

CANON LAW AND THE CONSTITUTIONS OF RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS

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TO CLARIFY THE relationship between the new Code of Canon Law and the constitutions of religious congregations today is no simple task. Divergent views of world culture, diverse images of Church, differing theologies of religious life and changing perceptions of the role and purpose of law all contribute to the complexity of the problem. It seems important then not to attempt to explore the question except within a broad conceptual framework. A cursory glance at changing patterns in society and Church across this twentieth century, together with descriptions of three distinct conceptions of religious life from a theological point of view, will serve as a context for introducing this reflection on the implications of the new Code of Canon Law as it relates to constitutions of religious congregations.¹

Culture, Church, and religious life

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Church was preparing itself for the codification of its laws. The dominant view of world culture at that time was 'classical-based'. It presented a picture of unusual stability, with tradition as normative. History testifies to the influence of the feudal society on the development of the western catholic Church. Even though there were efforts to move with a spirit of liberalism at the turn of the century, the traditional view more often than not prevailed in society and Church. This view, still held by many today, maintains that nothing changes fundamentally. In describing interpretative models of the dynamics of change within society, Holland defines the governing principle operative in the traditional model as authoritarian or hierarchical, and its basic social virtues as order and harmony.² The strong influence of this particular model can be seen in movements within the Church in the early twentieth century.

It was precisely in the year 1900 that the Church, for example, centralized its administrative structures in Rome. It was in 1901 that

the *Normae* were promulgated for religious. These norms defined specific guidelines for constitutions of religious congregations. With the further promulgation of the Code of Canon Law in 1917, the uniforming influence of the law was notable in the life of the Church. Pyramidal structures, typical of the traditional model, with strong control at the top and little participation from the bottom, testified to the influence of society on the Church as well as on religious life itself.

Reflecting on the nature and scope of cultural influence on church structures, theologian Thomas Clarke suggests three distinct conceptions of religious life, based on Holland's schema of three stages of the Church's pastoral response to industrialization. In other words, the Church's pastoral response changed as our country moved from an agricultural society to an industrial one. Clarke's first concept, traditional in form and reflective of a medieval orientation toward religious life, highlights patterns obviously visible in the Church of the early twentieth century. For example, the need to protect traditional values influenced the ongoing development of hierarchical structures, with stress on authority and substantial resistance to social change. The philosophical roots of this first conception made sharp distinctions between the spiritual and the material, the eternal and the temporal, the religious and the secular. Religious life was conceived as a fixed state in the Church, obedience as its pivotal vow. Government by one person was favoured; attitudes and rituals of the exercise of authority and obedience contained much that was feudal. The role of law was seen as an expression of order and harmony, a means of achieving the common good. Law was also aimed at keeping doubt and ambiguity, as well as conflict, at a minimum.³

We know from history, as well as from experience, that this traditional image of religious life was dominant in this century until the close of the Second Vatican Council. At this time the Church, like society, found itself face to face with rapid change towards a technological society. Even though societal structures in the early nineteen sixties were more quickly affected by change than those within the Church, there is little doubt that the same sociological shifts which led to a changing society soon led to a changing Church and ultimately to a changed conception of religious life. This phase, referred to by Clarke as liberal, can be described as *transitional*.

The image of the world culture having shifted from that of 'classical-based' to 'experience-based', tradition was no longer given priority. Emphasis was rather on human experience. The Church, in calling for a renewal of life and structures, specifically called for a renewal of its law. We began to enter deeply into the transition of renewal.

Changes in the liturgy, expansion of the role of lay persons, and wider opportunities in ministry for religious were but a few of the broader changes initially implemented as a result of conciliar decrees. Specific to the mandate to religious was a call to renewal based on fidelity to the gospel, community charism and signs of the times. Within a short space of time, the response of religious to this mandate raised serious questions with regard to the concretized image of religious life in the monastic mould. The hierarchical structures which traditionally defined the boundaries of community life and ministry, particularly for women religious, began to topple. The perception of constitutions as 'a fixed rule' for religious soon disappeared.

