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HUMILIS MAGISTER ET SERVUS

## RULE OF THE LAY FRATERNITIES OF ST DOMINIC AND GENERAL DECLARATIONS

More than thirty years have passed since the from the definitive approval of the new Rule of the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic by the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes on 15 January 1987 (Prot. n. D. 27-1-87), and its promulgation by the Master of the Order, fr. Damian BYRNE, on 28 January 1987.

The Rule was complemented by a series of General Declarations promulgated by fr. Damian BYRNE on 16 February 1987 and various interventions of General Chapters and Masters of the Order in the following decades. Most notable are the General Declarations promulgated by fr. Carlos Alfonso AZPIROZ COSTA on 15 November 2007 following the International Congress of the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic at Buenos Aires in March of that year.

With the passage of time it has become apparent both to the International Council of the Lay Dominican Fraternities and to the International Congress of the Lay Fraternities meeting in Fatima in October 2018 that some minor adjustments to the Rule are necessary, along with some further clarifications in order to respond to the needs of the Fraternities across the world.

Therefore, having heard the International Council and Congress of the Lay Fraternities;

And having received the approval of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life on 28 January 2019 (Prot. n. D. 37-1/96) for amendments to nos. 20(c) and 21(b) of the Rule;

WE HEREBY PROMULGATE the following revised text of the Rule of the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic.

At the same time WE PROMULGATE the following revised General Declarations of the Master of the Order.

The new General Declarations integrally re-order the material of those made by our predecessors fr. Damian Byne on 16 February 1987 and fr. Carlos Alfonso Azpiroz Costa on 15 November 2007, and so those former Declarations are to be considered abrogated in accordance with canon 20.

The amendments to the Rule and the new General Declarations come into force on 24 May 2019, memoria of the Translation of Our Holy Father Dominic.

Given in Rome, at our General Curia at Santa Sabina, on 9 March 2019.

  
fr. Jean-Ariel BAUZA-SALINAS OP

*Secretarius Generalis*



  
fr. Bruno CADORÉ OP  
*Magister Ordinis*

*Prot. n. 73/19/007 Rule*

# REGULA FRATERNITATUM LAICALIUM SANCTI DOMINICI

*(NB. Titulus "fraternitates laicales" exprimi potest  
modo diverso ad mentem linguarum diversarum)*

## I. CONSTITUTIO FUNDAMENTALIS LAICATUS DOMINICANI

### DE LAICIS IN ECCLESIA

1. — Inter Christi discipulos, viri et mulieres in sæculo degentes, virtute Baptismatis et confirmationis, muneris prophetici, sacerdotalis et regalis Domini nostri Iesu Christi participes facti sunt. Ad hoc vocantur ut Christi præsentiam in medio populorum vividam reddant et "divinum salutis nuntium ab universis hominibus ubique terrarum cognoscatur et accipiatur" (Apost. Act. 4, 3).

### DE LAICATU DOMINICANO

2. — Aliqui vero, Spiritus Sancti motione ducti ad vitam secundum sancti Dominici spiritum et carisma adimplendam, Ordini incorporantur speciali promissione, secundum statuta ipsis propria.

### DE DOMINICANA FAMILIA

3. — In communitatibus coadunantur et cum aliis coetibus Ordinis unam familiam constituunt (cf. LCO, 141).

### DE SPECIFICO CARACTERE LAICATUS DOMINICANI

4. — Peculiari proinde modo signantur tum in propria vita spirituali, cum in servitio Dei et proximi in Ecclesia. Ut membra Ordinis, eius missionem apostolicam participant, studio, oratione et prædicatione secundum propriam laicorum conditionem.

### DE MISSIONE APOSTOLICA

5. — Ad exemplum S. Dominici, S. Catharinæ Senensis et maiorum nostrorum qui vitam Ordinis et Ecclesiæ illustraverunt, ipsi communionem fraterna roborati, in primis de propria fide testimonium reddunt, hominum huius temporis necessitates audiunt et veritati serviunt.

6. — Apostolatus Ecclesiæ hodierni fines præcipuos sedulo considerant, speciali modo impulsu ad misericordiam veram erga omnes anxietates manifestandam, ad libertatem propugnandam, ad iustitiam et pacem promovendam.

