

CHAPTER PROCEEDINGS 2024

(CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS BROTHERS' SOCIETY)



**THE COMPETENCE
TO SEE AND
THE COURAGE
TO ACT**



**BROTHERS OF HOLY CROSS
ST. JOSEPH PROVINCE
BANGLADESH**



CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS
OFFICE OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

11 September 2024

Brother Ripon James Gomes, C.S.C.
Provincial, St. Joseph Province
97 Asad Avenue, Mohammadpur
Dhaka-1207, BANGLADESH

Dear Brother Ripon,

On behalf of Br. Nee Wayoe, C.S.C., Fourth Assistant, I want to extend our gratitude for the warm welcome and hospitality you showed him throughout your recent Provincial Chapter. He spoke highly of the sense of brotherhood and fraternity he experienced during his time at the Chapter. This is a great tribute to you and your Province.

At its recent meeting, the General Council studied the decisions of your Provincial Chapter. The Council also appreciated your clarifications in response to my September 1st email. In light of this, the Council has approved the submitted Proceedings with the following modifications:

1. Realizing there was an error, we accept the modification made to Decree 1 regarding the composition of the next Provincial Chapter. We have accepted the revised chart you submitted for the composition of delegates by age groups.
2. Since it contradicts Statute 38a of our Constitutions, we ask that you modify the second sentence of Recommendation a3 under the Religious Life Committee to read as follows: “Finally professed Brothers should wear the St. Joseph medal with the habit.” Because your long-standing custom of the



habit is different, you have requested to be dispensed from this Statute. However, I do not have the authority to grant this dispensation, as the Statute was approved by the General Chapter. I understand, however, that Brothers will continue to follow their established practices.

With these revisions, and in conformity with Statute 110(9), I authorize you to promulgate the decisions of the 2024 Provincial Chapter of the St. Joseph Province. Once the Proceedings are published, I would ask that you send at least two copies to the General Administration for our records.

The Provincial Chapter represents a special moment in the life of a Province as it “discerns and decides the largest issues of the common good” (C7, 95). The decisions of the Chapter—in the form of its decrees, recommendations, and exhortations—are means to attain the holiness you desire as consecrated religious men. I pray that as you live out these decisions in the next three years, you will grow steadily in holiness and unity.

As the St. Joseph Province anticipates the approaching Jubilee Year for the Church, may the graces received from your Chapter encourage the brothers to renew their trust in Divine Providence as they look to a hope-filled future.

As always, please be assured of my prayerful support.

Fraternally in Holy Cross,



Brother Paul Bednarczyk, C.S.C.
Superior General



Message from Provincial Superior

Dear Confreres,

With thanks and gratitude, I like to extend my heartfelt thanks to God for showering His knowledge, wisdom, guidance, and blessings upon all the members and delegates who participated in the last Provincial Chapter-24 from 18-22 July at the Provincial House, Dhaka. The theme of the Chapter was “Competence to See and Courage to Act” (Const 2:14), which guided and led us to see the world in a new way and in the context of Bangladeshi reality.

This chapter has been another milestone in the province's history and the Congregation because our Province has marked 25 years of its Silver Jubilee as a Province with enormous blessings, merits, achievements, and with a few shortcomings. It has helped all the capitulants to revisit and redesign our Vocations, Vision, Mission, and Identity as a Religious-Brother in the Church and society.

In addition, I thank all the delegates who participated in the chapter and shared their views, thoughts, deliberations, and ideas for better discussion and decision-making in the form of Decrees, Recommendations, and Statements. I hope these legislations help us live and serve better as Holy Cross confrere in our mission what our Founders- Fathers Jacques-François Dujarié and Blessed Basil Anthony Mary Moreau envisioned for us to live and witness in the Church and society.

My appreciation goes to Bro. Bertrant Nee Woyoe, C.S.C. Fourth General Assistant and representative of the General Administration, Rome, for his valuable presence and encouragement in the Chapter. Indeed, I am grateful to Fr. Simon Fernandez, C.S.C., Province of North East India, for his professional and adroit moderating of the Chapter. I am also thankful to Bro. Bikash Victor D'Rozario, C.S.C. for being the assistant moderator. Similarly, I am grateful to Fr. George Kamol Rozario, C.S.C. Provincial Superior, Sacred Heart of Jesus Province, Bangladesh, and Fr. P. José E. Ahumada, C.S.C. District of Chile, for their presence in the Chapter. Above all, I thank Very Rev. Bro. Paul Bednarczyk, C.S.C. Superior General, Rome, and his assistant generals for not only approving the legislations of the Provincial Chapter – 2024 but also appreciating the outcome of the Chapter and assuring to journey with us.

Let's pray for one another that God may bless us, St. Joseph protects us, Fr. Dujarié and Blessed Moreau lead us, and Mother of Sorrows intercedes for us so that we may live the legacy of Holy Cross based on the Gospel values and the Chapter Proceedings to be a better religious and serve better to those who have been entrusted to us.

Brotherly in Holy Cross

Ripon, ese .

Bro. Ripon James Gomes, C.S.C.

Provincial Superior

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Vocation and Formation Committee

Preamble:

Jesus called the twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases then he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God --- the disciples left and travelled through all the villages, preaching the good news and healing people everywhere. (LK 9:1-3, 6)

As Jesus called his disciples, instructed them, empowered them, and sent them out, we are called by God, empowered and sent out. To effectively fulfill the mission of being sent out to proclaim the kingdom, it is imperative that we form ourselves to be competent in our mission. Human formation and spiritual formation are significant components that indicate healthy growth and maturity to undertake the task of discipleship. We need to foster vocations and engage in a strong, quality formation program. As humans, we are connected to each other. And as religious people, we come not just as servants but as neighbors, to be with them and of them. As Christ did, we must care with love and compassion for all those who suffer. Besides, we should not limit our outreach to simply being appropriate; it should challenge us to courageous action in solidarity with the poor. We do this with hope, confident in the power that flows from the Risen Christ, who has fully revealed the integral dignity of every man and woman.

In our experience with fellow humans, we see inequalities among individuals and groups oppression, and the social, political, and economic structures at the root of these evils. Therefore, in formation, we strive to prepare candidates with sensitivity to the reality of injustice and oppression in the world. Our formation includes development of a person's capacity to relate to others, the ability to form genuine friendships, and the ability to achieve

affective maturity. Candidates are nurtured so that they grow in all dimensions of their lives. The basic motivation of candidates should be generous giving to humanity, as shown by the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Like the disciples, we manifest God's presence through our service. Therefore, it is important that we slow down and listen attentively as people, young and old, seek to be heard. God gives us multiple opportunities to encourage those discouraged and downhearted as we give our lives to build a more just world and bring joy into a suffering humanity. Our formation develops discernment, spiritual accompaniment, and self-awareness to support the maturation process and the skills and training needed for fruitful apostolic service. It follows the great leadership lesson on humanity and courage taught by Jesus, who humbled himself to be our humble and true leader.

DECREES

1. Province Formation Coordinator and Committee: (Handbook)

The Provincial shall appoint a Formation Coordinator for the Province with at least two years of formation work experience. He shall perform the duties prescribed in the Vocation and Formation Guidelines of the Congregation and the Province. The Province Formation Committee shall consist of the Formation Coordinator along with all the formation personnel and two or three co-opt members from the province.

2. Full-time Province Vocation Promotion Coordinator: (Handbook)

The Provincial shall appoint a Brother for the full-time Province Vocation Promotion Coordinator. He shall coordinate all vocation promotion activities in the province as stated in the formation guidelines and as needed at the time.

3. Vocation Promotion Plan:

The Chapter decrees that the province Vocation Promotion Coordinator, along with the collaboration of the local Vocation Promoters of different regions/areas/localities, shall formulate a short-term and long-term plan to promote Vocation Promotion work smoothly.

4. New Scholasticate Building Committee:

The chapter decrees that a committee shall be formed to study the feasibility of a new house for the Scholastic Brothers.

5. Evaluation for the Program of Formation Houses:

According to the congregational vocation and formation guide, the chapter decrees that the program of every formation house shall be evaluated every five years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Training Program for Formation Personnel:

The chapter recommends that Brothers who are working in the formation houses or who are about to work in the formation houses undergo proper and relevant formation training.