The paradigm shift which marked the transition from the traditional era to the post-Vatican II age in no small measure affected religious life as an institution. In reflecting on the influence of this traditional mode on the theology of religious life, and in recounting some of the significant results of renewal efforts on the part of religious, Clarke cites a shift of accent:

- from the contemplative to the active as an equal and dialectically related partner
- from a separation from the world to relevance to and involvement in the world and the making of history
- from consecration to prophecy and witness and *diakonia*
- from an expectation of the law to provide order and to reduce ambiguity to provision for the rights of the community and its official representatives
- from regarding constitutions as an embodiment of prescriptive and cautionary measures to an articulation of the community's identity and mission in inspirational and visionary terms.⁴

This transitional or post-Vatican II image of religious life obviously witnesses to a certain familiarity with change on the part of most religious congregations. Challenged to manage change rather than resist it, religious whose preference lies with the transitional model no longer regard religious life as a fixed state. The sociological shifts ever prominent in the culture in this period of rapid social change point to the emergence of new forms as old forms die.

In addition to the traditional and transitional views of religious life, a third conception is indeed emerging. Strongly gospel-oriented, this form is often referred to as *radical* or as *prophetic*. It is precisely because of its emerging character that this model does not admit of the same kind of verification in actual history as do the two previously described models. An expression of this third view will not be found in church documents. Inasmuch as law is not expected

to be *avant-garde* but rather to reflect the lived experience, the current Code of Canon Law does not describe this form of religious life.

In pointing to some of the salient features of the prophetic model, Clarke indicates that those who predominantly identify with this conception cease to regard religious life as a state of perfection, or as a form of life significantly different from that of other baptized Christians. Close links between religious and lay are leading to greater diversity in community living, in sharp contrast to monastic models of the past. Among the traditional vows neither obedience nor celibacy is pivotal, but rather poverty. Evangelical poverty, both spiritual and material, becomes the key to commitment. The accent is on a radical response to the gospel, through transforming action and the work of justice in the world. The relationship of religious communities to the hierarchical church is described as ecclesial rather than ecclesiastical. The purpose of law is not seen so much as promoting order and reducing conflict, as fostering growth and furthering the life and mission of the community. Law and authority necessarily take on a more creative character within a world view which is open to change.⁵

Even though all three of these orientations to religious life have their roots in a particular cultural milieu peculiar to a given period in history, it is clear that all three models coexist today. It is also clear that the orientations described here as traditional, transitional and prophetic are not mutually exclusive. For example, it is common to find side by side within any one religious congregation members whose preference is the traditional orientation, those who are most comfortable with the transitional or post-Vatican II concept of religious life, and those whose lifestyle and ministry identify them with the prophetic.

To make a distinction between the various orientations of religious life is not to deny the values inherent in each mode. Neither is it to question the positive influence the various models have had within the broader Church and society at a given time. This review of the three approaches to religious life does, however, focus the reality of conflict not uncharacteristic of an era of social change. The areas of divergence among the three orientations have specifically led to the surfacing of conflicting attitudes with regard to the new Code of Canon Law.

Given the diverse expectations and outcomes of the renewal effort among religious, it is difficult to envisage a code of law which might be equally acceptable to all religious. On the other hand, a close look at the response of women religious to the Vatican II mandate to revise constitutions might give insight into changing attitudes toward church law and the effort on the part of women religious to share responsibility for shaping the law designed to govern their lives.

The renewal of constitutions

The broad conceptual framework provided thus far gives us a global view of the response of society, Church and religious congregations to social change. In a similar way, the process of renewal among women religious provides a specific context for exploring the dynamics of social change as this phenomenon relates to religious and the rewriting of constitutions.

The mandate issued to religious congregations at the close of the Second Vatican Council was clear. Adaptation and renewal were not an option. Conciliar decrees *Perfectae caritatis* and *Lumen gentium* addressed the need for renewal of spirit and adaptation to changing times. *Ecclesiae sanctae* defined norms for implementing the conciliar decrees and for the revision of constitutions in particular.

Whereas the underlying message in the conciliar documents was clear, specific directives were lacking. For example, the Council designed no particular vehicle nor any one process to ensure a uniform response to its mandate. Consequently broad diversity characterized initial renewal efforts among religious. The conciliar principles of participation, co-responsibility and subsidiarity, as well as the Council's admonition calling for fidelity to the gospel, community tradition and the signs of the times, guided religious in their overall renewal effort.

At the special general chapter, congregations were empowered to alter certain norms of their constitutions as an experiment, as long as the purpose, nature and character of the institute were preserved. Even experiments contrary to the common law of the Church were willingly permitted by the Holy See.⁶ The history of renewal in congregations of women religious reflects immediate and serious response to the broad direction set by the Council. It was precisely within this context that differences in historical background, and particularly in charism, led to differences in style and in modes of response to change. These differences in turn resulted in a variety of outcomes in renewal efforts in general, and in the process of rewriting constitutions in particular.

