

## CHAPTER 8

### THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

#### The General Council

Can. 627

**115.** Responsibility for the central government of the Institute is entrusted by the General Chapter to the Brother Superior General. He is assisted by a permanent Council known as the General Council.

***115a.** The members of the General Council form a community united around the Brother Superior General who holds the principal office of responsibility in the Institute. They collaborate closely with him by reason of their complementarity as persons, by the way they share their experience and by their willingness to be of service in the areas of responsibility assigned to them.*

***115b.** The choice of General Councillors should take into account the functions of government and, as far as possible, the universality of the Institute and its cultural diversity.*

D 5; 1,2  
D 6,2

**116.** Constituted as a community at the Centre of the Institute, the Brother Superior and his Councillors symbolise its unity and work to ensure

art. 116a-117 - THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

the fidelity of the entire body of the Institute to the faith of the Church, to the directives of the Holy See and to the living charism of the Founder.

**116a.** *The Brother Superior and his Councillors have as their mission to foster a spirit of communion and interdependence within the Institute. In their efforts to establish and maintain the structures that are needed for the unity of the Institute and the effectiveness of its activities, they are careful always to give priority to persons.*

Can. 592,2

**116b.** *The Central Government takes the means necessary to make the Founder and his thought better known to the Brothers. In like manner, the Central Government strives to communicate a correct understanding of the Rule, the directives of the Church and the normative documents of the Institute. In this way the Brothers are led to accept the ideas contained in these documents and to put them into practice.*

Can. 578

**117.** In their style of government, the Brother Superior and his Councillors have recourse to the prophetic dynamism which is still alive in the spiritual heritage that has come down from the Founder.

By being open to the Spirit, and by a process of discernment, they determine how to provide for the spiritual renewal of the Brothers, what is needed in various situations and how to respond to new

apostolic needs.

They keep in touch with all parts of the Institute. They make a wise choice of those they appoint to positions of leadership and they encourage creative initiative. The Superior and his Councillors are men of hope and they share this conviction with all the Brothers throughout the entire Institute.

They never hesitate to bring to the attention of the Brothers those things that they think ought to be changed, but always in a spirit of fidelity to the charism of the Founder and the mission of the Institute, of which they are the guarantors.

Can. 592,1  
Can. 704

**117a.** *At the beginning of their mandate, the Brother Superior and his Councillors draw up a comprehensive programme which enables them to respond to what they discern to be the call of the Spirit or the needs of youth, and also to the decisions taken by the General Chapter.*

*This programme will distinguish between those responsibilities that are to be shared by the entire General Council and the specific duties to be assigned to each Councillor.*

**117b.** *During the period between two ordinary General Chapters, the Brother Superior and his Council will meet at least once with the representatives from the Districts, sub-Districts and Delegations of each Region.*

## The Brother Superior General

B 11°  
Can. 622-  
626  
Can. 629  
Can. 164-  
179

**118.** The Brother Superior General is elected by the General Chapter and he exercises authority over the whole Institute according to the prescriptions of canon law and of the Institute's own legislation.

At the time of his election, he must have at least ten years of perpetual profession in the Institute.

His mandate goes from one ordinary General Chapter to the next. He can be reelected.

He and his Council usually reside in the Generalate.

He can be deposed for the reasons set forth in article eleven of the Bull of Approbation of the Institute.

Can. 118

**118a.** *It is within the authority of the Superior General:*

**1°** *to convoke the ordinary General Chapter and, if the need arises, an extraordinary General Chapter;*

**2°** *to appoint Brothers to office in accordance with canon law and the legislation of the Institute;*

**3°** *within the limits permitted by law, to delegate some of his powers to Brothers of his choice;*

**4°** *as the first representative of the Institute and acting in its name, to establish relationships with the ecclesiastical hierarchy as well as with any other authority or institution;*

*5° on requests that truly merit consideration from those in charge at various levels, and with the advice of his Council, to permit on a temporary basis departures from the disciplinary legislation proper to the Institute*

**118b.** *When the Brother Superior is ill or prevented from performing his duties, he can transfer his powers temporarily to the Brother Vicar General. He shall even be obliged to do this if the General Council, by secret vote and by an absolute majority, require him to do so.*

**118c.** *If, outside the time a General Chapter is in session, the Brother Superior decides that he should resign, he shall make his intentions known and the reasons for it in a letter addressed to the members of the General Council. After discussing the matter in the absence of the Brother Superior, the Council shall decide by an absolute majority of the votes cast in a secret ballot whether or not to accept the resignation. If the vote is in the affirmative, the Brother Vicar General shall replace the Brother Superior who has resigned.*

**118d.** *The possible deposition of the Brother Superior is a matter for the Holy See, following a vote of the General Council (cf. 122b).*

## **The Brother Vicar General**

**119.** The Brother Vicar General is the first collaborator of the Brother Superior General. He replaces him in the ordinary administration of the Institute when the Brother Superior is absent or prevented from exercising his office.

He is elected normally in the course of an ordinary General Chapter. Exceptionally, his election can occur during an extraordinary General Chapter, or even at a meeting of the General Council in accordance with the norms set forth in the Statutes (cf. 122b).

At the time of his election he must have at least ten years of perpetual profession in the Institute.

His mandate continues until the following ordinary General Chapter. He can be reelected.