2. Collaboration with Indian Confreres:

The chapter recommends that St. Joseph Province, Dhaka, Bangladesh, be open to welcoming the Scholastic Brothers of St. Andre Province, India, in our formation program at Sterling Towers, Chennai, India, if the province is interested in sending them.

3. The Ceremony of the Perpetual Profession:

The chapter recommends that the provincial and his council fix the month, week, and day for the ceremony of the Perpetual Profession of the Brothers. It should be held in either in a parish or other suitable place. The profession ceremony should be arranged in a simple and befitting manner. (Handbook with modification)

4. A Suitable Formative Environment in Local Houses/Residences (Handbook):

The chapter recommends that a more appropriate formative environment be created in the local houses/residences to enhance prayer life, fellowship, and common living so that the scholastic Brothers/formees may witness and be strengthened to deepen their call to the Brotherhood while engaging in their community or apostolic experiences.

5. Multi-Cultural Aspects in the Formation (Handbook):

This chapter recommends that the environment of our formation houses be integrated with different cultures, both Indigenous and international.

6. Recruitment of Candidates for Holy Cross Juniorate: Nagari and Rajshahi:

The chapter recommends that the recruitment of candidates for Holy Cross Juniorate, Nagari, be from the dioceses of Dhaka, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Chottogram, and Barisal; and the dioceses of Rajshahi, Dinajpur, and Khulna for Holy Cross Juniorate, Rajshahi. However, the formation committee can decide otherwise if necessary.

7. Spiritual Directors: The chapter recommends that the Brothers extend their assistance to the formation houses after being academically qualified as spiritual directors to assist help the Scholastic Brothers and formee in their overall growth.

8. Psychological Assessment in different formation levels:

The chapter recommends that professional psychologists conduct assessments for the candidates at different formation levels according to the candidates' ages.

9. Leadership training in all formation levels:

The chapter recommends that foundational leadership and mentoring training be arranged and taken care of at every level of formation.

10. Devotion to Our Holy Founders and Holy Cross Prominent Figures:

The chapter recommends that candidates in formation be encouraged to read, learn, and meditate on the lives of Holy Cross Founders and Prominent Figures.

11. Language Study:

The chapter recommends that the formation houses create a conducive environment and arrange various language-related programs for the candidates to learn one or more languages, especially English, in addition to their native language, for effective communication in the mission and ministry.

12. Local Vocation Promoter:

The Chapter recommends that every region/area/locality propose a name for the Local Vocation promoter to the Province Vocation promotion coordinator. Those names of the Local Vocation Promoter from different regions/areas/localities shall be brought to the notice of the Provincial for discussion or any alternation and thus for final approval.

13. Prayer and Fasting for Vocation:

The Chapter recommends that monthly adoration of the Blessed Sacrament be held in every local community for an increase of vocations to the province, and observe a day of fasting for more vocations once a year.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. The requirements for formation personnel are:

- a) that they are perpetually professed;
- b) that they show aptitude for formation work;
- c) that they have two years of experience in ministry and
- d) that the director and assistant director provide training/courses in some aspects of formation work.

2. Preparation for Perpetual Profession:

All the scholastic Brothers will undergo an intensive program in preparation for the petition for the final profession, as per the directive of the congregational formation handbook. A special spiritual session and a one-month retreat should be arranged for those Brothers who are in the process of making the petition for final vows.

3. Immediate Preparation for Perpetual Profession:

For immediate preparation for the Perpetual Profession, an 8-day retreat should be arranged.

4. Formation Stages:

a. Holy Cross Juniorate, Nagari and Holy Cross Juniorate, Rajshahi

b. Post SSC/HSC -

- i. **Come and See Program** one month after the S.S.C. Examination (Diang)
- ii. **Come and See Program** for two weeks after the H.S.C. Examination and at a suitable time after Graduation.
- iii. One-Year Special Program (Holy Cross Aspirancy, Narinda)

c. Holy Cross Aspirancy (Narinda):

- i. Higher Secondary/Technical studies
- ii. Community Experience after the HSC examination for 3/4 months
- iii. Immediate Preparation for Novitiate Program for 3/4 months

d. Holy Cross Novitiate: as per Constitutions.

e. Pobitra Krush Jnanatapasalaya (Bangladesh and India):

Bachelor Degree or Honors /Nursing Training/Medical study/Technical Study/ one-year community experience/ Diploma in Philosophy, Theology and other studies 6/7 years.

STATEMENTS

The Chapter of St. Joseph Province appreciates and expresses its heartfelt gratitude to:

- The Brothers of Holy Cross, St. André Bessette Province, India, for renting us their house in Chennai for a house of formation for our scholastic Brothers.
 - Holy Spirit Major Seminary, Banani, Dhaka, for accepting our Scholastic Brothers for a Diploma in Philosophy and Theology studies.
 - The Sacred Heart of Jesus Province, Dhaka, Bangladesh, for generously accommodating our Novices at Holy Cross Novitiate, Sagardi, Barisal.
 - The Canadian Province, Montreal, Midwest Province, and US Province of Priests and Brothers, Indiana, for accepting our Brothers for higher studies and mission work.
-

RELIGIOUS LIFE COMMITTEE

PREAMBLE

God the Father has called us to follow Christ Jesus on the path of Consecrated Brotherhood through the vows of Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience. Living these vows as Jesus did makes our spirituality truly evangelical.

We, the consecrated religious Brothers, are called to be "*A city set on a hill that cannot be hidden*" (*Matthew 5:14*). Our vocation is a divine call to be Brothers of Christ, rooted in Jesus Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit.

As Holy Cross Religious Brothers of Jesus Christ and of one another in Jesus Christ, we are called to live in community. The Brothers in our Brotherhood have a mutual obligation to be true Brothers to each other, modeled after Jesus Christ washing the feet of His disciples (*John 13:15*). Fraternity and faith sharing are essential to strengthening our bond of community life.

The theme of our Chapter, "*The competence to see and the courage to act,*" calls us to renew our dedication to a life of personal and communal prayer, sacrifice, solidarity with the poor, daily meditation, Holy Mass, and other devotions. These practices reorient our lives to align more closely with God's will.

Jesus Himself advised that the only way to overcome temptation and certain kinds of demons (*Mk 9:29*) is through constant and enduring prayer. When we perform our ministerial services in the spirit of prayer and the Holy Eucharist, they become sacred offerings to God. Without prayer and regular spiritual exercises, our ministries risk becoming merely social services.

In many parts of the globe, the first proclamation of the Gospel has the face of consecrated Women and men who take on the Lord's mandate with great commitment and devotion to their lives: "*Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation*" (*Mk*

16:15). The chapter calls us to go to the peripheries and courageously play a prophetic role in the Church. We pledge to live our consecrated religious life in being and doing—praying, teaching, preaching, and healing—joyfully at the service of God’s people.

DECREES:

1. Suffrages:

Each community of the Brothers in the province shall observe a day of prayer, including a Mass said and three days of rituals of having no meat or fish on the death of a member of Saint Joseph Province. A Mass shall be celebrated on the death anniversary of the member of Saint Joseph Province. At the death of a member of the immediate family of a Religious of St. Joseph Province, three Masses shall be celebrated for the deceased by the local community of the Religious and a single Mass by other communities. During the annual retreat a Mass shall be celebrated for the benefactors, living and dead.

2. Handling Funds: (Handbook)

All Brothers handling funds other than house and school funds shall get prior permission from the provincial administration for their purpose and use; thereafter, they shall give detailed reports of the sources and expenditure of these funds every year.

3. Participation in Religious Exercises:

All Brothers shall take every necessary step to arrange a prayerful atmosphere in the chapels of Brothers’ residences. They shall actively participate in regular spiritual exercises (Daily Prayers, Holy Eucharist, Adoration to the Blessed Sacrament, Holy Rosary, Retreat, Confession, Spiritual Reading, etc.) to deepen and strengthen their spiritual lives. All Brothers shall lead themselves in communal and personal reflection on their consecrated poverty, celibacy, obedience, simplicity of lifestyle, and standard of living in the community.

