

CHAPTER 9

THE DISTRICT AND THE REGION

The District

Can. 581
Can. 621

124. The District, as the ordinary expression of the communion existing among its communities and the Brothers who compose it, is more than a structure of government. It manifests and fosters the fraternal union which enables all, communities and Brothers alike, to assist each other in sharing their common responsibility for their life and their apostolic work.

For this reason, the first mission of those in charge of the District is to promote unity among the Brothers and the communities as well as their active participation in District concerns, thereby ensuring the value and the effectiveness of their witness within the local church.

The District is also called to establish and to maintain relationships with other Districts or Delegations and to strengthen those which unite it with the Centre of the Institute.

Can. 581
Can. 621

125. A District is established by the Brother Superior with the consent of his Council, after consultation with the Brothers who will be affected by this decision.

125a. *The establishment of a District presupposes a certain number of bonds among the communities that are called upon to compose it. To serve as a guarantee, there must also be a well-founded hope that the District will have at its disposal in the near future sufficient resources in personnel and material goods to be able to provide for the animation of the communities, for the formation of the Brothers, and for the development of the activities of which the District has charge.*

125b. *For geographical, political or other reasons, a District may organise one or more administrative sectors. The relative autonomy of these units will be determined by the District Chapter and approved by the Brother Superior with the advice of his Council.*

125c. *A sub-District may be established whenever an administrative unit has a sufficient number of communities and Brothers, whether in a particular socio-cultural area, or in an area that is far from the centre of the District. Its statutes provide for the maintenance of union with the District; they are conferred by the Brother Superior General on the advice of his Council. The sub-District is placed under the responsibility of an Auxiliary Visitor assisted by a Council. Their respective areas of responsibility are defined by the District Chapter.*

125d. *The initial formation of the Brothers remains one of the major preoccupations of a District, and it endeavours to make its own provision for it. If this is not possible, the District collaborates with other Districts in staffing common formation centres.*

Can. 581
Can. 585

125e. *If a District can no longer meet the conditions mentioned in article 125a, discussions should be initiated between the District and the Region to which it belongs. Brother Superior and his Council then take whatever measures are necessary, ensuring always that everything is done with respect for the persons involved.*

The Delegation

126. A Delegation is a group of communities which for reasons of a practical or provisional nature, cannot form either a District or a sub-District. It remains directly dependent on the Brother Superior General.

126a. *In exceptional circumstances, the Brother Superior General may establish a Delegation with the advice of his Council and after consulting the communities concerned. It is his responsibility also to approve the statutes of Delegation and to appoint those who will be in charge.*

126b. *The Brother Superior General can appoint as canonical superior of the Delegation a Brother having at least five years perpetual profession in the Institute. This Brother has the title of Delegate.*

126c. *In addition to this Brother Delegate, the Brother Superior General appoints one of the Brothers belonging to the Delegation, and proposed by them, to be the Brother President. The President, with the assistance of his Council, is responsible for dealing on the spot with the routine business of the Delegation.*

The Region

127. The Region is not understood first of all as a structure of government but as a means of coordination and collaboration between certain sectors of the Institute which choose to join together. Nevertheless, the statutes of each Region can confer on the Regional Coordinator a role of decision and authority in certain matters or in certain cases.

Unity of heart and mind among the Brothers of the Region is established and maintained by communicating and actively sharing with one another. A Region is established as an expression of the willingness of the units that compose it to cooperate with one another and so benefit by the added vitality that comes from acting together.

Every District, every sub-District and every Delegation forms part of a Region. The Brother Superior and his Council ensure that no sector of the Institute remains isolated and without the benefit that comes from collaboration.

127a. *The composition of the Region is determined by an agreement between, the Brother Superior and his Council on the one hand and the Districts, sub-Districts and Delegations concerned, on the other.*

127b. Regions may exist in many different forms characterised by flexibility in their organisation and their functioning.

Once appropriate means have been taken to consult the Brothers, it is for the Districts, sub-Districts and Delegations concerned to study and define the arrangements by which they are constituted as a Region. Then they submit their plans to the Brother Superior and his Council. Should the need arise, the latter help with the solution of any difficulties which may occur.

127c. *The Brother Visitors and those in charge of the Delegations within a particular Region form a Conference. Together they determine its statutes.*

127d. *1° Each Region designates its Regional*

Coordinator and specifies his mandate and responsibilities in its statutes.

