

FRATERNITY OF COMMUNION AND LIBERATION

CONSTITUTIONS

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CONSTITUTIONS

PROLOGUE

The “Fraternity of Communion and Liberation,” recognized by the Holy See in 1982 and led by the priest Fr. Luigi Giussani until his death, intends to be the cognizant, mature and engaged expression of the charism given by the Holy Spirit to the Church through Fr. Giussani, lived out in the experience of the Ecclesial Movement of Communion and Liberation.

Communion and Liberation traces its historical origins to 1954, when Fr. Luigi Giussani, a priest in the Ambrosian Diocese and religion teacher at Berchet High School in Milan, started an educational initiative among his young students. Over the years, and with no preconceived plan, Communion and Liberation spread organically, first throughout Italy, and then into Europe and the rest of the world, permeating the many spheres of social, cultural, and civil life.

The meaning of the movement is, at the deepest level, the recollection of the memory of Christ, lived out daily in the concrete circumstances of life, as a responsible journey to holiness. Its purpose is for men and women living in today’s society to attain maturity of faith.

The specific nature of the charism of Communion and Liberation may be described as follows:

- insistence on the memory of Christ as affirmation of the generative elements of the Christian experience, in that they give rise to the true image of man;
- insistence on the fact that the memory of Christ can only be generated within an experience of communion; and
- insistence on the fact that the memory of Christ inevitably tends to generate a visible and propositive communion in society.

As a contingent example of the dynamic of the great Christian method of incarnation, the Movement has always sought to carry out its “catholic” and “missionary” vocation by committing itself in the Church, with the Church and for the Church, in obedience to the Pope and Bishops, and in pursuit of the unity of Christians in every setting, as a sign of the resurrection of Christ for contemporary people.

“The Fraternity is an element of stability and completeness in the responsibility of the experience which is the life of the movement.”¹

¹ Letter from Fr. Giussani to all new members of the Fraternity. “*Letter from Father Giussani to the New Members of the Fraternity*,” in Giussani, Luigi, *The Fraternity of Communion and Liberation*, Milan: Società Cooperativa Editoriale Nuovo Mondo (2005), 256. https://www.fraternita.comunioneliberazione.org/Documenti/en-GB_LIBRO_BOOK%20OF%20FRATERNITY_INGLESE_OPERA_DEL_MOVIMENTO_Ing.pdf.

Article 1

1. The Fraternity of Communion and Liberation is a Universal Association of the Faithful generated by the charism given by the Holy Spirit to the Church through the priest Fr. Giussani, recognized by the Holy See, and constituted as a private juridic person, pursuant to Canons 298-311 and 321-329 CIC. Its purpose is to educate people in the faith and in bearing Christian witness in the world.

2. The Fraternity of Communion and Liberation (hereinafter “Fraternity” or “Association”) is headquartered in Milan, at Via Giuseppe De Notaris, no. 50.

Article 2

The Fraternity seeks to foster and promote personal engagement with the Christian experience, in light of the experience of the Ecclesial Movement of Communion and Liberation, in accordance with the tradition and Magisterium of the Catholic Church, so that each one may, in time, bring to fruition his or her own identity and vocation. This engagement is implemented and sustained within a lived communion, which renders the memory of the event of Christ an everyday experience, transfiguring the person’s existence to such a point that, in due time and ways, it impacts all of society.

Article 3

In accordance with the tradition and Magisterium of the Catholic Church, under the guidance of the Pope and Bishops, the members of the Fraternity participate in the life of the Church in their respective Dioceses and participate in bearing Christian witness in every context and condition of life.

Article 4

1. Central aspects and educational moments of the Fraternity include:

- the sacraments and the recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours as proposed by the Church;
- the Christian announcement and catechesis at the local level, in particular through the “School of Community” and the reading of and meditation on the Holy Scriptures and the texts of the Christian tradition and the Church Magisterium;
- attending the retreats and spiritual exercises (Advent, Lent, and annual exercises), led by the priests indicated by the Central Diaconia;
- cultural work as a public expression of and way of entering more deeply into one’s faith through the tools offered by the Fraternity;
- charitable action as education in the gratuitous service of others and as a form of personal engagement in society, through regular participation in community gestures of charity;
- missionary engagement as education in the meaning of the catholic nature of the Church;
- the commitment to directly contribute to the common fund of the Fraternity, as education in poverty and to testify to a communal way of conceiving of one’s assets.

