



TRINITAS

TRINITAS:

**Called to
Holiness,
Community
and Mission**

*Llamados a
la Santidad,
Comunidad
y Misión*

1875

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A Private Association of the Faithful
recognized by Roger Cardinal Mahony,
Archbishop of Los Angeles, California,
March 16, 1995.

*Una Asociación Privada de los Fieles
reconocida por Rogelio Cardenal Mahony,
Arzobispo de Los Ángeles, California,
16 de marzo, 1995.*

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STATUTES

Introduction

Article 1. Trinitas is headquartered in Ventura County, in the Santa Barbara Region of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, California, and is under the ecclesiastical authority of the Diocesan Bishop of that diocese. Other Trinitas communities will also be under the authority of their Diocesan Bishop.

Purpose

Article 2. The purpose of Trinitas is to form and support Christian communities which engage in efforts of evangelization and mission which animate the secular order.

Charism

Article 3. ¹We, the Trinitas community, are called: to live together the life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As Jesus came in total love and surrender to the Father, he calls us to join him in this same love and surrender through his gift of the Spirit. By this grace we reflect the life of the Trinity.

²In response to this call to be life-givers, we live truthfully and openly with each other, sharing with each other generously and gratefully. We recognize in each other a unique gift of God to the community. We therefore listen carefully to each other, value and respect each other's gifts, give an accounting to one another of how we use them, and help one another develop them.

³Jesus came to reveal the Father to a longing and sinful world. In his Spirit we are called to this same life-giving mission. As he commands us to remain in this world, he prays to the Father:

I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them (Jn 17:26).

We exclude nothing of the world's experience from this saving mission. Rather, like Christ, we give our lives to serve our brothers and sisters, wherever the Spirit leads us.

Spirituality

Article 4. ¹The life of the Trinity is incarnated in our interactions with each other. This is the basis of our spirituality. With Jesus, we live a life of self-giving love, even to the cross. Our guides along this way are Mary, the Mother of Jesus and St. Ignatius Loyola. As a community we take responsibility for helping each member grow in responsiveness to the Spirit.

²God invites us into an intimate relationship with himself in our life of prayer. We are called to live the liturgical and sacramental life intensively.

³In order to be ever more attuned to the Spirit and to live in obedience to the Father, we are committed to the regular examen, to a personal and communal review of life, and to a communal discernment of spirits in important matters.

⁴We are committed to spiritual growth by means of spiritual direction, spiritual reading and ongoing education. We are called to appreciate and care for God's creation.

Poverty

Article 5. ¹To understand and live the self-giving poverty of Jesus and the Father, we focus, as did the poor Jesus, on the Beatitudes. This is the heart of the poverty to which Trinitas is committed. By this commitment we seek to become totally what Jesus is.

²Because of the importance in our lives of the gift of secularity, we of Trinitas do not exempt ourselves, in any way, from the human condition; nevertheless our way of life is often counter-cultural. We are self-supporting through our work, working so as to have something to share. We accept stewardship for the earth, for its beauty and its resources, using no more than we need. We accept stewardship for our own health and well-being. We provide for our own retirement. As a community of love, we share our community resources with members in need.

³An important sacrament of this secular stewardship is the offering of money, time, service and resources. We make an annual written covenant of the form this offering will take. The offering is used for the support of the Trinitas community and its works.

⁴Giving an account of our stewardship of God's gifts forms part of the monthly review of life.

Obedience and Work for the Kingdom

Article 6. ¹The obedience of Jesus was to hear and respond to the call of the Father to begin the Kingdom on earth. For Jesus, obedience and love of the Father were one and the same: *I always do what pleases him* (Jn 8:29). Because we love God, we want to respond to his call with the free gift of ourselves. Authority resides in God, mediated through the community as a whole.

²Ignatian discernment takes in all dimensions of the Spirit's action. The Spirit calls us within our daily life, through the community, and through the call of the Church to work for what would better further the Kingdom. Discernment is at the heart of our obedience. Love of God and single-heartedness are at the heart of our discernment.

³Each of us is committed to this ever-maturing discernment, and the community is committed to encourage, challenge and invigorate each member in this process. This takes place in the daily examen and in the communal review of life, both of which are integral to Trinitas' obedience. Such obedience is possible only within a community of openness and trust.