***119a.** On the death or resignation or deposition of the Brother Superior General in office, the Brother Vicar General succeeds him with full rights and fills the office of Superior General with the title until the following ordinary General Chapter.*

***119b.** If the post of Vicar General becomes vacant outside the time when a General Chapter is in session, the General Council shall proceed first to the election of a new Councillor if there be need. Once the Council is at full strength it elects, by a*

*majority of two-thirds, one of its own members to be the new Vicar General (cf. 122b).*

## **The General Councillors**

Can. 625-  
629

**120.** The mission of the General Councillors is to assist the Superior General in the government and animation of the Institute. They share with him and under his authority all the tasks of central government.

Their election normally takes place in the course of an ordinary General Chapter which will have previously determined the number of Councillors required by the Institute's needs, taking into account art. 112.

In exceptional cases the Councillors may be elected during an extraordinary General Chapter or even at a meeting of the General Council according to the provisions of the Statutes (cf. 122b).

At the time of their election, the Councillors must have at least ten years of perpetual profession in the Institute.

Their mandate continues until the following ordinary General Chapter. They can be reelected.

***120a.** During the period between General Chapters, a Councillor may offer his resignation; he may also be invited to do so by the Brother*

*Superior. In either eventuality, the General Council shall first of all prudently evaluate the reasons given by the persons concerned. The final decision is made by a secret ballot in the absence of the Councillor concerned. The vote required is an absolute majority for a Councillor who wishes to resign and a two-thirds majority in the case of a Councillor who is asked to resign (cf. 122b).*

**120b.** *In the case of a vacancy in the General Council, the Council, on the proposal of the Brother Superior, proceeds to the election of a new Councillor by a secret ballot, a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast being required. It is, however, left to the Brother Superior and his Council to decide whether or not to fill the vacancy in cases where the number of Councillors remains within the limits set forth by the General Chapter (cf. 122b).*

**120c. 1°** *In the period between two ordinary General Chapters, the Brother Superior General may add one or two new members to the General Council.*

**2°** *The first step in this process is for the General Council to decide by vote whether it is opportune to increase the number of its members. If the vote is positive, the Brother Superior then presents the name or names of candidates and the Council*

*proceeds to the election.*

**3°** *Each vote taken in this procedure is by secret ballot and requires a two-thirds majority (cf. 122b).*

### **Meetings of the General Council**

Can. 127  
Can. 627

**121.** Meetings of the General Council are convoked and presided over by the Brother Superior General or, in his absence, by the Brother Vicar General .

The frequency and arrangement of the Council's meetings as well as the specific nature of the vote required in certain cases, are regulated according to the norms of canon law and the legislation of the Institute.

Can. 127  
Can. 627

**122.** In order to perform certain acts validly, the Brother Superior must obtain in advance either the advice or the consent of the General Council; he himself does not vote.

When the consent of the Council is required, at least an absolute majority of those voting is necessary. If such a vote is positive, the Brother Superior is not held to it. He cannot, however, act contrary to a negative majority vote.

When it is the advice of the Council that is required, the Brother Superior is left free to make his own decision, whatever the result of the vote.

art. 122a - THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

In all these cases, there must be a quorum of at least half of the total members of the General Council. If the matter is urgent and such a quorum cannot be met, it falls to the president of the meeting to complete the quorum by admitting to the discussions and the vote one or two heads of the General Services.

Can. 627  
Can. 638,3  
Can. 1292

**122a.** *Apart from the instances prescribed by law, both universal as well as particular, the consent of the General Council is required in the following cases:*

**1°** *The convocation of an extraordinary General Chapter or the adoption, because of urgent circumstances and for a limited period, of certain measures which ordinarily require the decision of the General Chapter,*

**2°** *Every measure for the general or particular application of canonical legislation or the faculties granted by the Holy See, whenever the text of the law or the act of concession requires it;*

**3°** *All alienation of material goods when the sums involved exceed the limits fixed by law and also the alienation of any object considered valuable, because of its artistic or historic worth;*

**4°** *Any act of lending or borrowing entered into with persons outside the Institute, when the amount or the conditions involved exceed the powers granted by the Brother Superior to the*

*Brother Visitor and the District Council.*

**5°** *The possible designation of ten Brother Capitulants.*

*Apart from these cases, it is only the advice of the Council that is required.*

**122b.** *Unless circumstances make it impossible, all the Councillors in office ought to take part in the deliberations and votes provided for in articles 118d, 119, 119b. 120, 120a, 120b, and 120c above. These votes must be taken by a secret ballot and require a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast, taking into account the two cases referred to in article 120a.*

**122c.** *Brothers other than Councillors may, because of their office or special competence, participate in certain meetings of the General Council at the invitation of the presiding officer. These Brothers have only a consultative role and do not take part in the voting.*

## **The General Services of the Institute**

**123.** The Brother Superior and his Council are assisted in the work of government by a certain number of General Services. These are of two kinds:

Some are of an administrative nature and deal with all that concerns communication, the organisation of the work of the offices of central government, the management of temporal goods, juridical questions, and relations with the Holy See.

The others deal with missionary, educational and pastoral objectives and with formation in the Institute.

***123a.*** *The Brother Secretary General, the Brother Bursar General and others in charge of General Services receive their obedience, which is renewable, for a definite time, from the Brother Superior after consultation with his Council.*

*They exercise their responsibilities in conjunction with the General Council and are called upon by the Council whenever the matter dealt with is within their competence.*

*A suitable description of their responsibilities appears in The Administrator's Directory.*