These aspects and educational moments, in keeping with the indications of the Central Diaconia, constitute a permanent journey of formation for all members, pursuant to the specifications provided in the Directory.

2. The School of Community is the principal tool for maintaining a systematic relationship with the charism of the Movement. It involves personal work and weekly or twice monthly group



meetings to reflect on the writings of Fr. Giussani or the Church Magisterium, following the indications of the Central Diaconia. The meetings, led by the Representative of the relevant geographic area or by someone delegated by the Representative, shall focus on deep study of the texts, participants' reflections on the comparison between the texts and their own experience, and a summary by the leader.

3. The Representatives of geographic areas and persons delegated by them must participate in regular formation sessions offered by the Central Diaconia, pursuant to the provisions of the Directory.

Article 5

1. Membership in the Fraternity derives from the recognition that the charism given to the Church through Fr. Giussani and lived out in accordance with the experience of the Ecclesial Movement of Communion and Liberation is the path of one's own adult Christian vocation, that is, it is the authentic source of assistance in bringing about the purpose of the Church: holiness in the world.

2. The members of the Fraternity are those adults – priests, religious, or laypeople – without distinction between the sexes, who formally join the Association and have their applications accepted pursuant to Article 7.

3. Christian believers who are not Catholic may join the Fraternity and take on all duties compatible with their religious denomination. They may not, however, hold leadership roles, or vote or be a candidate for purposes of forming the General Assembly.

Article 6

Members of the Fraternity are asked to practice daily engagement in community life, as a means of dedicating themselves to the mission of the Church and the service of the Association, to achieve its constitutional purposes.

Article 7

1. People who wish to join the Fraternity shall submit, after a sufficient period of discernment, a formal application to the President stating that they share in the purposes of the Fraternity and commit to observe its Constitutions and to fully live out all its aspects and dimensions, as compatible with the duties associated with their station in life.

2. They shall also consent to the processing of their personal data as specified in the privacy policy that shall be provided to them.

3. Due to the nature of the Association, applying to join the Fraternity presupposes that applicants are actually participating in the Fraternity's educational initiatives.

4. Following the procedures laid out in the Directory, the Representative of the applicable geographic area shall verify and confirm applications to join the Fraternity. The Central Diaconia shall then make a decision concerning acceptance within three months from receiving the application. Membership in the Association starts at the time the decision is made.

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5. Members of an Institute of Consecrated Life or of a Society of Apostolic Life may only join the Fraternity after obtaining the written permission of their Superior.

Article 8

1. The central bodies of the Fraternity are the General Assembly, the Central Diaconia, the Executive Committee, and the President.

2. The meetings of the Diaconia and the Executive Committee may be carried out by conference call or videoconference in circumstances established by the Directory. Summons to the meetings shall be issued via any technological tools valid for legal purposes, at least 15 days prior to meetings for regular business and at least three days prior to meetings in case of urgent matters.

3. All members enrolled in the Fraternity for at least one year prior to date elections are announced may vote, directly or indirectly, in the election of the central bodies of the Fraternity. Elections shall be carried out pursuant to the provisions of these Constitutions and those of the Directory.

4. The Association promotes the equal access of men and women to elected positions.

5. All members enrolled in the Fraternity for at least one year prior to the date elections are announced may be elected to the central bodies of the Fraternity, within the limits outlined in these Constitutions and the Directory.

Article 9

1. The term for members of each of the governing bodies shall be five years.

2. The same individual may serve on one or more of the governing bodies for a maximum period of no more than 10 consecutive years.

