the Knights;

**8) At least once a year the Teacher of the Novices organizes a period of common life with his Novices, for example a weekend, a whole week etc., with the same purposes of the aforesaid periodic meeting;**

**9) The Novitiate can never last less than one year (Rule, ibidem) neither can stretch over three years; the Teacher of Novices at the end of every year will take the prosecution or the positive or negative conclusion of every Novitiate into account, 10) The Novices have to support the Order in the same measure as the Knights.**



## IV - Dames

The Rule assigns a precise role to the Dames in the Militia and considers their service precious.

**1) The Chapter remembers that:**

- The Dames, "desirous to increase their own Christian life" (Rule, Cap. The), have to respect what is prescribed and recommended by the Rule and by this Chapter for what concerns their spiritual life, in particular monthly Confession, frequent Communion, the retreats and Spiritual Exercises, and spiritual direction;
- The Rule recommends that they unite themselves to the prayer of the Knights when they celebrate the Divine Office together;
- It is praiseworthy that the Dames also deepen the ideal motivations of their Donation, both privately and during the general formative meetings.

**2) The Chapter expresses its own appreciation for the Dames who generously collaborate with the Knights, giving "part of their energies" (Rule, Chap.)** for the realization of works of charity prescribed by the Rule and Constitutions and insisted upon by this Chapter.

**3) As it regards the reception and the formation of the Novices the Chapter,**

- Prescribes to follow the express principles in points 1), 2), 3), 4) and 9) of the paragraph about "the reception and formation of Novices";
- It prescribes that the norms expressed in point 5), regarding spiritual formation, have to be applied with precision and it praises the application of the norms about ideals and cultural formation;
- It recommends periodic formative meetings for the Novices, for the purposes expressed in point 6).

**4) The Novices have to contribute, as the Dames, to the support of the Order with free offers.**