⁴Since Jesus' last command was to take this Spirit out to the whole world (Mk 16:15-18), each of us has the responsibility to prepare for this mission of bringing the good news, wherever in the world we are called. The community as a whole has the responsibility to support the mission and to assist us in

discerning the form of our response. Our last words will be those of Jesus: *I have given you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do* (Jn 17:4) ...*Now it is finished* (Jn 19:30).

⁵The members of Trinitas take seriously the Church's call to evangelization and the mission *ad gentes*. All of us are called to evangelize within the structures of our families and careers. All of us are encouraged to train ourselves for direct evangelization within an appropriate ecclesiastical structure. Each community is expected to develop and support at least one missionary vocation from within the community.

Chastity

Article 7. ¹We understand that our total gift of self to God demands total personal availability in love, together with a way of life that is life-giving for others. The progress of our growth in love forms part of the review of life.

²Christ is the center of the chastity practiced by everyone; however, the virtue is practiced according to our state of life. Since the Trinitas community consists of celibate and married persons, the form of chastity chosen after discernment is that which God indicates is best for each of us. Clearly, we must be free to make a commitment to either marriage or celibacy. The commitment to chastity requires that we take all necessary steps to achieve personal wholeness. In the review of life the community supports each of us in our commitment to the freedom of a chaste love.

Community

Article 8. ¹Trinitas builds a community on the model of God. The purpose of our gathering in one mind and one heart is to discover together, as Christ did, the Father's will for each member and for the community as a whole, and to actively respond to it. All members must take responsibility for their spiritual development.

²We invite and call others into this oneness. Each of us of Trinitas is equally responsible for the good of our community and for Trinitas as a whole. Since God graces each member with personal gifts, each will be a special blessing to the community, able to fulfill unique roles. The community assigns tasks according to these gifts and our possibilities of using them.

³Jesus excluded no one from his call to follow him: men, women, married and unmarried, of various professions, social status and age. Any serious, mature and committed Christian who is living the Gospel may apply to become a member. The qualities looked for in a potential member are:

- a growing generosity,
- a growing willingness to serve,
- a deepening life of prayer,
- a growing desire for community,
- a developing ability to be open and honest,
- a potential for spiritual discernment,
- and, if married, ongoing cooperation of the spouse.

⁴A Trinitas community is co-responsible and collegial. Co-responsibility takes the spiritual forms already noted and also includes willingness to confront destructive elements together. Major decisions are made by consensus within a process of communal discernment which respects the freedom of conscience of each member. Consensus is the agreement of most members. Dissenting members must articulate their understanding and acceptance of the consensus.

⁵Every Trinitas community will have a circle of friends who are not called to become members, but who want to share the spiritual gifts of the community. Such friends are welcomed to all community events except the review of life.

Becoming a Member

Article 9. ¹Before accepting an applicant the community requires a period of inquiry of indefinite duration, screening and securing of necessary certificates and recommendations. The applicant must have adequate physical and emotional health, be employed and self-supporting, even if a student, and must be a Christian. Ordinarily, applicants should be under age 40.

²The local community as a whole receives the application and accepts the person into candidacy. Membership begins with admission into candidacy at a formal rite of admission. Candidates begin a period of initiation of approximately two years. This period is to help the candidate to live all aspects of community life. This initiation process is to be balanced, deep and gender-and-state-of-life-appropriate. During initiation the candidate reviews his/her spiritual development at the communal review of life.

³The Educator recommends the candidate for first commitment. Applications for first commitment are made in January. The community meets for discernment before Lent begins. The proximate period of preparation for commitment is the three months of the Lent-Easter season, which is a period of intensive prayer and following of Christ.

⁴At commitment, members make promises of poverty, chastity, obedience and work for the Kingdom.

⁵Commitments are made on the solemnity of the Holy Trinity. The period of commitment is one year. Ordinarily, after five years, with approval of the community, a perpetual commitment may be made.

⁶All applications for yearly or perpetual commitment are made in January.



Creating New Communities

Article 10. ¹Since intimacy is a primary value in the Trinitas community, when a community reaches 10-15 committed members it is subdivided to create two autonomous communities.

²An inquirer who lives at a distance from an established community may be accepted as follows. The period of inquiry begins when the inquirer gathers at least two other interested persons to form a community. A member of Trinitas is commissioned by the Coordinator Conference to meet regularly with this new community to offer support, information, resources, and application and initiation processes. When a person is ready, he or she makes a commitment in Trinitas. When three persons have made this commitment, a new Trinitas community is established. When there are three members with a lifetime commitment, the community applies to the Coordinator Conference to become an autonomous community.