3. After reaching the 10-year limit, an individual may only be reelected after a one-term vacancy period.

4. The provision in the previous paragraph shall not apply to a person elected President, as they may serve in that role regardless of the years already spent serving in other roles within the governing bodies.

5. A person who has served as President for a maximum period of 10 years may not serve in that position again. He or she may serve in other roles within the governing bodies, but only after a vacancy of two terms with respect to those roles.

Article 10

1. An Election Committee, appointed by the Central Diaconia pursuant to Article 15(2)(m), shall oversee that the election procedures of the Association are correctly implemented and investigate any complaints.

2. The Election Committee shall serve a three-year term.



3. The members of the Election Committee may not hold any position in the central governing bodies of the Fraternity while serving their term.

Article 11

For purposes of electing Delegates to the General Assembly, the Fraternity shall be divided into electoral districts, on a geographic basis, the delineation of which shall take into account both geographical differences and the number of enrolled members residing in each area. The division into districts, which shall be duly updated, shall be enshrined in the Directory and in the General Assembly Regulation adopted by the Central Diaconia.

Article 12

1. Every five years, the President shall announce the election of Delegates to the General Assembly, in a ratio of one Delegate for every 250 enrolled residents in each electoral district, rounded to the nearest unit. Members' residency shall be determined by the home address they provide to the Fraternity administrative offices.

2. Electoral districts with fewer than 250 enrollees shall, nevertheless, elect a Delegate.

3. All members of the Fraternity may actively vote directly and be elected within their electoral district, in the elections covered by this Article, without prejudice to the provisions of Article 5.3.

4. Each voter may indicate a maximum number of preferred candidates equal to half the number of seats assigned to his or her electoral district, rounded up to the nearest, higher unit where an odd number of seats is assigned.

5. Voting shall be free, secret, equal, personal, and non-delegable.

6. The election of Delegates to the General Assembly may be carried out in person or electronically, pursuant to the provisions laid out in the Directory and the General Assembly Regulation, and they may be preceded by a meeting of the enrolled members residing in each electoral district, according to the home address members provide to the administrative offices of the Fraternity.

Article 13

1. Every five years, after completion of the elections described in Article 12, the President shall convene the General Assembly to fulfill the duties described in Article 14.

2. The election of Delegates may be announced, and an Extraordinary General Assembly convened, in order to consider and render decisions concerning particularly urgent and important matters for the life of the Association, including modifications to the Constitutions and Directory. An Extraordinary General Assembly may be convened by the President, or at the request of an absolute majority of the members of the Central Diaconia.

Article 14

1. The General Assembly of the Fraternity shall consist of the Delegates elected pursuant to Article 12 as well as the sitting members of the Central Diaconia. The meetings and voting of the General Assembly shall be carried out exclusively in person.

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2. The General Assembly shall:

- a) elect the President and 15 members of the Central Diaconia pursuant to the provisions of paragraphs 3, 4, 5 and 6 of this Article;
- b) share in and verify the common journey of the Fraternity, the Christian experience of its members and their communities throughout the world, in faithfulness to the charism and to Church teaching, and define the educational and missionary objectives for the upcoming five-year period; and,
- c) by an absolute majority vote of those present, draft modifications to the Constitutions to be submitted to the Holy See for approval, and adopt or modify the Directory.

3. The President shall be elected by secret ballot. For a meeting to be valid for presidential election purposes, a quorum of two-thirds of the members of the General Assembly must be present. The President shall be elected by a two-thirds majority vote of those present. If three rounds of voting fail to elect a candidate, the Delegates shall choose between the two candidates who received the highest numbers of votes. For purposes of this round, an absolute majority of votes cast will suffice to determine the winner. All the members of the General Assembly shall be eligible for election, together with the outgoing President, subject to the limits described in Article 9.

4. The General Assembly shall elect 15 members of the Central Diaconia by secret ballot, of whom no fewer than five shall be residents of at least three countries other than Italy. All members of the General Assembly are eligible for election, subject to the limits described in Article 9.