2° If the statutes of a Region confer upon its Coordinator powers of decision and authority in certain areas, his appointment has to be approved by the Brother Superior General and his Council.

3° But if his role is limited to the work of coordinating, his appointment comes from the Conference of Visitors and those in charge of the Delegations. The Brother Superior and his Council are duly informed.

127e. *The Regional Coordinator fosters communication among the Brother Visitors of the Region and supports them in their mission. He ensures that the Region remains in contact with the Brother Superior General. He follows up the application of decisions and programmes adopted for the Region as a whole. He also encourages cooperation and interdependence within the Region and between it and other Regions of the Institute.*

The details of the Brother Regional Coordinator's functions are specified in each Region by the Conference of Brother Visitors or possibly by a Regional Assembly with the approval of the Brother Superior. This approval requires the consent of the General Council whenever the

Statutes of the Region confer on the Regional Coordinator the power to make decisions and to exert authority in certain domains or in certain cases.

127f. *The Brother Superior and his Council set up a schedule of meetings that will bring together all the Brother Regional Coordinators.*

127g. *In addition to participating in the activities of a given Region, the Districts, sub- Districts and Delegations are encouraged to cooperate with other parts of the Institute.*

127h. *Sending Brothers to the Young Churches or to sectors that are lacking in vocations, together with the sharing of material or spiritual resources, constitutes a most significant form that Regional cooperation can take. Formal agreements between Districts that send Brothers and those that receive them specify the details of this type of collaboration.*

The Regions also make it possible for Brothers with particular aptitudes to be made available temporarily to give assistance where needed

The District Chapter

Can. 632

128. As an assembly of a pastoral and administrative nature, the District Chapter manifests the profound unity existing among the Brothers and permits their active participation, either directly or through their delegates, in the structures of reflection and decision in the District.

The District Chapter is convoked by the Brother Visitor. It evaluates the life of the District in all its aspects. It takes into account the local situation and it establishes a schedule of precise programmes for renewal, adaptation or growth to be implemented in the near future. The process of evaluation and of establishing new programmes is carried out according to the guidelines set by the Church and by the Institute.

Everything set down concerning the District Chapter applies equally to sub-Districts, and Delegations, according to the arrangements determined in their statutes.

129. The District Chapter is normally held when the Brother Visitor is about to complete his term of office. It must also be held following a General Chapter in order to apply its decisions. If the circumstances warrant it, the Chapter to follow a General Chapter can be considered as the final step of a District Chapter which began prior to the General Chapter.

129a. *The District Chapter is presided over by the Brother Visitor. The Chapter itself elects its other officers.*

129b. *With the advice of his Council, Brother Visitor may decide to convoke an extraordinary Chapter. He must do so if this is requested by more than half the members of the preceding Chapter.*

130. When deciding on the procedure for the election of delegates, the District Chapter or, in default of a Chapter decision, Brother Visitor and his Council, ensure that there is a balanced representation of Brothers according to age-groups, competence, functions and geographical areas.

The following norms are to be observed:

1° Members by right are the Brothers Visitors, Titular and Auxiliary; members of the District Council; such Brothers as are designated by the preceding Chapter.

2° At least two-thirds of the members of the Chapter are elected.

3° Every Brother in the District has the right to elect and be elected.

4° The Brother Visitor and his Council can decide to invite all the Brothers to participate in the District Chapter. Only elected members have the right to vote.

***130a.** The Chapter welcomes questions put to it by Brothers from the District; it desires to associate them all in its preparation; it encourages the widest possible participation.*

131. The resolutions taken by the District Chapter must always conform to the directives given by the General Chapter. These resolutions are forwarded to the Brother Superior General and his Council for approval.

Once approved they become effective in the District, and have normative force for all those to whom they apply. They are communicated to the Brothers of the District.

The Brother Visitor

Can. 618
Can. 619
Can. 620
Can. 624
Can. 628
Can. 832

132. The Brother Visitor is the guarantor of the unity and vitality of the District. He is the one primarily responsible for the District and is its principal animator. He exercises his authority as a major superior in accordance with the norms of canon law, the legislation of the Institute and the directives given by the District Chapter.

