

Carthusian Legislation in the Sixteenth Century as reflected in the *Chartae**

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The sixteenth century witnessed a radical transformation in the fortunes of the Carthusian Order. In 1509, before the upheavals of the Reformation, the *Tertia Compilatio* of the Statutes was published in an atmosphere of stability and continuing expansion of the Order, followed by the printing next year of the splendid Amorbach (Basle) edition of the whole corpus of Carthusian Statutes, together with the Papal privileges and bulls pertaining to the Order.¹ Within thirty years the English Province was in ruins, while the effects of the Reformation had made deep inroads into the Order in Germany and elsewhere. The Counter-Reformation would renew and strengthen the Catholic Church as a walled citadel, and it would be against this background that the *Nova Collectio Statutorum* would be published in 1582.² The *chartae* of the General Chapter provide an illuminating background and supplement to these two *corpora* of legislation.

Chartae early in the century include a renewal of the prohibition already made in 1498, against monks sharing with women the labour of harvesting, and a strong prohibition against the practice of alchemy in charterhouses, renewing an ordinance of 1499.³ The *charta* for 1506 includes a Papal letter revoking previous Papal permissions for women to visit certain charterhouses in particular circumstances, and, in response to the request of the Prior General and the General Chapter, forbidding ab-

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¹ Reprinted in Hogg 1989. The *Tertia Compilatio* is in Fascicle 3.

² Dom Innocent Le Masson published a second edition of the *Nova Collectio* in 1681, to which his *Directorium Novitiorum* was appended. The Second and Third Parts of the *Nova Collectio* are reprinted in Hogg 1992a. The First Part was in 1582 printed separately as the *Ordinarium Carthusiense*.

³ Clark 1998a, 1/40-2/39.

solutely the admission of women to Carthusian monasteries and churches.⁴

It is in 1506 that the formulation of a new body of Statutes is brought forward; there had been no new corpus since the publication of the *Statuta Nova* in 1368. Two, or three, or more of the Order's Priors or monks were to be chosen by the Prior General – Dom Franciscus du Puy, himself a doctor of civil and canon law – to produce an edited collection of the legislation produced in the intervening years for the next General Chapter.⁵ The process of examination went on through 1507⁶ or 1508⁷, and in the Chapter of 1509 the *Tertia Compilatio* was finally approved for publication, to rank in authority with the *Statuta Antiqua* and *Statuta Nova*.⁸ The printing of the Basle edition of Carthusian legislative material in 1510 set the seal upon this.

Papal privileges given to individual houses, as well as to the Order, had a legal as well as simply a historical significance. This was a time when the Order was concerned to consolidate its historical roots, and movement towards the recovery of Serra San Bruno would be completed in 1514. The Chapter of 1510 requested the superior of all Carthusian houses, including convents of nuns, to search out any privileges which had not been included in the Basle publication, and send them, or at any rate copies, to the Grande Chartreuse, since by Papal indult privileges granted to individual houses extended to the whole Order.⁹

The disposition for the convent of Prémol in the *charta* for 1512 touches on a matter that would come up later in the century – the overcrowding of convents beyond what the resources of the house could carry. The number of nuns at Prémol needed to be reduced to thirty.¹⁰

At the end of the *charta* for the same year there is provision for the course of action by the Order if by any chance there should be a schism in the Church, with rival Popes; Priors and Visitors from all parts of the Order should attend Chapters at the Grande Chartreuse, without taking sides in the schism, but being ready to accept the common mind of the Church as to the true Pope when this should be determined.¹¹ No doubt there was the memory of the Urbanist/Avignon schism. In the event, the

⁴ Clark 1998a, 14/39-15/43. – On women and the Carthusians, see Hogg 1992b.

⁵ *Ibidem*, 14/20-38.

⁶ *Ibidem*, 22/11-15.

⁷ *Ibidem*, 27/2-9.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 33/23-33.

⁹ *Ibidem*, 38/21-29.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 48/10-12.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, 50/22-51/27.