5. The meetings during which the elections described in paragraphs 3 and 4 of this Article are held shall be presided over by the member of the General Assembly who has been enrolled longest in the Association. Subsequent meetings shall be presided over by the President.

6. For purposes of electing the 15 members of the Diaconia, each member of the General Assembly may indicate up to eight preferences.

7. The General Assembly shall be dissolved as soon as it has completed the tasks described in this Article. Its members are not subject to the term limits described in Article 9.

Article 15

1. The Central Diaconia of the Fraternity shall consist of:

- a) the President;
- b) 15 members elected by the General Assembly, no less than five of whom shall reside in at least three countries other than Italy;
- c) five members appointed from among the members of the Fraternity who have been enrolled for at least one year; and
- d) one priest of the Priestly Fraternity of the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo, one consecrated member of the Suore di Carità dell'Assunzione, and one male and one female consecrated lay member of the Memores Domini Association, appointed by the superiors of their respective organizations from among their members who are also enrolled in the Fraternity.



2. The Central Diaconia shall:

- a) govern the Association;
- b) promote the life and activities of the entire Fraternity;
- c) adopt programs and initiatives intended to ensure the growth of the Fraternity and its individual members, in accordance with the educational and missionary objectives defined by the General Assembly;
- d) manage the Association's assets;
- e) if it wishes, delegate some of the functions described in the above lettered provisions to the Executive Committee, establishing the contents and limits of the mandate and potentially how it should be exercised, issuing potential directives, and always reserving the right to make the delegated decisions itself;
- f) propose modifications to the Constitutions and the Directory to be submitted to the General Assembly for approval;
- g) adopt the General Assembly Regulation and other rules of implementation;
- h) approve the budget forecast, the final balance sheet of the Fraternity, and the related report;
- i) make decisions concerning the admission or separation of individual members of the Fraternity;
- j) ascertain and declare that a President has become permanently incapacitated;
- k) upon nomination by the President, appoint the members referred to in paragraph 1(c) of this Article;
- l) upon nomination by the President, elect the Vice President and three members of the Executive Committee from among its members, pursuant to Article 17;
- m) upon nomination by the President, elect the Secretary General, the Treasurer, the members of the Board of Auditors, the members of the Electoral Committee, the members of the body entrusted with the protection of minors and vulnerable adults, and any other committees;
- n) be consulted concerning the formation of the Presidential Council and informed of the members that constitute it and of its proceedings;
- o) if it wishes, designate, after due consultation and taking into account the elections of the General Assembly, Representatives for the geographical areas determined by the Diaconia itself. It shall also determine their specific duties and responsibilities. These Representatives shall promote the educational and missionary activities of the communities, oversee compliance with the Constitutions, and implement the Diaconia's decisions. They shall remain in their role for as long as the Diaconia sees fit to confirm them. In designating Representatives, the Diaconia shall favor turnover in the persons entrusted with the task;
- p) advise the President concerning the potential designation of Representatives for the various educational and missionary contexts (schools, universities, workplaces, and cultural, charitable and missionary contexts). These Representatives shall remain in their roles for as long as the President sees fit to confirm them, but not beyond the end of the term of the President who appointed them. These Representatives shall dedicate their efforts to bringing the work in their various spheres into harmony with the charism of the Association, in compliance with the Constitutions and the guidance of the Diaconia.

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3. In the event of the death, refusal, resignation, or permanent incapacity of one of the members described in paragraph 1(b) of this Article, the unelected person who received the most votes shall take his or her place, and shall remain in office for the duration of the term of the person they replaced.

4. In the event of the death, refusal, resignation, or permanent incapacity of one of the members described in paragraph 1(c) of this Article, the Central Diaconia shall, upon nomination by the President, appoint another, who shall remain in office for the duration of the term of the person they replaced.

5. In order for meetings of the Central Diaconia to be valid, a quorum of an absolute majority of members must be present, potentially including virtually. An absolute majority vote in favor by those in attendance is required for the decisions of the Central Diaconia, except for the matters described in section 2(e), (f), (g), (j), (k), (l) and (o) of this Article, which require a two-thirds majority vote of those in attendance.