4. Cemetery Committee:

The provincial and his council shall form a committee to investigate the possibility of a province cemetery in Parwan or any other suitable place in the near future and report to the council body to take immediate action to implement it. This committee will also manage the portion of the cemetery designated to the Brothers of Holy Cross in Wari Christian Cemetery.

5. Safeguarding policy for the St. Joseph Province:

The provincial and his council shall form a committee to prepare the safeguarding policy for the St. Joseph Province. The committee shall arrange some awareness programs or symposiums introducing this safeguarding policy to the Brothers, novices, and aspirants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Suffrages:

The chapter recommends that each community of the Brothers in the province observe a day of prayer, offer a Mass said on the death of each member of the Brothers' provinces and mixed provinces of the USA and Canada who served in Bangladesh as missionaries.

2. Establishment of a Consecrated Life Committee and Guidelines:

The chapter recommends the establishment of a Consecrated Life Committee with responsibilities to include, but not be limited to:

- a) Adapting some province-wide devotions or prayer practices, providing a process for personal and communal reflection on fidelity to daily prayer, meditation, regular spiritual direction, confession, reconciliation, and individual, extended annual retreats;
- b) Reviewing and implementing the existing "A Reflection Guide" for Ongoing Religious Renewal in Holy Cross (Published in 2018);

- c) Exploring ways in which the province can train younger religious in Holy Cross spirituality, history, and charism; and
- d) Promoting ongoing reflection on the Vocation, Identity, and Mission of the Holy Cross Brothers in the church in the light of the documents *Vita Consecrata*.

The Consecrated Life Committee will take care of these above-mentioned measures and assist the provincial administrator in renewing the province's commitment to spiritual exercises and community life.

3. Metal Cross and Anchor, St. Joseph Medal, and Habit: (Handbook)

The chapter recommends that:

- a) The metal Cross with anchor emblem be used by the Brothers, specifically at secular functions and programs. The Brothers should wear the metal Cross with anchor with the habit until their final profession, and all the "*finally professed Brothers should wear the * St. Joseph medal with the habit*" (*Statute 38 a*).
- b) The habit be worn by all the Brothers at all religious functions in the school, community, and parish wherever and whenever appropriate.

4. Number of Brothers in each local Community:

The chapter strongly recommends that a minimum number of three Brothers be assigned to each community to practice a healthy community life and to increase better service to the people.

5. Privacy and Confidentiality of House/Residence:

The chapter recommends that each house and community safeguard the privacy (restricted times and places) and confidentiality of the community and its members.

*However, due to the long-standing custom and established practices in Bangladesh, Brothers may continue wearing Anchor with the habit.

6. Deepening Relationship with the other Units of Holy Cross:

"Our Association is a visible imitation of the Holy Family wherein Jesus, Mary and Joseph, notwithstanding their difference in dignity, were one at heart by their unity of thoughts and uniformity of conduct." - *Moreau Circular Letter 14*. To promote a deepening of the relationship with the other units of Holy Cross, the chapter recommends that combined programs, sessions, celebrations and even new apostolate be continued and other new ways explored.

7. Christmas and Easter: (Handbook)

The chapter recommends that the Brothers in local houses join at least one community meal on Christmas Day and Easter Day in their respective community houses or parish houses.

8. Local Chapter:

The chapter recommends that the members of local houses find ways to improve the quality of the local chapter by cordial and candid sharing. The members of the attached community should join the Local Chapter. At the weekly local chapter, members should share Bible reading, our ministries, Constitutions, Circular Letters, Encyclical and contemporary issues, etc. The local house may invite resource persons occasionally to stimulate a deeper sharing of religious values.

9. Jubilee Celebration and Renewal Program:

The chapter recommends that the jubilee (Silver & Golden) of Religious Profession for a Brother be celebrated in a befitting manner and that the Jubilee Celebrant be given an opportunity to have spiritual sessions/retreats or renewal programs in any of the counties or places of India/ Philippines/ Montreal/ Le Mas/ Holy Land/ or wherever feasible so that they may be enlightened spiritually for celebrating the Jubilee Year.

10. Sabbatical Year:

The Chapter recommends that a Brother over fifty/sixty years should be given an opportunity to have a sabbatical program for a certain period on the occasion of his Sabbatical Year, wherever feasible within or outside the country, to refresh life.

11. Formation and Training Program for Local Superiors:

The chapter recommends that a Religious Brother be required a formation and training program before he begins service as a local superior or director. Topics to be covered include, but are not limited to:

- a) Understanding the legitimate authority and responsibility of being a superior or director, including the importance of maintaining a balanced approach to the role;
- b) Highlighting the importance of ensuring pastoral care for house members;
- c) Reviewing the Ethical Standards Guidelines in the Congregation of Holy Cross;
- d) Identifying Province's standards, expectations, and bases for interventions;
- e) Understanding the importance of and the means for developing and maintaining a high quality of local community life; and
- f) Ensuring that house chapters periodically discuss the Constitutions (S 43).

12. Guidelines for Superiors and Directors:

The chapter recommends that house Superiors/Directors be aware of each person's total well-being, remembering that religious community is mainly a union of human beings and safeguarding relationships is a priority concern. All house superiors/directors will meet all the members of their respective houses individually at least once a year. They will

- a) Be responsible for the daily, monthly, and annual schedule and ensure active participation of the members;
- b) Take special care to regulate house budgets and incidental expenses other than monthly allowances;
- c) Supervise the house obedience, house chronicles, archives, and News Notes;

- d) Regulate necessary permissions, give proper guidance, and share information with the house members;
- e) Be responsible for the conditions, cleanliness, and maintenance of the Brothers' house/residence, utility bills, and property and safeguard the privacy of the house;
- f) Share important matters affecting the whole community with the community members before making a decision. If the house/residence superior/director wants to take any such decision involving expenses of more than BDT 10,000/such a matter should be discussed in the House Chapter;
- g) Encourage the members of the house to read Constitutions, Statues, Chapter Proceedings, Circular Letters or Messages from the Provincial and Generalate, and the Encyclicals from the Holy See and to be involved in the pastoral work in the local parish;
- h) Attend the Half-Yearly or Annual Meetings of Local Superiors and Directors regularly; and
- i) Reduce arrangement of social hours in the community and discourage members from extending frequent individual invitations to families and attending social hours outside.

13. Guidelines for Ongoing Formation:

In accordance with the constitutions and statutes of the congregation, it is recommended that each Brother, for his development in continued formation, take special care in the following matters:

- a) Being faithful to the daily examination of conscience, spiritual reading, office of the hour, meditation, visiting the Blessed Sacrament, private devotions, praying the rosary, regular spiritual direction, and sacrament of reconciliation;
- b) Participating in programs on religious and human development and joining various prayer movements, such as Charismatic Renewal and Basic Christian Community (BCC).

- c) Participating in a spiritual renewal program within or outside the country following each ten-year period after final profession;
- d) Participating occasionally in various forums to be able to strengthen their religious life and apostolic commitment;
- e) Participating in arranged psycho-spiritual sessions when over 20 years of final profession;
- f) Participating in more arranged age-group gatherings for personal sharing in view of personal growth; and
- g) Making collaborative efforts for arranging ongoing formation programs with the Holy Cross Priests and Sisters in Bangladesh and India wherever and whenever possible.

The Chapter recommends forming an Ongoing Formation Committee, which will help the provincial and his council to take care of these matters.

14. Designated fund or a budget for Ongoing Formation Program:

The Chapter recommends creating a designated fund or allocating a budget yearly to run the Ongoing Formation Program effectively.

15. Inter-Generational and Multicultural Living:

The chapter recommends that the province's members emphasize more intergenerational living, multicultural living, and Holy Cross spirituality in the local community and during common gatherings. This may also include reflection and dialogue on the vow of poverty, simplicity of lifestyle, and the standard of living in the Province.

16. Use of Cellphones, Social Media:

The chapter strongly recommends that Brothers be more responsible users of cell phones and social media. Brothers should refrain from using cell phones and social media during community meals and gatherings. In addition, Brothers should be more

prudent and aware of sharing individual activities, posting various photos and videos, and commenting or messaging on social media.

17. St. Joseph Shrine:

The chapter recommends building a Shrine of St. Joseph with a good structural plan in the Bhawal area to increase laypeople's and Brothers' devotion to St. Joseph, the patron of the Holy Cross Brothers. The chapter also recommends restoring the St. Joseph Oratory on Placid's premises.