Even though most religious congregations embarked on renewal from the same stance, that is, within the traditional model of religious life, other interpretative models of change soon surfaced. Not unlike society and the Church, religious congregations witnessed to the development of three distinct models for interpreting social change. These distinct models in turn fostered differing understandings of religious life, of law, and of the purpose of constitutions. Just as the dominant image of religious life prior to the Council had been *traditional*, the post-Vatican II image soon emerged as *transitional* or *liberal*, with seeds being planted along the way for the possible emergence of the *prophetic* or *radical* image.

The willingness with which women religious approached the rewriting of constitutions at the close of the Council was indicative of a certain readiness on their part to deal with the complexities of social change. Renewed structures, inviting both participation and co-responsibility, facilitated the endeavour among community members. The structures specifically designed for the process of rewriting constitutions enabled community members to gather in a spirit of prayerful reflection, for the purpose of focusing values typical of their heritage. This reflective approach to the revision process enabled not only the sharing of a common vision within a congregation, but also the articulation of that vision in terms of identity and mission. Consequently, early in the rewriting process, constitutions began to be experienced as a statement of identity and mission as well as an expression of the precise relationship between the congregation and the broader church. At the same time, the dominant approach to the revision of constitutions within any given congregation ordinarily reflected the dominant orientation of the community to religious life. Those congregations faithful to traditional modes of operating did not necessarily advocate a highly participative process. Those concerned about the quality of participation and co-responsibility in renewed structures more often than not were sensitive to the importance of underlying conciliar principles.

It was clear from the initiation of the revision process that the task would be less than simple. Reflection on the lived experience of the congregation coupled with testing new directions in light of gospel values, community tradition and changing times confirmed this fact. The problem of dealing with strong differences with and between religious congregations in view of changing concepts of Church, religious life and community values has pointed to a consistent need for reconciliation during this post-Vatican II era. Basic to this struggle has been the deeper need to reconcile differences pertaining to the understanding of church law and its relation to the life of religious.

Recent data pertinent to the revision of constitutions indicate that there is a need for continuing education with regard to the law-life relationship.⁷ As evidenced in the traditional model, strict adherence to the law led to a form of community life which, while experienced by religious in general as stable and secure, was at the time of renewal, experienced by many as restrictive and static. According to theologian Sandra M. Schneiders:

Until the period of Vatican II, the relationship among life, law and theology was a stable (if not sclerotic!) constellation of virtually unchanging elements. Law had an unquestioned priority over life

and theology. It was actually from canon law that religious life derived its forms, its operation and its very self-definition.⁸

In view of the need to deal with distinct and somewhat divisive differences in the understanding of the role of law in the life of the community, many religious congregations provided for the education of membership in this area. A new understanding of the relationship of law to life began to emerge. Efforts were made to internalize the deeper meaning of law and at the same time to put it in proper perspective as it relates to life and to theology. A broader understanding of church law soon led to an increased ability among women religious to take responsibility for the formulation of that law which was designed to govern their life through constitutions.

Guidelines defined by *Ecclesiae sanctae* for the revision of constitutions served as an anchorpoint in the rewriting process.⁹ The encouragement to blend spiritual and juridical elements in constitutions, and the emphasis on fidelity to charism tended to support the concept of law as it relates to life and mission without exercising undue control. Because of their defined canonical relationship with the Church and of their understanding of the responsibility to help shape their own law, religious began to show increased interest in particular law.¹⁰ Women religious as a group suddenly found themselves engaged at a level of intensity in what has well been called a de-stabilizing of the relationship among the three elements of law, life and theology. For many, law lost its clear priority in relation to life and theology; and the stable constellation was replaced by a dynamic tension between life and law, giving theology priority in the relationship.¹¹

The evolution of the new Code

The process of revising constitutions within religious congregations paralleled a process initiated by John XXIII for the purpose of revising the law of the Church. At the time of announcing the forthcoming Second Vatican Council (25 January 1959), this interim pope had called for what he termed the reform of canon law. His was a pastoral plan. Having expressed concern that those responsible for the code revision 'begin where the people are', John XXIII defined a pastoral approach to the formal revision of church law. The spirit of this pontiff was shared by Paul VI as he assumed responsibility for moving the revision forward after the death of John XXIII. Considered by many as the greatest theologian of canon law the Church has ever produced, Paul VI, over seventeen years, laid out for the Church a theology of law. It was his explicit hope that the revised Code would become an aid to contemporary church life in the post-Vatican II era.