³A member of Trinitas who moves away from the community for legitimate reasons either forms a new community around him/herself or chooses to join a local Trinitas community if there is compatibility. The relocated member remains a member of his or her original community until the new community is established or until he or she is accepted by the local Trinitas community. The original community supports the whole process appropriately.

Leaving the Community

Article 11. ¹A person not willing to renew the commitment should leave freely, on friendly terms with the community. He or she should discuss the decision with the community and put the decision in writing. If the commitment is not renewed, all promises cease on Trinity Sunday. Those with perpetual commitments are asked to engage in at least a year's discernment process with the community and their spiritual directors.

²The community has the responsibility to help members in transition out of the community and to discern. Members of the community are to be truthful, loving and non-judgmental, looking to both the good of the individual and of the community.

Dismissal from the Community

Article 12. A member who is not living the spirit of Trinitas or who is not attending the meetings of the community, may be dismissed. The unacceptable behavior or attitudes of the member must be pointed out to him or her at least three times during the communal review of life. If there is no real change within six months of the third review, the community instructs the Coordinator to write a letter of dismissal in the name of the community. In the case of a member who is consistently absent from the communal review of life, the Coordinator writes up to three letters warning the member of dismissal for absence and inviting the member to explain these absences in writing, stating reasons for withdrawing from Trinitas.

If there is no change and the member has not requested a hearing from the local community or the Coordinator Conference, in the event of a dispute, the formal letter of dismissal is to be sent. Membership then ceases.

Absence from Meetings

Article 13. For the good of the community, all members are expected to be actively involved and present. Ill or elderly members and missionaries prevented from attending meetings are not considered absent. For serious reasons the Coordinator may give permission for prolonged absence from meetings. After a year the community must review the matter and decide whether to extend the leave or to dismiss. Members who are not present at meetings at which decisions are to be taken, for whatever reason, forfeit the right to vote.

Disbanding of a Community

Article 14. ¹A community remains part of the Trinitas federation as long as it remains in the spirit of Trinitas. This includes living according to the Gospel and the mind of the Church, cooperating with other Trinitas communities, participating in Federation conferences and contributing to the well-being of Trinitas as a whole.

²If a community fails significantly in this spirit for three years, the Coordinator Conference warns the offending community in writing and proposes necessary changes within a specified time frame. If the community does not respond within the time indicated, the Central Coordinator informs the community and the local Diocesan Bishop, in writing, that they have ceased to belong to Trinitas. The assets of any disbanded community become the property of the Tri-

Trinitas Federation. In the event of the dissolution of the Trinitas Federation, after payment of debts and obligations, all property is distributed by the Coordinator Conference (or local Board of Directors) to fund a foundation or corporation organized and existing for the same religious and spiritual purposes. The Coordinator Conference informs the appropriate ecclesiastical authorities of the dissolution of a community or of the Federation.

³Individuals who wish to remain in Trinitas after the disbanding of their community, will be assisted to do so.

Authority

Article 15. Authority resides in the community as a whole; each member is accountable to the community.

Leadership

Article 16. ¹There are two main offices in a Trinitas community: the Coordinator and the Educator.

²The Coordinator is the main administrative officer. The Coordinator's tasks are:

to administer the affairs of the community, as much as possible by delegation,

to represent the community in an official and legal capacity,

to facilitate consensus in community decision making,

to work cooperatively with the Educator for the spiritual growth of the community,

to promote vocations,

to give official warnings as recommended by the community,

to permit extended absence from community gatherings when (s)he deems it necessary,

to represent the community actively in the Coordinator Conference.

The Coordinator must incarnate the life of Trinitas.

³The Coordinator is elected for three years by the committed members of the community and is accountable to the community for his or her service. Consecutive reelection is not permitted. Ordinarily, the Coordinator must have a permanent commitment in Trinitas.

⁴The Educator is responsible for the spiritual development of the community. The Educator's tasks are:

- to exercise leadership in the spiritual development of the community,
- to provide spiritual resources for the community,
- to recommend the applicant for acceptance into initiation in newly forming communities,
- to direct the initiation process,
- to work cooperatively with the Coordinator,
- to continue his or her education in spirituality,
- to develop prospective candidates for the ministry of Educator, especially in new communities.

The Educator must incarnate the life of Trinitas and have expertise in spirituality.