STATEMENT

1. We appreciate the provincial's and his council's for taking necessary measures to ensure a successful Canonical Visit in 2023 and satisfactory reports.
 2. We thank the province and all the Brothers for the fruitful celebration of the 25th anniversary (Silver Jubilee) of Province status regionally in different educational institutions and commonly at St. Joseph Provincial House in 2024.
 3. We thank the provincial and his council for embarking on the second Juniorate Program at Rajshahi and creating an Educational Charitable Fund as the hallmark of the Silver Jubilee of St. Joseph Province.
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APOSTOLIC LIFE COMMITTEE

PREAMBLE

Our mission is to preach the Good News through healing, teaching, and preaching and our life witnesses, as “.... Jesus went about the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity (Mathew 9: 35). Pope Francis says,

The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness, and loneliness. With Christ, joy is constantly born anew. In this Exhortation, I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to get on upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come (Evangelii Gaudium, 1).

Our founder had a dream that we become prophets to assist marginalized, afflicted, poor, and needy people. Following his dream, we are serving these groups in Bangladesh. Our Constitution says, “Our concern for the dignity of every human being as God’s Cherished child directs our care to victims of every injury: prejudice, famine, warfare, ignorance, infidelity, abuse, natural calamity” (Constitution 2:15). We are aware that the cries of the earth and of the poor have become even louder and more painful in recent years. Let us continue to grow in the awareness that we all live in a common home as members of a single family.

“A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.”

According to the synod of Bishops, The Spirit invites us to take a few steps to grow in our “journeying together”? such as – ‘companion on the journey, listening, speaking out celebration, sharing responsibility for a common mission, dialogue in the church and society, authority and participation, ecumenism, discerning and deciding, and forming ourselves in synodality.”

(Synod of Bishops; for a Synodal Church; Official Handbook; Sept. 7, 2021)

As Brothers of Holy Cross, we need to open our eyes and awaken our hearts, so that we can continue to fulfill our founder's vision and mission to keep the spirit of joy within us and share the same with others in view of spreading the Good News for the Kingdom of God.

We, the Brothers, commit ourselves to live the religious life according to the ideals and traditions set by our Founder and the Constitutions, giving due consideration to the cultures and realities of our country and the international nature of our Congregation.

Mission Statement:

We, the Brothers of Holy Cross of the St. Joseph Province, Bangladesh, commit ourselves to live the religious life according to the ideals and traditions set by our Founder and the Constitutions, giving due consideration to the cultures and realities of our country and the international nature of our Congregation.

- a) We commit ourselves to developing a meditative life of personal and community prayer in the manner of the Asian people and the universal Church.
- b) We commit to fostering a supportive and fraternal community and shall strive to collaborate more closely with the other members of the Holy Cross Family.
- c) We commit ourselves to a preferential option for the historically underserved, which calls us to adopt a simple lifestyle. In our apostolates, the Adivasi (Indigenous) peoples, the poor, and the "*Anawim*" of our society shall always be our priority. In our apostolic discernment, we remain open to the possibility that the reflection and work of an individual or group may be prophetic to us.

- d) We commit ourselves to promoting religious and human values such as LOVE, JUSTICE, PEACE, JOY, HOPE, RECONCILIATION, and PROTECTION OF MOTHER EARTH.
- e) We commit ourselves to continue to work in education and youth ministries. In these ministries and apostolates, we shall try to impart spiritual, social, and moral values to all those with whom we work.
- f) We commit ourselves to continue our dedication to the church in Bangladesh at the parish and diocesan levels, and we shall do our part in implementing the Apostolic and Pastoral Plans in the local and universal church.

With the help of God's grace and the intercession of our sorrowful Mother Mary, Saint Joseph, St. Andre Bessette, and our founder, Fr. Moreau, we are determined to live by their example and values.

DECREES

1. Individual Apostolate: (Handbook)

Brothers taking up individual apostolates shall take permission from the Provincial and his council, which shall be discussed with the Bishops of the concerned Dioceses. The key consideration for any Brother opting for a new individual apostolate shall be his preference for the poor and oppressed. In addition, before the Provincial authorizes such apostolates, the religious and community life of the Brother shall be considered.

2. Training for Counseling Services and Value Education: (Handbook)

The Chapter decrees that Brothers shall be prepared through academically certified training programs for counseling service and value education for working effectively and efficiently in educational institutions.

3. Child Protection Policy:

The chapter decrees that all the institutions run by the Holy Cross Brothers shall have their own Child Protection Policy for their respective institutions and dioceses and implement it accordingly.

4. Higher Studies & Specialized Training for the Brothers: The Provincial and his council shall form an Education Commission to plan higher studies and specialized training programs at home and abroad. This committee shall explore various study programs and subjects based on the needs of the Province and propose the names of the Brothers to the Provincial administration for approval.

5. A Committee to study the feasibility of newly proposed ministries:

The chapter decrees that a committee shall be formed to study and assess feasibility prior to opening any new ministry or upgrading an existing one and report to the provincial administration for implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Headmasters/Principals/Vice-principals/Asst.

Headmasters/ House Superiors/House Directors Meetings: (Handbook)

The Chapter recommends that the provincial organize meetings of the Headmasters/ Principals/ Vice-Principals/ Assistant Headmasters/ House Superiors/ House Directors once a year for coordination and sharing.

2. Training Program for the Brothers According to the Need of the Apostolates:

The chapter recommends that the provincial and his council take necessary steps to prepare prospective Brothers for the following long-term and short-term courses:

- a. Teaching catechism in the schools and Parishes and preparing Brothers for teaching at Holy Spirit Major Seminary, Banani.

- b. Library Science
- c. Nursing and paramedic work
- d. Counseling Services
- e. Managing Archives
- f. Teaching in technical schools.
- g. Working in drug rehabilitation ministries and centers.
- h. Training in Catechism
- i. Administering Hostels

3. Guidelines for Hostels (Handbook)

The chapter recommends that guidelines be prepared for administering hostels.

4. Province Education Commission: (Handbook)

The Chapter recommends that a Province Education commission serve as a forum and a clearing house to deal with policies and issues in the education ministry. This commission should take the necessary steps regarding the following matters:

- a. Following National Education policy;
- b. Following the Public Education Board policy
- c. Following the policies adopted by the Bangladesh Catholic Education Board;
- d. Following the Province's Education Policy Handbook;
- e. Preparing a short curriculum to educate the teachers, students, and school community about the philosophy, pedagogy, and history of Holy Cross Education.

5. Integrity of Creation and Peace & Justice:

The chapter recommends that a peace and & justice commission be formed and the Brothers continue their activities more regularly and actively in collaboration with societal, national, and congregational Peace and Justice partners by becoming aware of the limited resources of the earth and being responsible for their appropriate use in our daily lives and in the lives of those we serve

through our educational apostolates by continually organizing awareness building and motivational programs (Nature study club, Ecology club, Environment club) and by using natural power sources (Solar, etc.) in our houses and institutions.

6. Value Education and Education to Reality (ETR) in our Institutions:

The chapter recommends that:

- a. All our institutions should integrate value education and *Education To Reality* (ETR) in school programs. Brothers and teachers of our schools should receive training in value education and Education to Reality (ETR) from available sources.
- b. All our institutions should give priority to Holistic formation.
- c. Provincial administration should identify Brothers and train those who are engaged in ETR programs in all educational institutions.
- d. Provincial administration should form a team of Brothers with expertise in value education and ETR to train teachers of our institutions.

7. Collaboration of Brothers in Parish Work & and Dioceses:

The chapter recommends that the Brothers be encouraged to continue to get more involved in parochial ministries as needed.

8. Youth Ministry:

The chapter recommends continuing the youth movement “ARISE” (Action to Revive the Inner Strength by Education) started by the Brothers and educating Brothers for youth ministries.

9. Evaluation of the Current Ministries:

The chapter recommends that the provincial and his council assess and evaluate Saint Joseph Province's current apostolates through professional expertise.

10. Establishing a University:

The chapter recommends that a committee be formed to study the feasibility of establishing a university in the near future.

11. Prison & Migration Ministry:

The chapter recommends that the province look into the possibilities of officially beginning the prison and migration ministry.