Though not immediately involved in the revision of the Code, for no women had been selected for membership on subcommissions, women religious were not far removed from the process for the revision of law for religious. A committee of the Conference of Major Religious Superiors of Women's Institutes in the U.S.A. was established in 1965 for the purpose of proposing norms for a suggested revision of the canonical laws concerning religious life. After a three-year study, in collaboration with its membership and with the counsel of theologians and canonists, CMSW (now LCWR) completed its task. In the hope of being of assistance, the Conference presented its publication, *Proposed norms for consideration in the Code of Canon Law*, to the Pontifical Code Commission. The spirit in which this project had been undertaken reflected a responsible effort on the part of women religious to be faithful to admonitions of conciliar documents, for the Council had particularly reminded all faithful that they 'should openly reveal' to those responsible for governing the Church, their 'needs and desires' and that they should express their 'opinion on things which concern the good of the Church'.¹² The history of the early efforts of the subcommission testifies to the fact that the proposed norms served as a resource to those responsible for the first draft of the law for religious. The CMSW publication also proved to be a resource to women religious in renewal chapters and in the ongoing process of rewriting constitutions.

In defining the proposed norms, women religious of the United States had not only taken as normative the principles and doctrine expressed in the decrees of the Council, but they had also taken seriously those principles declared by the pontifical code commission as basic to the renewal of the law. The committee gave particular attention to the principles which were defined to provide for (1) a juridical text which would reflect the theology of the Council, (2) a law which would foster growth and at the same time promote order and protect rights, and (3) a law that would be pastoral in approach. In other words, the text could provide for the needs of those who look to the law for exhortation and of those who depend on the law to issue imperatives.

These same underlying principles were evidenced in the work of the subcommission for the revised law for religious. The 1977 draft, published under the title of *Schema of canons on institutes of life consecrated by profession of the evangelical counsels*, witnesses to this fact. This schema, obviously a departure in form and format from the 1917 Code, was at the same time considered by many canonists, and by religious in general, as a law faithful to Vatican II directives, at once pastoral in text and pastoral in mandate. In forwarding an evaluation of the schema to the pontifical commission, the Canon Law Society of America commended the commission for its

courageous adoption of this style, considered by CLSA as much more compatible with the charismatic nature of religious life than that style reflected in the 1917 Code.¹³

The broad consultative process designed for the critique of the schema witnessed to an effort on the part of the Church to provide for the involvement of religious in the revision of the law that was to govern their life. Bishops through national conferences, and major superiors through the International Union of Superiors General of Women and of Men (UISG and USG), received copies of the schema for evaluation. Many congregational leaders engaged their membership in a process for the purpose of evaluating the proposed law. The Leadership Conference of Women Religious collated responses of congregations in the United States and submitted a comprehensive computerized report to the International Union of Superiors General in Rome. This organization, which had gathered worldwide reports representing responses from over 2,000 congregations of women religious, took responsibility for presenting a final report to the chairman of the commission, the late Cardinal Felici. Whereas there were negative responses to various aspects of the proposed law, these were considered minimal in comparison to the substantially positive evaluation of the total schema. In fact, for many religious the 1977 draft proved to be a source of inspiration as well as an educative tool in pursuing the course of renewal and in moving forward in the revision of constitutions.

There were those, however, who were not so positive in their response to the 1977 draft. Among those offering negative criticism were an organized minority group of United States women religious, some official representatives of the Church and of the International Union of Superiors General of Men in Rome (USG). The results of the worldwide consultation ultimately led to a reorganization of the original commission, and to the formation of a special study group which was given responsibility for producing a second draft based on observations and suggestions received. The original schema was radically changed. More significant than the change in style, which reflected an effort to preserve that of the 1917 Code, was the departure from the directive principles of the 1977 draft.

The publication of the second draft of the Code in June 1980 was met with a request by bishops and canonists for further consultation. John Paul II appointed additional members to the commission. Several women were included as advisory to the group responsible for the second draft of the law for religious. In October 1981 the promulgation of the Code was recommended by the pontifical commission. On 25 January 1984, on the twenty-fourth anniversary of John XXIII's call for the renewal of the law, John Paul II signed the revised Code of church law.