Brother Visitor is at the service of his Brothers, ready to listen to them and remaining in contact with them. He is careful to help each Brother to develop his vocation. He promotes close cooperation between

the Brothers in order to help them carry out their mission more effectively in all its aspects.

The Brother Visitor assigns the Brothers to their communities and provides for the different posts of responsibility according to the norms established by the District Chapter. He visits the communities and ensures that the District remains in contact with the Region and the Centre of the Institute.

He admits candidates to the Novitiate and also, subject to the prescriptions contained in 95b, to the making of vows. It falls within his competence to grant the authorisations specified in canon law including the publication of writings on matters of religion or morality.

132a. *He visits the communities, at least once a year. On these occasions he assesses with the Brothers the quality of their community life and of their apostolic activities as well as those aspects which have significance for their spiritual lives. If the need arises he encourages the Brothers to redefine their specific objectives, referring for this purpose to the annual programme of the community previously established and approved. In the course of his visit he receives each Brother individually.*

132b. *The Brother Visitor communicates to the Brothers the documents he receives from the*

Centre of the Institute. He does what he can to ensure that the message of these documents is well understood and to facilitate their application.

Once a year, the Brother Visitor submits to the Brother Superior a succinct but adequately documented report on the situation in the District.

132c. *The Brother Visitor organises gatherings of Brothers and lay persons to deal with matters that concern religious life, the apostolate and professional activities. These assemblies provide the opportunity for an exchange of ideas and experiences as well as for concrete plans of action.*

132d. *The Brother Visitor ensures that the requirements of canon law and civil law are complied with in what concerns the goods of the District and the patrimonial goods of the Brothers. The same applies to social justice as it affects the personnel employed by the communities. He authorises building works and repairs and other expenditure within the limits approved by the Brother Superior General.*

132e. *The Brother Visitor encourages programmes designed to foster vocations. He follows with great attention the progress of the Brothers in initial formation, providing them with*

the help of a group of Brothers specially prepared for the task. He ensures that the Brothers of all age-groups have the required facilities for their own development and for taking part in programmes for continuing formation. He supports the Brother Directors in their role as leaders.

132f. *The transfer of a Brother from one District to another is effected with his personal consent following an agreement between the Brother Visitors involved and with the advice of their respective Councils. Care is taken to inform the Secretary General of the Institute.*

Can. 623

133. The Brother Visitor is appointed by the Brother Superior General with the advice of his Council. For this purpose, the District sends the Brother Superior, the results of the vote taken to determine the list of candidates for the office. At the time of his appointment, the Brother Visitor must have at least five years of perpetual profession in the Institute.

Can. 624

134. The Brother Visitor is appointed for three years, or four, according to what has been decided by the District Chapter.

The total duration of the successive terms of office of a Brother Visitor in the same District may not exceed nine years.

134a. *The District Chapter establishes the procedure to be followed for presenting to the Brother Superior three names of those Brothers judged suitable for the office of Visitor. This procedure however respects the principle on the one hand that all the Brothers of the District be consulted, and on the other hand that the Brother Superior retain the freedom to choose.*

B 2°
Can. 609
Can. 616

135. To open a community, the Brother Visitor must obtain the prior written consent of the Brother Superior and of the Bishop of the Diocese.

The closure of a community is under the jurisdiction of the Brother Superior, the Bishop of the place having been previously consulted.

The District Council

Can. 627

136. The mission of the District Council is to promote the unity of the District and to assist the Brother Visitor in the exercise of his duties. Together they make plans for the progress of the District and they study how to face the problems that arise. Each year, the Brother Visitor undertakes, with his Council, a fraternal evaluation of his own work and of the state of the District.

137. The District Chapter determines the number of

the District Councillors as well as the length of their period in office. It also establishes the procedure for their election or appointment.

The minimum number of Councillors is six. At least two-thirds of them are elected. The Brother Visitor can appoint one or more Councillors of his choice to ensure a better representation of the Brothers.

The titular Brother Visitor is, by right, the President of the District Council. Auxiliary Visitors are members by right.

137a. *Substitute members are elected. These can take part in all meetings of the District Council, but they have the right to vote only when they are taking the place of an absent Councillor.*

137b. *The District Council is convoked and presided over by the titular Visitor or his delegate. He calls a meeting of the Council as often as circumstances require it and at least every three months.*

The Council also meets when requested to by at least half of its members.

