

Cor Orans



Implementing Instruction of the Apostolic
Constitution *Vultum Dei Quaerere*
on Women's Contemplative Life

What is an Apostolic Constitution

“The most solemn form of legal document issued by the Pope in his own name” (John Huels)

Papal decree/papal law

What is an Instruction

Canon 34

Clarify laws

Determine the methods for observing and fulfilling laws

Given for those whose duty it is to see that laws are executed

Obliges them in the execution of the laws

Apostolic Constitution *Vultum Dei Quaerere*

Pope Francis, June 29, 2016

Twelve “matters calling for discernment and renewed norms”

Formation

Prayer

The Word of God

Eucharist/Reconciliation

Community Life

Autonomy

Federation

Cloister

Work

Silence

Communications Media

Asceticism

Instruction *Cor Orans*
CICLSAL, April 1, 2018

General Norms (1-14)

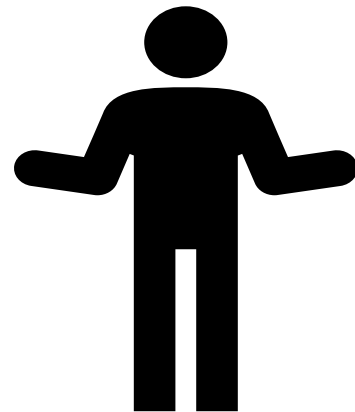
Chapter 1: The Autonomous Monastery (15-85)

Chapter 2: The Federation of Monasteries (86-155)

Chapter 3: Separation from the World (156-218)

Chapter 4: Formation (219-289)

What should diocesan bishops and their vicars/delegates know about this new legislation for cloistered nuns in the diocese?



See two sections of CO Chapter 1
“The Autonomous Monastery”:

Part VI on Ecclesial Vigilance
of the Monastery

&

Part VII on Relations between the
monastery & the diocesan bishop

Ecclesial vigilance of a monastery (“the service of supervision”)

President of the female congregation

Major superior of the male associated institute (the religious ordinary)

Diocesan bishop

Each monastery is entrusted to the vigilance of a single authority.

CO 76

New requirement found in VDAQ:

Pope Francis requires, for the 1st time in the history of nuns, that, barring dispensation from the Holy See, every monastery be joined to a federation

WHY???

**Rationale for new
mandate that every
monastery become a
member of a federation
or congregation:**

- 🌀 overcome isolation,
- 🌀 promote their common charism, and
- 🌀 provide reciprocal help to each other

What is the **binding force** of VDO and CO?

The Roman Pontiff explicitly decreed the regulations in VDO.

Decrees are law.

In other words, the regulations in VDO constitute papal legislation for monasteries of nuns. The regulations are laws and are binding on all monasteries of nuns.

Monasteries of nuns are required to implement VDO and CO.

Chapter I: The Autonomous Monastery

3 general aspects of autonomy:

- How a new monastery of nuns gets established and gains recognition as autonomous;
- Intervention in an autonomous monastery that is struggling to survive;
- The relationship between an autonomous monastery and ecclesiastical authorities, especially the diocesan bishop

Criteria to be taken into account when judging whether a monastery will be suppressed:

- Number of nuns
- Advanced age of majority of the members
- The real capacity for governance and formation
- Lack of candidates for a number of years
- Lack of the necessary vitality in living and transmitting the charism in dynamic fidelity.

ONLY THE HOLY SEE can suppress a monastery.

According to the norms of CO, the Holy See will seek the opinion of the diocesan bishop before suppression. (CO 71)

All monasteries of nuns, whether or not they are entrusted to the special vigilance of the dioc bishop, are subject to him in the following matters:

- public exercise of divine worship, care of souls, and the apostolate (cc. 394, 673, 674, 612)
- when, on pastoral or paternal visits, or even in the case of necessity, he finds abuses and his appeals to the superior have had no effect (c. 683 §2, 1320)
- necessity of his written consent to erect a monastery in his diocese before the approval of the Holy See is requested (c. 609)
- appointment of chaplains and approval of ordinary confessors for monasteries (cc. 567, 630 §3)

Continued on next slide:

Continued from previous slide about dioc bishop and suppression of a monastery:

→expressing his opinion before a monastery is suppressed (c. 616 §1)

→the care of a nun on exclaustation (c. 687)

→for a just cause, the faculty of *entering* the cloister and allowing other people to enter, with the consent of the major superior (c. 667 §4)

[Please note that CO partially derogates c. 667 §4 – now a major superior can permit nuns to *leave* the enclosure. It is no longer in the purview of the diocesan bishop.]

All female monasteries, without prejudice to internal autonomy and possible external exemption, are subject to the diocesan bishop, who exercises pastoral care in the following cases:

(the list of these 7 cases of being subject to the dioc bishop is a taxative list.)

- a) the community of the female monastery is subject to the power of the bishop, to whom it must devote respect and reverence in what concerns the public exercise of divine worship, the care of souls, and the forms of apostolate corresponding to their character;
- b) the diocesan bishop, on the occasion of the pastoral visit or other paternal visits and even in case of necessity, can provide appropriate solutions himself when he finds that there are abuses and after appeals made to the major superior have had no effect;
- c) the diocesan bishop intervenes in the erection of the monastery by giving written consent before the approval of the Apostolic See is requested

- d) the diocesan bishop intervenes, as local ordinary, in the appointment of the chaplain and, always as local ordinary, in the approval of ordinary confessors. Everything must take place “*considering the specificity of the proper charism and the needs of fraternal life in community*”;
- e) the diocesan Bishop intervenes in the suppression of the monastery by expressing his opinion;
- f) the exclaustrated nun refers to the diocesan bishop, as the local ordinary, and to her Superiors, remaining under their dependence and care;
- g) the diocesan Bishop has the faculty, for a just cause, of entering the cloister and allowing other people to enter, with the consent of the major superior (but the permission of nuns *leaving* the cloister is now left to the major superior, not the dioc bishop)

As regards the female monasteries entrusted to the particular vigilance of the diocesan Bishop, this is expressed in respect to the monastery community mainly in the cases established by the universal law; as the diocesan bishop, he:

- a) presides over the conventual chapter that elects the major superior.
- b) carries out the regular visit of the monastery, also with regard to internal discipline, taking into account the provisions of this Instruction;
- c) examines, as the local ordinary, the annual report of the financial administration of the monastery;
- d) in derogation from can. 638, §4 CJC, gives as Local Ordinary, his written consent for particular administrative acts, if established by its proper law.

e) confirms the indult of definitive departure from the monastery, granted to a temporary professed member by the major superior with the consent of her Council;

f) issues the decree of dismissal of a nun, even of temporary vows.

CO 81

There are many other provisions in *Vultum Dei quaerere* and in *Cor orans*, but these are the ones that you as vicars and delegates should be particularly attentive to.

QUESTIONS?



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