The new Code: trends and implications

Whereas the Code reflects many of the liberalizing changes in the Church since the reforms of Vatican II in 1965, in the opinion of many canonists it fails to provide for the results of the significant transition brought about by the Council. Inasmuch as this law does not reflect the post-Vatican II experience of the broader church, it does not adequately reflect the experience of religious in this transitional era. The reality of the Code tends to emphasize already existing differences among religious. The diversity in orientations towards religious life described earlier in this article is specifically reflected in the reactions of women religious to the new Code. For those who look to the law to solidify form and structure, the new Code is more than acceptable. For those who no longer give priority to law over life, and whose principal concern is the developmental nature of religious life, the specifics in the law are less than enabling. For those primarily concerned with emerging forms, the retrieval of the political character of the gospel, and the public nature of christian life, the law remains a question.

The life-law tension focused anew by the promulgation of the new Code has been somewhat heightened for United States women religious by the action of John Paul II in creating a special commission of bishops whose task it is 'to facilitate the pastoral work of their brother bishops in helping (United States religious) whose institutes are engaged in apostolic works to live their ecclesial vocation to the full'. A statement by the executive committee of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in the U.S.A. reflects a belief that the study can undoubtedly serve several valuable ends including an opportunity to continue a consolidation of understanding of the changes of the past fifteen years, and to substantiate the judgment of many american women religious that renewal has resulted in greater fidelity to the origins and traditions of their communities, as well as to the deepening of their faith commitment.¹⁴ This belief is undoubtedly shared by many american women religious. On the other hand, opportunities providing for dialogue and discussion with bishops point to a concern on the part of women and men religious with regard to the nature of a text which was released with the letter on religious life by Pope John Paul II. This text by SCRIS (commonly referred to as 'Essential Elements') contains principles and fundamental norms based on traditional teaching and the revised Code of Canon Law for religious life.¹⁵ The details of this document and the image of religious life which it portrays leave no doubt that the Vatican Congregation for Religious highly endorses the traditional form of religious life. The use of the text to interpret the revised Code for religious and to emphasize 'the ending of the period of special experimentation'

mandated by *Ecclesia sanctae* reflect in addition an understanding of the role of law as an instrument of control and as a means of promoting order.

The text on 'Essential Elements' obviously does not have the weight of law. Neither has it commanded the same serious consideration on the part of religious as has the new Code. It has undoubtedly, however, serious implications with regard to the process for approval of constitutions of religious congregations. We can assume that the criteria for the approval of constitutions are explicitly defined in this document. This assumption is substantiated by the experience of some congregations for which approval is apparently contingent on further revision of their constitutions in order to comply with the interpretation of the law according to SCRIS.¹⁶

Given the large number of religious congregations in the United States, comparatively few have either presented documents to SCRIS for approval or have actually received approval for their revised constitutions. The results of a survey conducted in early 1983 by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious show that most congregations of women religious are still involved in the process of rewriting constitutions.¹⁷ In the twenty-eight congregations reporting on interaction with ecclesiastical authority with regard to the approval of constitutions, three of the nine diocesan institutes have received approval; two of the nineteen pontifical institutes indicate that their constitutions have been approved. All in the latter category report that dialogue with SCRIS has been helpful. Constitutional content about which questions were raised focused primarily on authority/obedience issues, particularly with regard to the personal authority of the superior, religious dress, and the question concerning daily eucharist. These same issues were identified as areas of divergence between SCRIS and the congregations seeking approval of constitutions.

Although some congregations obviously seek approval for community documents through a process involving written communication, the trend among american groups is to give priority to the value derived from direct communication either by representatives of a given congregation going to Rome for the dialogue, or by arranging to meet with a member of the SCRIS staff in the United States. The LCWR survey shows that this approach, while seldom resulting in immediate approval of constitutions, most often leads to openness toward dialogue on the part of both SCRIS and the congregation and to a greater understanding of the lived experience of the community by those reviewing constitutions.

Depending on the theological stance of the community, a congregation may or may not be particularly concerned about

approval of constitutions at this time. Incarnational theology tends to inform the choices and the direction of many women religious today. Increasingly aware of God's action in salvation history, and of their participation in Christ's redemptive action, these same women consistently give priority to life over law. Without denying the need for law and without disregarding the value of church law, these women move on the conviction that law follows life, that law serves life. They do not see law as the dominant force in their life; their expectation is that law will serve life.

There are many canonists who, after careful study of the Code, indicate that the present Code is capable of serving and furthering the life and mission of the Church. It is especially important then to review the law for religious within the context of the total Code. It is equally important to relate the Code to other church documents. The New Testament, conciliar and post-conciliar documents, and those documents which pertain specifically to the history and traditions of religious communities all serve as a context in interpreting the new law.