12. Foreign Mission.

The Chapter recommends that the Provincial Administration takes necessary steps to prepare interested and potential personnel for Foreign Mission.

13. Prospective Apostolates:

The chapter recommends that a committee be formed to study the feasibility of taking over St. Joseph School in Khulna City and & accepting St. Louis High School as the perpetuated ownership to the St. Joseph Province in Khulna Diocese.

14. Brother Flavian International School, Patherghata, Chottogram:

The chapter recommends making a study committee to open an *International School* in the second shift of Brother Flavian KGSchool, Patherghata, Chottogram, for maximum use of the building and contribute "*Intellectual Charity for the locality*" (Pope Benedict).

STATEMENTS:

1. The Chapter expresses thanks and gratitude to all the Bishops of Bangladesh for their support and pastoral care.
2. The Chapter extends its gratitude to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Province for involving our Brothers in the apostolate at Notre Dame University, Bangladesh.

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

PREAMBLE

Good Governance is an essential part of any organization. We, the Brothers of Holy Cross of St. Joseph Province, Bangladesh, in order to govern and be governed properly and relying on the Providence of God and the generosity of the Brothers, intend to use our available wealth and resources prudently, frugally and for the welfare and benefit of all. We shall always try to read the constitutions, circular letters of Blessed Father Moreau and other Superior Generals, the encyclicals of different Popes, and other Church documents related to authentic leadership and do our part as genuine, sharing and serving.

In the governance of a religious congregation, managing finances necessitates both the competence to see and the courage to act. Competence involves a deep understanding of financial principles, transparency in reporting, analytical skills to interpret financial data and awareness of external economic factors. Courage involves making ethical decisions aligned with the congregation's values, implementing cost-saving measures, investing in growth opportunities, and confronting financial challenges directly. Balancing visionary leadership with prudent management ensures the congregation's financial health and sustains its mission, allowing it to thrive spiritually and communally. This year, the Saint Joseph Province celebrated its 25th Silver Jubilee. During this time, the province has been striving to achieve self-sufficiency both as a community and as a province.

We shall remember that as consecrated religious, our religious vows require us to build heavenly not earthly wealth. We shall meet in a chapter to discuss and decide on issues concerning our consecrated religious, community life and our apostolate in the missions. We, the Brothers of St. Joseph Province, will use our power, money, and land and properties prudently. We shall rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us away from letting them be obstacles to

following in the footprints of our forerunners and our Lord Jesus Christ. We shall focus on the marginalized and those on the peripheries of our daily lives. We will keep in mind that we are the sojourners & stewards of this world: we are in the world but not of the world. The Provincial Chapter leads us, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to make communal decisions about our earthly and religious affairs. We, the leaders of the province, shall always remember that we are the servants of the servants.

DECREES

1. The Membership of the next provincial chapter 2027:

Only delegates shall participate in the next provincial chapter & and the membership of the next delegated provincial chapter which shall consist of ex-officio and elected members. “*The number of the delegates will always exceed the number of ex-officio members*” (*Statues 65*). The membership of the next provincial chapter shall be between 60-65. All members of each category will elect their delegates according to the following categories:

2027 Provincial Chapter: Delegates will be according to the chronological age groups:

S.L	Age Group	Percentage (%)	Number	New %
1	Provincial & Council (Ex-Officio)	00%	09	15%
2	60 and above	64%	09	15%
3	50 - 59	72%	13	21%
4	40 - 49	57%	16	27%
5	30 - 39	34%	10	16%
6	20 - 30	12%	04	06%
Total Number =			61	100%
7	Observers		05	

2. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and contract with Schools & Dioceses:

Provincial Administration shall make efforts to sign MOUs and contracts and renew them with our schools, dioceses' schools, and all Dioceses as early as possible. Property, Land, Vocation Promotions, and contributions/rent of the capital shall be clearly mentioned there. Before going to any new ministries, a complete contract with the concerned authority shall be necessary.

3. House/Residence Budgets and Accounts:

- a. Brothers shall prepare realistic budgets for our houses/residences. The house directors/house superiors shall be responsible for monitoring their proper implementation. The accounts of the local communities shall be kept according to the province account policy and sent to the Province Office monthly. After submitting monthly statements, house superiors shall receive monthly house budgeted allowances. The house directors/house superiors shall share the monthly house accounts with the house members during the house chapters. The Province finance committee shall facilitate yearly internal house audits.
- b. All income earned by the community members shall be sent to the Province Office monthly. House superiors shall monitor all the TA, clothing, and medical expenses for the Brothers. Brothers shall take medical expenses from the Province Office if they exceed 5000 taka.
- c. Brothers shall get a monthly individual allowance of 5000 taka (Personal, Mobile, Cloth, TA). Meeting TA shall not be included: Christmas & Easter Bonus BDT 5000 taka (Twice a year), and Yearly Vacation TA is BDT 6000 taka.
- d. All surplus money from the local communities shall be sent to the Province after the financial year.

4. Construction, Extension, Renovation, Selling & Purchasing:

- a. The Principal/ Headmaster and Hostel Master (Own & Diocese) shall submit a written application with all documents explaining detail to get prior permission from the *Provincial Administration* for any new constructions, extensions, and renovations, or purchase of land owned by the province, Decisions shall be made taken in the chapter or general assembly.
- b. For the Diocesan institutions, the principals/ headmasters shall obtain necessary permission from the local ordinary, consult with the Provincial Administration, and follow the proper rules and regulations of the country.
- c. The Heads of the respective institutes shall obtain prior permission from the Provincial Administration to purchase /sell any permanent asset (landed properties, apartments, flats, etc.) with the money of the institute in the name of the institute. Decree 32 of the 2022 General Chapter shall serve as a guideline for such construction and the required permission of the General Administration in a timely manner.

5. Province-designated funds and Lending money/funds

- a. Province-designated funds shall be used for the respective purposes of the funds. *Provincial Administration* shall consult to use a designated fund for other purposes if any emergency arises.
- b. Lending money and giving loans to and from the province or other purposes, which will shall not exceed 50,000 taka. If it the amount exceed 50,000 taka, the provincial shall consult with his council and finance committee.

6. Province Financial Quarterly Statement:

The province steward or the provincial shall present the quarterly financial (Revenue, Income & Expenditure) statement in the council meeting for approval.

7. New Projects:

Provincial Administration shall prepare a written document in detail for any new project with its mission, vision, and financial strength. It shall be presented to the council and discussed. Necessary permission shall be obtained from the Superior General and his council for meaningful and effective implementation. In this regard a development office shall be set up.

8. Budget, Audits, and other documents of the Province Institutions run by the Brothers of Holy Cross:

- a. All accounts of schools & colleges run by the Brothers of Holy Cross (own & dioceses) shall be well budgeted, kept up to date, and audited. Budget and annual audit reports shall be sent to the provincial annually.
- b. The heads of the institutions shall ensure that all educational institutions' recognitions, SMC/GB records, and bills (water, gas, electricity, telephone, mobile, internet), as well as holding tax, VAT, post office box, generator maintenance, official documents, meeting minutes, property documents, land tax payments, and income tax filings for all employees (teachers, office staff, employees) be kept up to date.
- c. A Province Education Coordinator shall be assigned to monitor our schools/colleges regularly.

9. Service Rules and Pay Scale for House Employees:

The service rules and pay scale for the house employees of the province shall be revised and implemented according to the local situation starting in July 2025. (Local Salary Scale, Provident

Fund, advance salary, Gratuity, increment, & Bonus shall be included clearly).

10. Land at St. Placid's, Diang, Karnafuli & Parowan:

After consulting with experts, the Provincial Administration shall study the pros and cons of these disputed lands and make a final settlement as soon as possible. Except for consultation, no money shall be spent until the Provincial and his council makes the final decision.

11. Mariam Ashram:

Provincial Administration shall study all matters regarding Mariam Ashram in detail. After the complete report, the provincial administration and his council shall take the necessary steps to finish all unfinished businesses and make a proper plan to continue the different apostolate schools, hostels, ashrams, and retreat centers. The provincial Administration shall appoint a director to take care of Diang Retreat Center, Mariam Ashram, and pilgrimage.