⁴The Educator is elected by the committed members of the community for three years and is accountable to the community for his or her service. Reelection is possible. Ordinarily, the Educator must have made a permanent commitment in Trinitas.

Selecting Leaders

Article 17. ¹A month before the election the community gathers to discern what God's vision and priorities are for the future, especially the following three years.

²At the election meeting each member nominates both a person for Coordinator and a person for Educator. The nomination includes the person's special gifts with reference to the role described above. The person nominated may make a response to these comments, as may any other member.

³Because the Educator is crucial for the future of Trinitas, he or she is elected first. The election is made by consensus within a process of communal discernment. All committed members present at the meeting express their choice. If the community is seriously divided on the candidate, the decision is postponed for a time, so that further discernment can take place. The person is elected if the members reach a consensus. If by the third attempt opinion remains equally divided, the decision is made by lot.

⁴After this, the Coordinator is elected by the same process.

⁵If either the Coordinator or the Educator becomes unable to fulfill his or her commitments, he or she resigns, and the community gathers to elect a member to serve the remainder of the term. A person incapable of making a resignation will be formally removed from office by the community

gathered to elect the person who will serve the remainder of the term.

Federation

Article 18. ¹Trinitas is a Federation of autonomous communities bound together by mutual love and willingness to live according to the statutes. Preserving the Federation is the task of the Coordinator Conference.

²Interaction between communities is encouraged. Communities invite and welcome other communities to significant events, such as retreats and conferences.

³Regular newsletters are published so that members get to know each other and gain a sense of how the larger Trinitas community is responding creatively to God's action within it. These newsletters also inform communities of events occurring within and between individual communities, as well as provide information of common interest, including especially significant Church documents.

The Coordinator Conference

Article 19. ¹The Coordinator Conference is composed of the Coordinators of all Trinitas communities. Its purpose is to oversee the well-being of Trinitas as a whole. It meets at least triennially, more often as needed. Specific tasks of the Conference are:

- to preserve the Trinitas Federation,
- to establish, support, and disband individual communities,
- to prepare the Triennial Meeting,
- to select the Central Coordinator,
- to approve the budget submitted by the Central Coordinator,
- to hear and address grievances brought by individual members,
- to encourage and support regular meetings of the Educators,
- to propose, ratify and promulgate changes in the Statutes.

²The purpose of the Triennial Meeting of the Coordinator Conference is to deepen the spirit of Trinitas and provide a vision for the future. This meeting is open to all members, with Educators especially urged to participate. Others may be invited.

Central Coordinator

Article 20. ¹The Central Coordinator must have made a lifetime commitment in Trinitas and be a participating member of the Coordinator Conference. He or she is elected for three years by the Coordinator Conference during the triennial meeting, with all participants present as auditors. The election is made by consensus within a process of communal discernment. All Coordinators present at the meeting express their choice. If the Conference is seriously divided on the candidates, the decision is postponed for a time so that further discernment can take place. The Central Coordinator is elected when a consensus is reached. If, by the third attempt, opinion remains equally divided, the decision is made by lot. Consecutive reelection is not permitted. Upon election, the Central Coordinator resigns as Coordinator of his or her community.

²The tasks of the Central Coordinator are:
to prepare and call the triennial and
extraordinary meetings of the
Coordinator Conference,
to encourage communication and cooperation
among the Coordinators,
to publish a newsletter in appropriate
languages,
to prepare a budget, make necessary assess-
ments, and disburse central funds,
to keep membership records up-to-date,
to write official communications,
to represent Trinitas to Rome,
to give an accounting of his or her service to

the Coordinator Conference.
To do this well, the Central Coordinator must be an effective discoverer of talent and delegator.

Changing the Statutes

Article 21. The statutes may be changed by the Coordinator Conference at the Triennial Meeting only after careful discernment of God's will for Trinitas, following these procedures:

Proposals for statute changes are submitted by the local Coordinator to the Central Coordinator.

The Central Coordinator communicates the proposal to all local Coordinators to submit to their communities for study, discernment and consensus opinion, which is sent to the Central Coordinator.

After receiving the opinions of all communities, the Central Coordinator publishes this information for all communities and places the proposed statute change, for which a favorable consensus exists, on the agenda for the next Triennial Meeting.

At the Triennial Meeting a consensus of the Coordinators must be reached.

Following the approval of the appropriate ecclesiastical authority, the statute change may be promulgated.

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