7. — Charismate Ordinis inspirati, memores sunt apostolicam actionem ex abundantia contemplationis procedere.

## II. DE VITA FRATERNITATUM

### DE VITA FRATERNITATUM

**8.** — In vera communione fraterna ad mentem beatitudinum pro viribus vivant, quam etiam in qualibet circumstantia exprimant opera misericordiæ exercendo et quæ sua sunt impertiendo inter sodales fraternitatum, pauperes præsertim et infirmos; suffragia pro defunctis offerendo; ita ut omnibus sit semper cor unum et anima una in Deo (Act., 4, 32).

**9.** — Cum fratribus et sororibus Ordinis in apostolatu partem capientes, sodales fraternitatum vitam Ecclesiæ actuose participant, semper parati ut operam dent cum aliis consociationibus apostolicis.

**10.** — Fontes præcipui e quibus laici S. Dominici vires hauriunt ad proficiendum in propria vocatione, quæ coniunctissime contemplativa est simul et apostolica, hi sunt:

- a) Divini verbi auscultatio et sacræ Scripturæ lectio, præsertim Novi Testamenti.
- b) Quotidiana, quatenus possibilis sit, celebratio liturgica et sacrificii eucharistici participatio.
- c) Reconciliationis sacramentum frequens celebratio.
- d) Liturgiæ horarum celebratio una cum universa Familia Dominicana, necnon oratio in privato, sicut meditatio et mariale rosarium.
- e) Conversio cordis iuxta spiritum et praxim pænitentiae evangelicæ.
- f) Studium assiduum veritatis revelatæ et constans cogitatio de problematibus huius temporis sub lumine fidei.
- g) Devotio erga beatam Virginem Mariam, secundum traditionem Ordinis, erga sanctum Dominicum patrem nostrum et sanctam Catharinam Senensem.
- h) Spirituales recollectiones periodicæ.

### DE FORMATIONE

**11.** — Dominicanæ formationis propositum est veros adultos in fide præbere ita ut apti sint ad verbum Dei accipiendum, celebrandum et proclamandum.

Cuique Provinciæ competit rationem conficere:

- a) sive formationis progressivæ pro incipientibus.
- b) sive formationis permanentis pro omnibus, etiam pro separatis membris.

**12.** — Quilibet dominicanus aptus esse debet ad verbum Dei prædicandum. In hac prædicatione exercetur munus propheticum christiani baptizati et Sacramento Confirmationis roborati.

In mundo hodierno verbi Dei prædicatio modo speciali sese extendere debet ad humanæ personæ dignitatem simulque vitam atque familiam propugnandam. Christianorum unitatem simul ac dialogum cum non christianis et non credentibus promovere ad dominicam vocationem pertinet.

**13.** — Fontes præcipui ad dominicanam formationem perficiendam hi sunt:

- a) Verbum Dei et theologica cogitatio.
- b) Oratio liturgica.
- c) Historia et traditio Ordinis.
- d) Documenta recentiora Ecclesiæ et Ordinis.
- e) Scientia signorum temporum.

## PROFESSIO SEU PROMISSIO

**14.** — Ut Ordini incorporentur, sodales tenentur professionem emittere, seu promissionem qua formaliter promittunt secundum spiritum S. Dominici et modum vivendi a Regula præscriptum vitam ducere. Professio vel promissio ad tempus est aut perpetua. In professione emittenda sequens aut similis quoad substantiam formula adhibeatur:

«Ad honorem Dei omnipotentis Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, et Beatæ Mariæ Virginis et S. Dominici, ego N.N., coram vobis N.N., priore (præsidente) huius fraternitatis et N.N., adsistente, vice Magistri Ordinis Fratrum Prædicatorum, promitto me velle vivere secundum Regular Laicorum S. Dominici (per triennium) (per totam vitam)».

## III. DE STRUCTURA ET REGIMINE FRATERNITATUM

**15.** — Fraternitas est medium idoneum ad dedicationem cuiuscumque in propria vocatione nutriendam et augendam. Periodicitas coadunationum diversa est secundum fraternitates. Assiduitas cuiusvis sodalis propriam fidelitatem demonstrat.