12. Internal Audits and Budget of our Hostel:

Provincial Administration shall form a committee for running each hostel smoothly. Hostel accounts shall be well budgeted, updated, appropriately audited, and reported regularly to the hostel committee. Surplus money shall be sent to the provincial office at the end of the financial year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Fair payment for the Employees and teachers of our institutions:

It is recommended that heads of our institutions continue their effort to pay the employees, office staff members, and teachers fairly.

2. Ten-Year Strategic Plan of the Province: (2025 - 34)

The chapter recommends that the Provincial Administration prepare a Ten-Year Strategic Plan for 2025-2034, which will be implemented in consultation with the membership of the province. At the same time, the chapter also recommends **updating** each Brother's updated profile as soon as possible.

3. Capital Funding for Higher Studies, Health Care and Formation Programs of the province:

The chapter recommends that the province continue to increase its higher education and health care funds. It also recommends that the provincial administration gradually raise a substantial amount of money for province formation. Some sources include MPO Brothers government funds, gratuity, PF, Life Insurance Money, Educational support from different schools, and the province's surplus money.

4. Relationship with other sectors of Holy Cross:

The chapter recommends that all members of St. Joseph Province maintain healthy relationships with the other sectors of the Congregation of Holy Cross and that the provincials or their delegates from different provinces be invited to the next provincial chapter in 2027 as observers.

5. Duration of Service & Transfer

The chapter recommends that a Brother be appointed for a maximum of six years in one apostolate/ institute; this term can be renewable. The chapter recommends that at the time of a Brother's transfer, the Provincial Administration should consult with the Brother and the concerned person. The Brother and his new House Superior/ Director and Principal/ Headmaster will receive an official appointment letter.

6. Assembly of the province:

The Chapter recommends that an assembly be organized once for all the finally professed Brothers of the province and another one for all members. (*Handbook*)

7. *Ashakti Punarbasan Nibash (APON) and BARACA:*

The chapter recommends that the province establish a residence for Brothers at the APON campus. The chapter also recommends that the Brothers of Holy Cross continue rendering services for drug-addicted people's rehabilitation through BARACA. Some Brothers should be trained to continue this ministry effectively.

8. Vacation for Brothers (Common & Individual) & International Program:

The chapter recommends that the Provincial Administration formulate policies concerning Brothers' vacations and international programs, specifying destinations and participants to ensure equitable opportunities for all. Additionally, it is advised that they adhere strictly to the established order of the name list.

9. Teachers Registration (NTRCA) and Monthly Pay Order (MPO):

The chapter recommends that the postgraduate Brothers try to pass the teachers' registration tests. The school & college authority should continue trying to enlist the Brothers in the MPO whenever & wherever it is possible.

10. Naming of New Buildings: (Handbook)

The chapter recommends that the Provincial Administration continue naming new buildings in the province after his predecessors in memory of their dedication.

11. House Superior/ Director: The chapter recommends that the house superior/ residence director and headmaster/ principal preferably not be the same person.

12. Motorcycle & Car:

The chapter recommends that if any Brother or institution who wants to buy a motorcycle or car for the Brothers or the institutions, Brothers/ Heads shall get permission from the provincial and the concerned authority ahead of time.

13. St. Joseph Industrial Trade School, Narinda:

The chapter recommends that the Provincial Administration study St. Joseph Industrial Trade School in detail to improve its service in the future and take necessary steps accordingly.

14. Report of the Apostolate:

The chapter recommends that the heads of all the institutions present a written report on their apostolate before the chapter in the last assembly of the year.

15. Land Matter, Capital Investment & Land for Lands:

The chapter recommends that the Provincial Administration complete all documentation for work on the land as early as possible. At the same time, capital investment opportunities, especially in the land sector, can be used to improve and strengthen our province's financial condition in future apostolates such as Parowan, Sunamgonj, and Alikadom.

16. Medical Treatment:

The chapter recommends that the Provincial Administration improve health care policies and continue to anticipate and plan for the increased needs of the sick and elderly in the future. The Provincial Administration should also maintain yearly medical checkups for the Brothers and take necessary steps as needed. For major medical issues, the *Provincial Administration* will decide where to send the Brothers for better treatment. The Chapter also recommends that we plan on establishing a retirement house to provide facilities for the sick and elderly Brothers.

17. New Construction:

The chapter recommends that the Provincial Administration look into the possibility of starting the new construction on a priority basis.

- i. St. Joseph Industrial Trade School, St. Joseph Hostel & St. Joseph International School, Narinda building shall be constructed as early as possible when the funds are available.
- ii. New *Jnatapassalaya* Scholastics Building at BHOTS shall be constructed after consulting and signing a contract with the Bishop.
- iii. Technical School, Brothers' House, Boys' Hostel, and staff quarters at the Lama building shall be constructed as early as possible when the funds are available.

18. Appointment of a Brother:

The chapter recommended that the Provincial Administration take necessary steps, follow government rules, and discuss with the concerned person and authority the appointment of any Brother in any school or college as Principal/ Headmaster, vice-principal/Assistant headmaster, teacher, or minister in any post.

STATEMENTS:

1. The Provincial Chapter of St. Joseph Province - 2024 expresses its gratitude to the Congregational Solidarity Fund, Holy Cross Mission Center, and Bengal Bouts for their generous financial support.
2. The provincial chapter of St. Joseph Province - 2024 expresses its gratitude to Bro. Francis Boylan, csc (MW) and his friends, Italian Catholic Bishops ‘conference for their financial support for Holy Cross campus at Rajshahi.
3. The Provincial Chapter of St. Joseph Province - 2024 expresses its gratitude to the Late William Baselmo for his financial support of Biroidakuni and BOATH.
4. The Provincial Chapter of St. Joseph Province - 2024 expresses its gratitude to St. Joseph Higher Secondary School and St. Gregory School and College for their financial support of the apostolic work at APON.
5. The Provincial Chapter of St. Joseph Province - 2024 expresses its gratitude to Church in Need, Cologn, Germany Diocese, and Bro. Donald Sacplur, CSC (MW) for Our Holy Cross Retreat Center at Diang.
6. The Provincial Chapter of St. Joseph Province - 2024 extends its special thanks and gratitude to Fr. Simon Fernandez, CSC, and Br. Bikash V. Rozario, CSC, for their tireless efforts to make the Provincial Chapter 2024 effective as moderators.
7. The Provincial Chapter of St. Joseph Province- 2024 extends its gratitude to the outgoing provincial Br. Subal L. Rozario, CSC, and his council members for their untiring service for the development of the St. Joseph Province, Bangladesh.

POLICY HANDBOOK

VOCATION AND FORMATION COMMITTEE

DECREES

1. Province Formation Coordinator and Committee:

The Provincial shall appoint a Formation Coordinator for the Province with at least two years of formation work experience. He shall perform the duties prescribed in the Vocation and Formation Guidelines of the Congregation and the Province. The Province Formation Committee shall consist of the Formation Coordinator along with all the formation personnel and two or three co-opt members from the province.

2. Full-time Province Vocation Promotion Coordinator:

The Provincial shall appoint a Brother for the full-time Province Vocation Promotion Coordinator. He shall coordinate all vocation promotion activities in the province as stated in the formation guidelines and as needed at the time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Ceremony of the Perpetual Profession:

The chapter recommends that the provincial and his council fix the month, week, and day for the ceremony of the Perpetual Profession of the Brothers. It should be held in either in a parish or other suitable place. The profession ceremony should be arranged in a simple and befitting manner.

4. A Suitable Formative Environment in Local Houses/Residences:

The chapter recommends that a more appropriate formative environment be created in the local houses/residences to enhance prayer life, fellowship, and common living so that the scholastic Brothers/formees may witness and be strengthened to deepen their call to the Brotherhood while engaging in their community or apostolic experiences.

5. Multi-Cultural Aspects in the Formation:

This chapter recommends that the environment of our formation houses be integrated with different cultures, both Indigenous and international.