All the members of the Council should be notified, as well as any substitutes, should the situation require it.

The Brother Visitor can invite consultants to the meetings but these do not have the right to vote.

137c. *The agenda for the Council meetings is prepared under the direction of Brother Visitor or his delegate, and is then communicated in good time to the Councillors and the substitutes. Any Brother of the District may submit a topic to the Council. The agenda must include topics proposed by the Council members themselves. Due discretion being observed, the Brothers of the District are informed of the work of the Council and the decisions taken.*

The minutes of the Council meetings are kept in a special register, which also includes the final decisions of the Brother Superior.

Can. 127
Can. 627

138. In order to perform certain acts validly, the Brother Visitor must obtain, in advance, either the advice of his Council or its consent.

When it is the consent of the Council that is required, the Brother Visitor may not act contrary to a negative majority vote.

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

The quorum required for a meeting of the District Council is a half of the total number of its members. The Brother Visitor does not take part in the voting, but he makes the final decision.

Can. 656,3
Can. 703

138a. *The following acts require the consent of the District Council:*

- 1° admission to final profession;*
- 2° the dismissal of a Brother with vows who is living in the District, whether he belongs to it or not, in cases of urgency foreseen in canon law;*
- 3° the transfer of goods from one house to another within the District;*
- 4° the disposition of goods of a house which has been closed;*
- 5° determining the powers given to Brother Directors and Bursars in economic matters,*
- 6° any other extraordinary administrative measures which involve the District's finances.*

Can. 641

138b. *The following acts require the advice of the District Council:*

- 1° the admission of candidates to the novitiate;*
- 2° the appointment of the Bursar or of others in charge of the general services of the District;*
- 3° the convocation of the District Chapter.*

Can. 609
Can. 1292,2

138c. *The following acts require the advice of the District Council prior to presentation to the Brother Superior General for ratification:*

1° all plans for opening or closing a community; assuming responsibility for a pastoral work of education or the withdrawal from or closure of such a work already existing;

2° all alienation of goods when the limit imposed by the Holy See is exceeded;

3° all borrowing or lending outside the District when the amount or conditions imposed go beyond the limits fixed by the General Council;

4° every agreement or contract made with the authorities of the local church, or with other public or private bodies, which might involve the joint responsibility of the District and the Institute;

5° any request for the use of powers placed at the discretion of the Brother Superior General and his Council by the Holy See.

138d.

1° Apart from cases where the Rule indicates expressly that the vote of the District Council is deliberative, this vote is only consultative.

2° What is said of the District Council applies also, all things considered, to Sub-District and Delegation Councils.

Administration of temporal goods

Can. 634 -
640

139. The Institute, the Districts and similar groupings legitimately constituted, and the communities are non-profit making entities. They have the right to acquire, possess, administer and dispose of material goods in view of their specific mission. In such cases they act within the authorised limits and under their own responsibility, conforming to canon law and the legislation of the Institute, and taking into account the requirements of civil law.

The Brothers appointed to administer the goods of the Institute do so as depositaries of the goods of the Church.

Those in charge at all levels see that the resources are shared equitably, in such a way that the sectors which are better off, come to the aid of their Brothers less favourably placed, so as to minimise as far as possible the differences which might exist in the living conditions of communities within the same sector.

Can. 636
Can. 1280

140. In each District, a Bursar, distinct from the Brother Visitor, but acting under his authority, is responsible for the administration of material goods. He has the assistance of an Economic Council .

Can. 636,2

140a. *In conformity with the guidelines established by the District Chapter, the Bursar, with the help of his Council, prepares the annual budget which*

he then submits to the Brother Visitor and his Council. The Economic Council, for its part, controls the manner in which the budget is followed and studies ways of solving the difficulties that arise.

Can. 636,2

140b. *The Bursar furnishes an annual report on the financial condition of the District to the Brother Visitor and the District Council. This report is sent by the Brother Visitor to the Brother Bursar General.*

140c. *The various Districts, sub-Districts and Delegations jointly contribute towards the costs of the central administration of the Institute. They ensure that it can balance its budget so as to be able to meet its other expenses.*

The amount to be contributed by each District is calculated by a system established by the General Chapter and applied each year by the General Council according to what is proposed by the International Economic Council.