**16.** — Candidatorum admissio, servatis dispositionibus a Directorio præscriptis quantum ad conditionem personarum et tempus admissionis, committitur responsabili laicali qui (quæ) præhabita vocatione decisiva consilii fraternitatis, ad receptionem candidati, ritu a Directorio determinato, cum adsistente religioso, procedit.

**17.** — Post tempus probationis a Directorio determinatum et accedente voto Consilii fraternitatis, responsabilis laicis accipit, simul cum adsistente religioso, professionem ad tempus vel perpetuam.

## DE IURISDICTIONE ORDINIS ET FRATERNITATUM AUTONOMIA

**18.** — Fraternitates laicorum subsunt iurisdictioni Ordinis; illa tamen autonomia gaudent, laicis propria, qua seipsas gubernent.

## IN UNIVERSO ORDINE

**19.** — a) Magister Ordinis, qua S. Dominici successor et totius familiæ dominicanæ caput, præest omnibus fraternitatibus in mundo. Ipsi competit integrum spiritum Ordinis in illis servare, normas statuere practicas pro opportunitate temporum et locorum et promovere bonum spirituale et zelum apostolicum sodalium

b) Promotor generalis vices gerit Magistri Ordinis pro omnibus fraternitatibus, quorum vota præsentat Magistro vel Capitulo Generali.

## IN PROVINCIIIS

**20.** — a) Prior provincialis præest fraternitatibus intra limites territorii suæ provinciæ ac, de consensu Ordinarii loci, novas fraternitates erigit.

b) Promotor provincialis (frater aut soror) vices gerit prioris provincialis et pleno iure participat Consilium provinciale laicorum.

Ipse nominatur a Capitulo provinciali vel a priore provinciali cum suo consilio, audito prius Consilio provinciali laicorum S. Dominici.

c) In territorio Provinciæ habeantur Præses provincialis et Consilium provinciale laicorum, electi a fraternitatibus et regulati iuxta normas a Directorio definitas.

#### IN FRATERNITATIBUS

**21.** — a) Fraternitas localis gubernatur a præside cum suo consilio, qui plenam responsabilitatem moderationis et administrationis assumunt.

b) Præses et Consilium eliguntur ad tempus et secundum modum a Directoriis particularibus statutum.

c) Adsistens religiosus (frater aut soror) adiuvat sodales in materia doctrinali et vita spirituali. Ipse nominatur a priore provinciali, auditis prius promotore provinciali et Consilio locali laicorum.

#### DE CONSIPIO NATIONALI ET INTERNATIONALI

**22.** — a) Ubi adsunt plures Ordinis provinciæ in eodem ambitu nationali, institui potest Consilium nationale, secundum normas a Directoriis particularibus statutas.

b) Simili modo exstare potest Consilium internationale, si tamen opportunum videatur, consultatis fraternitatibus totius Ordinis.

**23.** — Consilia fraternitatum vota et petitiones ad Capitulum provinciale fratrum Prædicatorum mittere possunt; Consilia provincialia et nationalia vero ad Capitulum Generale. Ad ista capitula aliqui responsables fraternitatum libenter invitentur ad materias tractandas quæ laicos spectant.

#### STATUTA FRATERNITATUM

**24.** — Statuta propria fraternitatum laicalium sancti Dominici sunt:

a) Regula fraternitatum (Constitutio fundamentalis laicatus OP, normæ vitæ et regimen fraternitatum)

b) Declarationes generales, seu Magistri Ordinis, seu Capituli Generalis.

c) Directoria particularia

# GENERAL DECLARATIONS

## THE LAY FRATERNITIES OF ST DOMINIC

1. — § I – The Laity of St Dominic are those faithful who, baptised in the Catholic Church or received into her, confirmed and in full communion of faith, sacraments and ecclesiastical governance, are called by a special vocation to progress in the Christian way of life and to animate temporal things through the charism of St Dominic.