6. Voting concerning persons shall be by secret ballot.

7. The Central Diaconia shall meet frequently enough to meet the needs of the Association and its members, to carry out the functions assigned to it under the Constitutions, and in any case at least four times annually. It shall be convened by the President or upon the written request of an absolute majority of the Diaconia itself.

Article 16

1. The President shall be elected by the General Assembly pursuant to Article 14(3).

2. The President shall:

- a) guide the life and activity of the entire Fraternity, in communion and cooperation with the other members of the Central Diaconia and in a spirit of service;
- b) propose initiatives and programs intended to ensure the growth of the Fraternity, its communities, and all its members to the Central Diaconia and, in the areas and within the limits of its mandates, to the Executive Committee;
- c) coordinate and ensure that the institutional activities of the Fraternity are carried out in an orderly and regular manner;
- d) ensure the execution of the decisions of the General Assembly, the Central Diaconia and the Executive Committee;
- e) convene and preside over the meetings of the General Assembly, the Central Diaconia, the Presidential Council and the Executive Committee;
- f) represent the Association for all ecclesiastical purposes;
- g) in case of necessity or emergency, adopt measures falling under the Central Diaconia's competences and/or those delegated to the Executive Committee, submitting them for evaluation by these bodies at the first opportune meeting;
- h) suggest nominees for the positions of Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary General, and members of the Board of Auditors, Executive Committee and various other committees to the Central Diaconia;
- i) suggest five nominees to the Central Diaconia for the appointments described in Article 15(1)(c) and 15(2)(k);



- j) after consulting the Central Diaconia, choose a priest qualified to carry out the ministry to serve as Spiritual Advisor to the Fraternity;
- k) after consulting the Central Diaconia, potentially nominate Representatives for the various contexts described in Article 15(2)(p); and
- l) inform the Central Diaconia of the members who shall make up the Presidential Council and of the Council's proceedings.

Article 17

1. The Executive Committee shall be composed of:
 - a) the President;
 - b) the Vice President; and
 - c) three additional members, elected by the Central Diaconia from among its members.
2. The Executive Committee shall exercise the functions delegated to it by the Central Diaconia pursuant to Article 15(2)(e).
3. The adoption of decisions by the Executive Committee requires an absolute majority vote of its members in favor.
4. The Executive Committee shall meet frequently enough to properly carry out the functions delegated to it. It shall be convened by the President or upon the written request of an absolute majority of its members. The President shall preside over it.

Article 18

1. The President may, after consulting the Central Diaconia, form a Presidential Council.
2. The Presidential Council shall have a purely advisory role and shall be composed of members appointed by the President, with notice to the Central Diaconia, and of the members of the Executive Committee.
3. The Presidential Council and its members shall serve for as long as the President wishes to confirm them, but not beyond the end of the term of the President who appointed them.

Article 19

1. The Central Diaconia shall elect a Vice President, nominated by the President, from among its own members.
2. In the event of the absence or temporary incapacity of the President, the Vice President shall perform the President's functions.
3. In the event of the death, refusal, resignation, or permanent incapacity of the President, occurring within the first 36 months of his or her term, the Vice President shall take his or her place on an interim basis and shall, within 90 days, call a new, extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly, pursuant to Articles 12, 13 and 14.
The General Assembly shall elect a new President and a new Central Diaconia for a five-year term.

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4. In the event of the death, refusal, resignation, or permanent incapacity of the President, occurring after the 36th month from the start of his or her term, the Vice President shall become the President until the end of the previous President's term.

5. The Vice President shall be a rightful member of the Executive Committee.

Article 20

1. The Secretary General shall be nominated by the President and elected by the Central Diaconia.

2. In accordance with the directives of the Central Diaconia and the President, the Secretary General shall:

- a) draft accurate minutes of the meetings of the Central Diaconia, the Presidential Council, if formed, and the Executive Committee and submit them for approval by these bodies at the end of their meetings or at the next meeting at the latest;
- b) maintain and update the membership register;
- c) maintain the Fraternity archives;
- d) handle official communications on behalf of the Fraternity.