RELIGIOUS LIFE COMMITTEE

DECREES:

2. Handling Funds:

All Brothers handling funds other than house and school funds shall get prior permission from the provincial administration for their purpose and use; thereafter, they shall give detailed reports of the sources and expenditure of these funds every year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Metal Cross and Anchor, St. Joseph Medal, and Habit:

The chapter recommends that:

- a) The metal Cross with anchor emblem be used by the Brothers, specifically at secular functions and programs. The Brothers should wear the metal Cross with anchor with the habit until their final profession, and all the "*finally professed Brothers should wear the * St. Joseph medal with the habit*" (*Statute 38 a*).
- b) The habit be worn by all the Brothers at all religious functions in the school, community, and parish wherever and whenever appropriate.

7. Christmas and Easter:

The chapter recommends that the Brothers in local houses join at least one community meal on Christmas Day and Easter Day in their respective community houses or parish houses.

*However, due to the long-standing custom and established practices in Bangladesh, Brothers may continue wearing Anchor with the habit.

APOSTOLIC LIFE COMMITTEE

DECREES

1. Individual Apostolate:

Brothers taking up individual apostolates shall take permission from the Provincial and his council, which shall be discussed with the Bishops of the concerned Dioceses. The key consideration for any Brother opting for a new individual apostolate shall be his preference for the poor and oppressed. In addition, before the Provincial authorizes such apostolates, the religious and community life of the Brother shall be considered.

2. Training for Counseling Services and Value Education:

The Chapter decrees that Brothers shall be prepared through academically certified training programs for counseling service and value education for working effectively and efficiently in educational institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Headmasters/Principals/Vice-principals/Asst. Headmasters/ House Superiors/House Directors Meetings:

The Chapter recommends that the provincial organize meetings of the Headmasters/ Principals/ Vice-Principals/ Assistant Headmasters/ House Superiors/ House Directors once a year for coordination and sharing.

3. Guidelines for Hostels

The chapter recommends that guidelines be prepared for administering hostels.

4. Province Education Commission:

The Chapter recommends that a Province Education commission serve as a forum and a clearing house to deal with policies and issues in the education ministry. This commission should take the necessary steps regarding the following matters:

- a. Following National Education policy;

HANDBOOK

- b. Following the Public Education Board policy
- c. Following the policies adopted by the Bangladesh Catholic Education Board;
- d. Following the Province's Education Policy Handbook;
- e. Preparing a short curriculum to educate the teachers, students, and school community about the philosophy, pedagogy, and history of Holy Cross Education.

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATIONS

6. Assembly of the province:

The Chapter recommends that an assembly be organized once for all the finally professed Brothers of the province and another one for all members.

11. Naming of New Buildings:

The chapter recommends that the Provincial Administration continue naming new buildings in the province after his predecessors in memory of their dedication.

The nature of our commitment and the success of our mission as religious in the Congregation of Holy Cross demand that we adhere to a high standard of ethical conduct. (Ethical Standards of Conduct in the Congregation of Holy Cross: Holy Cross Standards of Conduct: A Handbook for Superiors, 2nd edition, pp. 11-14)

OUR STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The nature of our commitment and the success of our mission as religious in the Congregation of Holy Cross demand that we adhere to high standards of ethical conduct. By our vows and our membership in the Congregation of Holy Cross, we strive to maintain these standards:

- (1) We respect the confidentiality expected by those who come to us in ministry when sharing their personal dreams and difficulties. Likewise, we respect the confidentiality expected by the members of our local community, province, and congregation when individual members or the community face difficulties and disagreements.
- (2) We are loyal to the Congregation and its interests, and to the apostolic institutions of which we may be a part. We act with integrity in situations where our loyalties may be in conflict or perceived as such, and we never participate in decisions that may be perceived to benefit us personally or our relatives.
- (3) We maintain the highest standards of responsibility in our personal finances. We do not enter into contracts or assume debts that may violate our public commitment to poverty and obedience. We ensure that our personal financial commitments are met within the framework of our vows and that all financial transactions comply with civil and canon law, as well as the Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation.
- (4) We ensure that funds donated for the use of the Congregation or an apostolate are used for their intended purpose. We never use funds given to the Congregation or an apostolate for personal gain or comfort, nor do we use official letterhead to solicit funds for personal use.
- (5) We do not engage in private apostolic efforts that involve raising and distributing funds without explicit approval from the appropriate superior (usually the provincial). We do not deposit or withdraw such funds from Congregation, province, or apostolic institution accounts to assist donors with tax deductions. We follow established

procedures to protect ourselves, the Congregation, the province, and donors from legal liability.

(6) We do not speak or write publicly on behalf of the Congregation, the province, or an apostolic institution unless we hold an appropriate post or have been asked to do so by the proper authority.

(7) If responsible for publicity or advertising for the Congregation, the province, or an apostolic institution, we ensure that all statements are honest and reflect the values and morality of the entity.

(8) We recognize that our conduct reflects more than our personal actions and strive to avoid behavior that may harm the public image of or cause embarrassment to the Church, the Congregation, the province, or an apostolic institution.

(9) We do not possess, distribute, or use illegal drugs or narcotics.

(10) We do not waste or destroy property belonging to the Congregation, the province, or an apostolic institution without authorization. We do not purchase, lease, alienate, remove, or give away property without proper approval.

(11) We do not promote causes in direct conflict with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

(12) We do not place ourselves in a position where we are unable to perform our ministry due to alcohol consumption.

(13) We do not engage in sexual harassment, which includes any of the following behaviors: direct or implied threats that submission to sexual advances will affect employment, work status, promotion, grades, or letters of recommendation; direct propositions of a sexual nature; subtle pressure for sexual activity; repeated and unwanted staring; conduct intended to cause discomfort or humiliation, including comments of a sexual nature, sexually explicit statements, jokes, or anecdotes; unnecessary touching, patting, hugging, or brushing against a person's body; and remarks about a person's clothing, body, or speculations about their sexual experience.

পরিত্র ক্রুশ সন্ন্যাসব্রতীদের আচরণের মানদণ্ড (বাংলা অনুবাদ)

পরিত্র ক্রুশ সংঘের সন্ন্যাসব্রতী হিসেবে আমাদের অঙ্গীকারের প্রক্রিয়া ও প্রেরণাকার্যে আমাদের সফলতা দাবি করে যেন আমরা উচ্চমানের নৈতিক আচরণের মানদণ্ডের প্রতি অনুরোধ থাকি। পরিত্র ক্রুশ সন্ন্যাস-সংঘে ব্রত গ্রহণ এবং সভ্যপদ লাভের ফলে আমরা এই নৈতিক আচরণের মাপকাঠি বজায় রাখতে আপ্তাগ চেষ্টা করি।

(১) কর্মক্ষেত্রে যারা আমাদের কাছে আসে তাদের ব্যক্তিগত স্বপ্নসমূহ (dreams) ও সমস্যাবলী সহভাগিতা করে সেগুলো আমরা গোপন রাখি। যখন সংঘের সদস্য কোন সংঘ-গৃহ (community) কোন সমস্যার বা মতান্বেকের সম্মুখীন হয়, তা আমরা গোপন রাখি কারণ স্থানীয় সংঘ-গৃহ, সংঘ-প্রদেশ এবং গোটা সংঘের এই গোপনীয়তা রক্ষা করতে আমাদের নিকট একান্তভাবে আশা করে।

(২) আমাদের সন্ন্যাস-সংঘের প্রতি ও এর কল্যাণ সাধনের (interest) প্রতি আমরা বিশ্বস্ত থাকি। যে প্রেরিতিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের সঙ্গে জড়িত তার প্রতিও আমরা বিশ্বস্ত থাকি। যখন আমাদের বিশ্বস্ততা কোন দ্বন্দ্বের সম্মুখীন হয় বা আপত্তদৃষ্টিতে দ্বন্দ্বের (conflict) সম্মুখীন বলে মনে হয়, তখন আমরা অখণ্ডতার (interest) সহিত তা মোকাবিলা করি।

আমরা এমন কোন সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ প্রক্রিয়া অংশগ্রহণ করি না, যাতে আপত্তদৃষ্টিতে নিজের বা কোন আত্মীয়ের স্বার্থ রক্ষা হয় বলে প্রতীয়মান হয়।