§ II – To be *incorporated* into the Order of Preachers in whose apostolic mission they fully participate, the Laity of St Dominic make the *promise* according to the formula foreseen by the Rule. Entry to the lay branch of the Order, called the *Lay Fraternities of St Dominic*, subject to the Master and the other Major Superiors of the Order, is brought about only with this promise.<sup>1</sup>

## OTHER GROUPS OF DOMINICAN LAITY

2. — § I – In addition to the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic, there are Priestly Fraternities and other Associations and Confraternities, governed by their own Statutes legitimately approved by the competent authority and by various titles *attached* to the Dominican Family.

§ II – These Associations and Fraternities constitute a great and varied richness for the Church and the Dominican Family, and are to be greatly valued by all the members of the Lay Fraternities.

§ III – The formula of the promise contained in the *Rule of the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic* approved by the Holy See is not to be used by other groups aggregated in any way to the Dominican Family, unless the Master of the Order expressly permits otherwise.<sup>2</sup>

## LIFE OF THE FRATERNITIES

3. — The Rosary, by which the mind is raised up to the intimate contemplation of the mysteries of Christ through the Blessed Virgin Mary, is a traditional devotion of the Order; therefore its daily recitation by the brothers and sisters of the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic is recommended.<sup>3</sup>

## APOSTOLATE OF THE FRATERNITIES

4. — Members of the Fraternities are always to bear authentic witness to the mercy of Christ, in communion with the Church and the Order (cf. *Rule*, 5–7). To make public statements in the name of a Fraternity, or of the Dominican Laity more broadly, they require the authorisation of the competent authority in accordance with the Directory.

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<sup>1</sup> C.A. AZPIROZ COSTA, *Dichiarazioni Generali circa la Regola della Fraternite Laiche di S. Domenico*, 15-xi-2007 (hereinafter DG2007), I § 1. These footnotes do not form part of the promulgated General Declarations, but are to indicate the source of each declaration.

<sup>2</sup> D. BYRNE, *Declarationes generales regulæ fraternitatum laicalium Sancti Dominici*, 16-ii-1987 (hereinafter DG1987), 5; DG2007, I § 2.

<sup>3</sup> DG1987, 7.

## ADMISSION TO THE FRATERNITIES

5. — The Laity of St Dominic are always ascribed to a Fraternity, where possible that of their own canonical domicile or quasi-domicile, or are at least placed in stable contact with a member of the provincial or vicariate Council of the laity.<sup>4</sup>

6. — § I. — The perpetual promise is preceded by at least one year of initial reception and by three years of temporary promise, documented in the registers kept for this purpose either by the local Fraternity or in the provincial archive.<sup>5</sup>

§ II. — A candidate who has received an equivalent formation in the International Dominican Youth Movement may be dispensed from part of initial formation by the President of the Fraternity with the consent of the Council. In this case, at least one year of temporary promise is to precede perpetual promise.<sup>6</sup>

7. — The faithful who live in particular situations because of which in the judgement of the Council of the Fraternity it is not prudent that they be admitted to the promise may nevertheless participate in the life of the Fraternity and its permanent formation, in a path of following Christ through the Dominican charism, without prejudice to the discipline and Magisterium of the Church.<sup>7</sup>

## THE LAW GOVERNING THE FRATERNITIES

8. — § I — The Rule by which the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic are governed is the fundamental law for the Lay Fraternities of the whole world.

§ II — The present General Declarations promulgated by the Master of the Order are expansions, explanations and interpretations of the Rule.

§ III — The Provincial and National Directories, prepared by the Fraternities themselves and approved by the Master of the Order, are particular norms for the local fraternities and for their collaboration at provincial and national level.<sup>8</sup>

9. — So that the brothers and sisters of the Lay Fraternities may fulfil their obligations “not as slaves under the law, but constituted as free people under grace” (St Augustine, *Rule*, 8; cf. Romans 6:14), we declare that transgressions against the Rule do not as such constitute moral fault.<sup>9</sup>

10. — § I — The text of the Provincial Directory is to be agreed by the Provincial Council of the Laity. It is sent to the Prior Provincial, who transmits it, together with his opinion and that of his Council, to the Master of the Order for approval.

§ II — In approving the Provincial Directory, the Master of the Order may also make amendments to particular norms.