3. The Secretary General shall attend the meetings of the governing bodies of the Fraternity as necessary to carry out the duties relating to the role, without voting rights.

Article 21

1. The legal representative of the Fraternity for civil matters shall be the Treasurer, who shall be nominated by the President and elected by the Central Diaconia.

2. The Treasurer shall draft the budget forecast, the final balance sheet and the related report, to be submitted to the Central Diaconia for approval after receiving clearance by the Board of Auditors.

3. The Treasurer shall attend the meetings of the governing bodies of the Fraternity as necessary to carry out the duties relating to the role, without voting rights.

4. The President, after consulting with the Central Diaconia, may appoint an *ad hoc* representative of the Fraternity for civil purposes in specific or unusual cases.

5. The President is the legal representative of the Fraternity for ecclesial purposes.

Article 22

1. The President, after consulting the Central Diaconia, shall appoint a priest to serve as Spiritual Advisor to the Fraternity, with the consent of his Superior (see Canon 324 § 2).

2. The Spiritual Advisor shall oversee the internal life and educational and apostolic activity of the Fraternity and ensure that they comply with the faith, morality, and rules of the Church.

3. The President of the Fraternity may delegate the Spiritual Advisor to maintain relations with the Holy See with respect to individual, specific matters.



4. The Spiritual Advisor shall attend the meetings of the General Assembly and Central Diaconia in an observer capacity, without voting rights.

5. The Spiritual Advisor shall serve a five-year, renewable term.

Article 23

The Fraternity shall take care to run its institutional activities in harmony and compliance with the directives of the competent Church Authorities. It shall, in the first place, offer them the cooperation of the members of the Fraternity.

Article 24

The Fraternity is committed to preventing abuse and acting with respect for human dignity. It shall publish its own Rules for this purpose, approved by the Central Diaconia, and establish a body for the protection of minors and vulnerable adults.

Article 25

The Fraternity shall build its own financial assets through the regular contributions that its members commit to making on a periodic basis, as well as from occasional donations, offerings, gifts, or acts of generosity, including from non-members, and it shall have the power to purchase, sell, and manage them in keeping with Church and civil law.

Article 26

The Association may directly promote activities that it considers to be in harmony with its nature and useful for pursuing its constitutional purposes. The Association may also assist with and support, including economically, activities organized by others that meet the same criteria.

Article 27

The Association takes no responsibility for the initiatives of its members at any level, except insofar as they have been approved by an express and specific decision of the Central Diaconia.

Article 28

In the event that an individual wishes to renounce membership in the Fraternity or a constitutional appointment within it, he or she must communicate this intention in writing to the President, providing the reasons thereof. The renunciation must be accepted or rejected by the Central Diaconia, within three months of its submission, by means of written communication to the person concerned.

Article 29

1. Persons who have made no contribution of any kind to the life of the Association for a period of five years, committed serious acts contrary to the teachings or rules of the Catholic Church or harmful to the dignity of others or the good name of the Fraternity, or seriously infringed the Rules for the protection of minors and vulnerable adults may be dismissed from the Fraternity.

2. In such cases, upon recommendation by the President, the Central Diaconia shall examine the facts of the case with fraternal care, and with respect for members' rights to a hearing and a defense. It shall then render a decision by secret ballot. The decision shall be communicated in writing to the person concerned.

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Article 30

1. A Directory approved by the General Assembly shall implement these Constitutions.
2. Matters not provided for in these Constitutions shall be governed by the applicable Canon Law provisions.

Article 31

If the Association should dissolve for any reason or if, by law, it may not remain in possession of all or a part of its assets, the whole of its assets or the part in question shall pass to the *Memores Domini* Lay Association, recognized by decree of the Pontifical Council for the Laity on 8 December 1988, or, if said association cannot accept them, to another entity chosen by the Central Diaconia. In such an event, a two-thirds majority vote of present members is required.