In emphasizing the responsibility of women in interpreting law, Schneiders suggests a new role for theology as it relates to life and law:

. . . a more creative role for theology in the present situation of tension between life and law is that of 'interpreter', of creative hermeneut of the tension itself. In this role, the theologian of religious life would attempt to describe and analyze the tension in its causes and to reinterpret the relationship between law and life in function of theologically valid premises. . . .¹⁸

It is not likely that women religious who have been engaged in an ongoing process for the renewal of particular law, and at the same time have pursued opportunities for dialogue with church authorities, will fail to heed Schneiders's challenge. The dominant response of women religious in this transitional era leads to the expectation that these women will explore new and creative ways of coping not only with the tensions created by the implications of the bishops' study on the role of religious, but also with questions related to the latest decree from SCRIS concerning canon law taking precedence over the law of the community. Initiatives of women religious throughout this post-Vatican II era would also indicate an active and creative role on the part of women religious in dealing with the law of the Church as it affects the life of women in general.

Aware that the law provides for increased responsibilities and opportunities to minister within the Church, and that much was done on the part of the Church to eradicate canons which presented

women in an inferior, dependent and passive position, many women religious regret the Church's position on orders and jurisdiction. The concept of the equality of all human beings, male and female, remains in the Code as a debatable and serious issue. Especially disturbing to many women is the unexpected imposition of limitations on women based, not on their lay status but solely on their sex. Lay women, unlike lay men, are not permitted to be invested as lectors or acolytes, or to function as papal legates. Lay men have the option of choosing ordination; women as a class are restricted from responding to a call from God and the community. Women do not have access to power and decision-making, as structures are not provided to receive their thinking about decisions which affect their life or that of the Church.

As sociological shifts continue to surface in this time of rapid change, and as the Church struggles with the implementation of its revised law, women religious will undoubtedly have a role in relating to broader concerns than those embodied in their own constitutional law. The call to mission inherent in the constitutions of women religious is broader than the arenas of ministry permitted by the common law of the Church. This tension has neither been recognized nor resolved within the broader Church. This unresolved tension is not unlike the tension experienced by the founders and foundresses of many modern communities when seeking approval as a religious institute. The effectiveness with which women religious struggle to resolve these tensions, in fidelity to their own lived experience and to the Church whose mission they serve, will have implications for themselves as women religious as well as for all women serving in the Church.

NOTES

¹ It is important to note from the outset that even though this article reflects much that is common to religious congregations of both women and men, it is written from the perspective of a woman religious. Furthermore, it primarily reflects the experience of women religious in the United States of America.

² Holland, J., and Henriot, P.: *Social analysis: linking faith and justice* (Washington, D.C., 1980), p 13.

³ Clarke, Thomas E., et al.: *LCWR seminar papers — religious congregations within the Church* (Silver Springs, Maryland, 1982), pp 2-4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p 10.

⁶ Pope Paul VI: *Norms for implementation of four council decrees* (Washington, D.C., 1966), p 29.

⁷ Thomas, Barbara Lawler: *Constitutions and conversion* (Washington, D.C., 1982), p 67.

⁸ Schneiders, Sandra M.: 'Towards a theology of religious obedience', ed. by Lora Ann Quinonez, *Starting points* (Washington, D.C., 1980), p 72.

⁹ Pope Paul VI, *op. cit.*, pp 30-31.

¹⁰ *Particular law*: rulings defining the way of life of a religious institute according to the spirit of the founder/foundress. It contains both the constitutions and supplementary documents of the religious congregation.

¹¹ Schneiders, *op. cit.*, p 73.

¹² Abbot, Walter M., ed.: *The documents of Vatican II*, 'Lumen Gentium', 37 (New York, 1966), p 64.

¹³ Canon Law Society of America: *Proceedings of the thirty-ninth annual convention* (Washington, D.C., 1977), pp 98-99.

¹⁴ *Origins*, Vol 13, No 8 (7 July 1983), 'Commission on Bishops' role and life of U.S. religious orders' (Washington) p 133.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 133-42.

¹⁶ SCRIS: Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes. An official organ within the administration of the Vatican. This organization has responsibility for maintaining contact and communication with religious congregations and for approving constitutions of congregations.

¹⁷ Leadership Conference of Women Religious, 'Inter-congregational sharing: interaction with ecclesiastical authority re approval of constitutions', *Bulletin no 1* (Silver Springs, Maryland, 3/25/83), pp 1-8.

¹⁸ Schneiders, *op. cit.*, p 74.

¹⁹ *Origins*, Vol 13, no 36 (16 February 1984), 'Religious life and the new Code of Canon Law' (Washington, D.C.), p 602.