§ III — The approved Provincial Directory is promulgated by the Prior Provincial.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> DG2007, I § 3.

<sup>5</sup> DG2007, I § 1.

<sup>6</sup> Proposal by the International Congress of Lay Fraternities of St Dominic, Fatima, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> DG2007, I § 4

<sup>8</sup> DG1987, 1.

<sup>9</sup> DG1987, 2.

<sup>10</sup> DG1987, 1; DG2007, II § 1.

- 11.** — Unless provision is made by the National Directory, the Provincial Directory must determine:
- 1° the conditions for admission to a Fraternity;
  - 2° the time of probation and of profession of the promise, without prejudice to no. 6 above;
  - 3° the frequency of the Sacraments, and the prayers which the brothers and sisters of the Lay Fraternities are to raise to God;
  - 4° the frequency of the meetings of the Fraternities and the form of their celebration, and also the frequency of spiritual conferences;
  - 5° the internal constitution of each Fraternity and of the Fraternities of the Province as a whole;
  - 6° the manner of proceeding for the election of officials, without prejudice to norms of the Rule and these Declarations;
  - 7° the manner and limits of dispensation, without prejudice to no. 13 below;
  - 8° suffrages for deceased brothers and sisters of the Lay Fraternities, and for the whole Order.<sup>11</sup>

**12.** — § I – Where several Provinces are present in the territory of a single nation, there may also be a National Directory. The National Directory provides norms for national structures of the Laity of St Dominic. It may also provide norms for Provinces and Fraternities, although a Provincial Directory may derogate from norms of the National Directory.

§ II – The text of the National Directory is to be agreed by the Provincial Councils of the Laity of the provinces concerned. It is to be transmitted to the Master of the Order for approval together with the opinions of the Priors Provincial concerned and their Councils.

§ III – In approving the National Directory, the Master of the Order may also make amendments to particular norms.

§ IV – The approved National Directory is promulgated by the President of the national committee of Priors Provincial, if there is one, or else by the Master of the Order.<sup>12</sup>

**13.** — § I – The superiors of the Order and the presidents of the Fraternities do not have the authority to dispense from divine law or the universal law of the Church.

§ II – A dispensation always requires a just and reasonable cause (cf. can. 90 § 1). Norms which define essentially constitutive elements of an institute or act are not subject to dispensation (cf. can. 86).

§ III – Only the Master of the Order may dispense all Lay Dominicans from a norm of the Rule.

§ IV – The Prior Provincial may dispense individual fraternities from a norm of the Rule or the Directory, even without limit of time.

§ V – The President of the Fraternity may legitimately dispense from a norm of the Rule or the Directory in individual cases and for a determined time.<sup>13</sup>

**14.** — The Prior Provincial has the power to sanate invalid acts of the Fraternity, especially concerning admission to profession of the promise.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> DG1987, 6.

<sup>12</sup> DG1987, 1; DG2007, II § 1.

<sup>13</sup> DG2007, III.

<sup>14</sup> DG1987, 4.



## GOVERNMENT OF THE FRATERNITY

**15. — § I** – Unless the Directory determines otherwise, the President and Council of the Fraternity are elected by the members of that Fraternity who have made at least the temporary promise.

§ II – To be elected President, a member must have made the perpetual promise.

**16. — § I** – In accordance with art. 21(c) of the Rule, the Religious Assistant is to be a religious (“brother or sister”) of the Order. If it is impossible to appoint a suitable Dominican religious as Assistant to a fraternity, the Prior Provincial may dispense from this requirement and appoint another suitably-qualified person to assist the members in doctrinal matters and the spiritual life in the Dominican tradition.<sup>15</sup>

§ II – A religious or cleric who is not under the jurisdiction of the Prior Provincial cannot validly be appointed Assistant without the written consent of his or her major superior. For a secular cleric this consent is given by his Ordinary.<sup>16</sup>

## GOVERNMENT OF THE FRATERNITIES IN THE PROVINCE

**17. — § I** – The Directory determines the manner of electing the Provincial President and the Provincial Council of the Laity.

§ II – To be elected Provincial President, a member must have made the perpetual promise.