(৩) আমরা ব্যক্তিগত অর্থসংক্রান্ত ব্যাপারে আমাদের দায়িত্বরোধের সর্বোচ্চ মাপকাঠি (standard) বজায় রাখি। আমরা এমন কোন চুক্তি (contract) সম্পাদন করি না বা খণ্ডের দায় গ্রহণ করি না, যা আমাদের সর্বসাধারনের সামনে গ্রহণকৃত দরিদ্রতা ও বাধ্যতার ব্রত অর্থাদা করার শামল হয়। আমরা প্রত্যক্ষ করি যে, আমাদের ব্যক্তিগত অর্থসংক্রান্ত অঙ্গীকার (financial commitment) আমাদের ব্রতসমূহের আওতায় পূর্ণ হয়। লক্ষ্য করি যে, আমাদের সকল প্রকার আর্থিক লেনদেন সংঘটিত হয় সন্ন্যাসব্রতীদের জন্য নির্ধারিত দশের অর্থে সংক্রান্ত আইন, মান্ডলিক আইনের (Cannon Law) চাহিদা এবং সন্ন্যাস-সংঘের সংবিধান (Constitutions) ও নিয়মাবলীর (Status) দাবি মোতাবেক।

(৪) আমরা লক্ষ্য রাখি যে, সংঘের জন্য বা কোন নির্দিষ্ট প্রেরিতিক কাজের জন্য দানকৃত অর্থ যে উদ্দেশ্যে তা দান করা হয়েছে, সেই উদ্দেশ্যেই যে ব্যবহার করা হয়। সংঘের জন্য বা কোন নির্দিষ্ট প্রেরিতিক কাজের জন্য দানকৃত অর্থ আমরা কখন নিজের ব্যক্তিগত সুযোগ-সুবিধা বা আরাম আয়েশের জন্য ব্যবহার করি না। নিজের ব্যক্তিগত প্রয়োজনে আর্থিক সাহায্য সংগ্রহ করার ব্যাপারে আমরা কখন সম্প্রদায়ে, প্রতিসেবের বা কোন প্রেরিতিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের লেটারহেড (Letter-head) ব্যবহার করি না।

(৫) আমরা এমন কোন ব্যক্তিগত প্রেরিতিক কাজ করার চেষ্টা করি না, যেখানে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের (সাধারণত প্রভিসিয়ালের) অনুমোদন ছাড়া অর্থ সংগ্রহ ও বিতরণ জড়িত। কেবলমাত্র আমাদের দাতাদের আইনসম্মত আয়কর মণ্ডুক্য করার কাজে সহায়তা করার জন্য কোন প্রকার আর্থিক তহবিল আমরা কখন মণ্ডুক্য করার কাজে সহায়তা করার জন্য কোন প্রকার আর্থিক তহবিল আয়কর করার সংঘের, প্রতিসেবের বা কোন প্রেরিতিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের হিসাবে জমা করি না বা সেই হিসাব হতে উভোলনও করি না। নিজেদের, সম্পাদায়ের, প্রতিসেব বা দাতাদের সম্মত আইনী দায় হতে রক্ষা করার জন্য এ ব্যাপারে আমরা প্রচলিত সকল প্রকার আইনসম্মত পদ্ধতি মেনে চলি।

(৬) আমরা আমাদের সম্পদায়ের, প্রভিসের বা কোন নির্দিষ্ট প্রেরিতিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের পক্ষে সর্বসাধারণের সামনে কোন বক্তব্য পেশ করি না বা এ ব্যাপারে কোন কিছু লিখি না, যদি না এ সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানের কোন যথাযথ পদে বহাল থাকি বা যদি না যথাযথ (appropriate) কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক আমাকে এ ব্যাপারে দায়িত্ব দেওয়া হয়।

(৭) আমরা যদি সম্পদায়, প্রভিস বা কোন নির্দিষ্ট প্রেরিতিক প্রতিষ্ঠান সম্বন্ধে প্রচার বা বিজ্ঞাপন দেওয়ার দায়িত্বপ্রাপ্ত হই, যে, নিজের সকল বক্তব্য যেন সত্য হয় এবং তা যেন এমন সব মূল্যবোধ ও নৈতিকতা প্রকাশ করে যা ঐ সকল প্রতিষ্ঠান ধারণ ও প্রচার করে।

(৮) আমরা স্বীকার করি যে, আমাদের সকল প্রকার আচরণ যে কোন ব্যক্তির কাজের (action) চেয়ে বেশি কিছু। আমরা আমাদের ব্যক্তিগত অসদাচরণ যা পাবলিক ইমেজকে অঙ্গত দিকে প্রভাবাদ্ধিত করে অথবা যা মঙ্গলী, সম্পদায়, প্রভিস বা কোন প্রেরিতিক প্রতিষ্ঠানকে বিপদে ফেলে তা নিয়ন্ত্রণ (guard) করি।

(৯) আমরা কোন নিষিদ্ধ মানক বা চেতনা নাশক দ্রব্য সংরক্ষণ, বিতরণ বা ব্যবহার করি না।

(১০) আমরা সংঘের, প্রভিসের বা কোন প্রেরিতিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের সম্পত্তি অপচয় করি না। যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমোদন ছাড়া আমরা কোন সম্পত্তি ত্রয় করি না, ইজারা (lease) দেই না, হস্তান্তর করি না (alienate), সরিয়ে দেই না (remove) বা কাউকে দানও করি না।

(১১) আমরা রোমান ক্যাথলিক মঙ্গলীর শিক্ষার সঙ্গে সরাসরি দ্বন্দ্বের কারণ হই না বা এ ব্যাপারে কাউকে উৎসাহিত করি না।

(১২) আমরা মদ (alcohol) পান করতে করতে নিজেদের এমন অবস্থায় নিয়ে যাই না, যা আমাদেরকে নিজের প্রেরিতিক কাজ করতে অক্ষম করে ফেলে।

(১৩) আমরা যৌন উৎপীড়নে (sexual harassment) জড়িত হই না বা কাউকে শারীরিক, যৌন বা মানসিকভাবে অপব্যবহার (abuse) করি না। যৌন উৎপীড়ন (sexual harassment) বলতে আমরা বুঝি, আকস্মিক শারীরিক আঘাত, সরাসরি বা সংস্কৃত শাস্তি বা আঘাতের ভয় বা হৃষি প্রদর্শন যা যৌন কাজে লিঙ্গ হওয়া, চাকুরি দেওয়া (employment) পেশাগত অবস্থানের, পদেন্তিতে (work status), ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের প্রদত্ত নম্বর বা মান অথবা সুপারিশ পত্র প্রদানের শর্তরূপে প্রতীয়মান হয়; যৌন সংক্রান্ত কার্যে লিঙ্গ হওয়ার সরাসরি প্রস্তাবঃ যৌন কর্মে লিঙ্গ হওয়ার জন্য অতিসূক্ষ্ম বা চালাকিমূলক চাপ দেওয়া (subtle pressure) কারো দিকে বার বার ও অনাবশ্যক স্থির দৃষ্টিতে তাকান (staring); এমন আচরণ যা অন্যের অস্বাস্তি বা তাকে খাটো করা বা উভয়ই করার জন্য সম্পাদিত হয় যেমন- যৌনসংক্রান্ত বা মুনিদিষ্ট যৌনবিষয়ক উক্তি, প্রশাবলী, কৌতুক বা কোন ব্যক্তি বা বস্ত্র সম্পর্কে কোন মজার যৌন বাস্তব কাহিনী এমন ধরণের আচরণ যা কোন ব্যক্তির প্রতি করা হয় তাকে অস্বাস্ত করা বা তাকে খাটো করা বা উভয়ই করার জন্য। যেমন প্রয়োজন ছাড়া কাউকে স্পর্শকরা (touching), করতল দ্বারা আদর বা সহানুভূতি প্রকাশক মৃদু আঘাত করা (patting), কুলাকুলি করা (huggingd) অথবা কারো শরীরের সঙ্গে নিজের শরীর ঘসা (brushing agairst a body), কোন ব্যক্তির পোষাক বা দেহের সম্বন্ধে যৌনবিষয়ক মন্তব্য করা (remarks of a sexual nature about a person's clothing or body কার্যবলী অথবা পূর্বে ঘটে যাওয়া যৌন অভিজ্ঞতা সম্বন্ধে মন্তব্য করা।

BROTHERS OF HOLY CROSS IN BANGLADESH