**18. — § I** – In accordance with art. 20(b) of the Rule, the Provincial Promoter is to be a religious (“brother or sister”) of the Order. Dispensation from this requirement is reserved to the Master of the Order.

§ II – One who is not under the jurisdiction of the Prior Provincial cannot validly be appointed Provincial Promoter without the written consent of his or her major superior and a signed agreement between the Prior Provincial and the Promoter.<sup>17</sup>

§ III – The term of office of the Provincial Promoter is four years. He or she may not serve for more than two consecutive terms.

§ IV – Although the Provincial Promoter has the full right to participate in meetings of the Lay Provincial Council, he or she does not enjoy active or passive voice in any organ of the Lay Fraternities.<sup>18</sup>

## ELECTIONS

**19. — § I** – Except where these Declarations or the Directory make other provision, elections among the Laity of St Dominic take place in accordance with cann. 119, 1° and 164–183.

§ II – Unless the Directory determines otherwise, there may be up to three scrutinies in an election. An absolute majority is required for election in the first or second scrutiny. If there have been two inconclusive scrutinies, a vote is to be taken between the two candidates with the greatest number of votes or, if there are more than two, between the two senior by first promise in the Lay Fraternities. After a third inconclusive scrutiny, that person is deemed elected who is senior by first promise in the Lay Fraternities.

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<sup>15</sup> DG2007, V.

<sup>16</sup> ACG Trogir (2013), 187; Bologna (2016), 345.

<sup>17</sup> DG2007, IV § 2.

<sup>18</sup> DG2007, IV § 3.

## SEPARATION FROM THE LAY FRATERNITIES

**20.** — § I – At the expiry of the temporary promise, if it is not renewed, a member is free to depart from the Lay Fraternities.

§ II – During the time of the temporary promise, or after making the perpetual promise, a member is not to seek an indult to depart from the Lay Fraternities except for a grave reason weighed before God and with the assistance of fellow members. In the presence of such a reason, a motivated request is to be presented to the President of the Fraternity, who is to forward it to the Prior Provincial together with his/her own opinion and that of the Council of the Fraternity.

§ III – The Prior Provincial is competent to grant an indult of departure from the Lay Fraternities. Once the indult is notified in writing to the member concerned, he or she is dispensed from the promise and the requirement to observe the particular law of the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic.<sup>19</sup>

**21.** — § I – Besides the situations mentioned in canon 316 § 1, a member who has made the temporary or perpetual promise may be dismissed for one of the following offences:

1° grave violation of the Rule or of the Directory;

2° causing grave public scandal among the faithful.

§ II – In the cases mentioned in § I, the President of the Fraternity is first to warn the member formally in writing.

§ III – If the warning is not heeded, the President with the consent of the Council of the Fraternity may ask the Prior Provincial to dismiss the member. In the situations mentioned in can. 316 § 1 the President must ask the Prior Provincial to dismiss the member.

§ IV – If the Prior Provincial, having afforded the member the opportunity to present a defence, judges the dismissal to be warranted, he issues a written decree of dismissal.

§ V – The decree of dismissal, once legitimately notified in writing to the member, brings about the cessation of rights and obligation deriving from the promise, and extends to all Lay Fraternities of St Dominic.

§ VI – Hierarchical recourse to the Master of the Order against a decree of dismissal is always possible.<sup>20</sup>

**22.** — § I – A member who has obtained an indult of departure from the Lay Fraternities and who subsequently seeks to be reincorporated in any Fraternity must follow the formation process again. The member's perpetual promise can be received only with the permission of the Prior Provincial with the consent of the Council of the member's new Fraternity. The promise and admission of one who keeps silent about a previous indult of departure is invalid.<sup>21</sup>

§ II – One who has been dismissed from the Lay Fraternities, after careful evaluation of his or her condition of life and with certainty of amendment, may be re-admitted under the same conditions as in § I.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> DG2007, VI § 1.

<sup>20</sup> DG2007, VII §§ 1 and 3; can. 316 § 1.

<sup>21</sup> DG2007, VI § 2.

<sup>22</sup> DG2007, VII § 2.