Order's concern for the unity of the Church would be put to an even severer test.

The General Chapters of 1514-1515 were fully occupied with the recovery of Serra San Bruno, and with the establishment of the feast of St. Bruno.¹² This joyful celebration of the Order's roots carried no hint of the storms that were to follow.

Throughout the 1520's, the Reformation made inroads into the Order. Ittingen was burnt, though not lost, in 1524¹³; Stettin was lost in 1524; Conradsburg, Eisenach, and Nürnberg in 1525; Crimmitschau in 1527; Bern in 1528; Basle in 1529.¹⁴ But all the lost houses are entered resolutely in the provincial dispositions for 1530 and for many years following, with simply *Non fit misericordia* for the Prior, in the master-copies of the *chartae*. The legislation of the General Chapter does not in any obvious way reflect the religious crisis that is occurring, until in 1532 there is an *Ordinatio* appended to the dispositions for Teutonia and the Rhineland, enjoining imprisonment for monks who persist in Lutheran doctrine.¹⁵ Silence does not at all mean a blindness to what was happening, although as a contemplative Order the Carthusians were not fully in a position to appreciate the intermingling of social with religious change, nor to understand that the princes and burghers who had been their patrons in the past could not in all cases be relied on to give like support in the future.¹⁶ The Carthusian response was above all a concentration on the 'one thing necessary', a concentration on their contemplative ideal and the means to attain it.

The General Chapter of 1537 forbade the reading of the works of Luther and Erasmus, *ac aliorum qui sanam et Catholicam doctrinam non sapiunt, et religioni statui impie aduersantur* (Erasmus was not himself un-orthodox, but was perceived as being critical of the religious state). Those monks who engaged in discussion of forbidden opinions were to be subject to general discipline.¹⁷ This ordinance was confirmed next year, explicitly forbidding the use of Erasmus' translation of the New Testament, and of any other of his translations, and of the *Monotessaron* compiled from his translation.¹⁸

¹² Clark 2003a.

¹³ Kamber 1997.

¹⁴ Hogg 1987, 18-19.

¹⁵ Clark 1996b, 86/36-87/5; 92/11-23.

¹⁶ Mathew & Mathew 1934. Also Martin 1993.

¹⁷ Clark 2000, 9/34-41.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 13/1-7.

In 1540 the General Chapter, in a long *Exhortatio*, particularly called upon Visitors to check the absences of some Priors from their monasteries, and to ensure that Priors set an example by their attendance at the conventual offices; those entrusted with the formation of novices should themselves live thoroughly mortified and disciplined lives. All those in positions of authority were to remember their accountability to God.¹⁹ The Chapter of 1544 enjoined particular care in the reception of novices.²⁰

It was not only in the northern European countries that there were defections from the Order. In 1551 an *Admonitio* addressed to the three Italian provinces called on all those who, *maligno spiritu suadente*, had left the Order, to return within six months, else they would be considered expelled.²¹

Amid the turmoil and tribulations afflicting the Order, discipline was maintained in small things, no doubt in mindfulness of the Gospel precept that the servant who is faithful in small things is faithful in great ones. The *charta* of 1548 directed that converses writing to the Prior General should make it clear that they were converses, rather than simply calling themselves *frater*, which might mean either a monk or a converse.²² In 1555 converses were directed to shave their moustaches immediately upon receipt of the *charta*, under a penalty to be determined by the Reverend Father.²³

The Council of Trent had been meeting intermittently since 1545, until its suspension in 1552. Under the austere and violently intolerant Paul IV there was no hope of its reassembly; only under his less forbidding successor Pius IV was this possible. An *Exhortatio* of the General Chapter in the *charta* of 1561 recalled once more the calamitous times, and called on all Priors and monks of the Order to be true to their calling, not tossed about with every wind of vain doctrine. Prayers were enjoined for the Council²⁴, which would resume in January 1562 for its last phase. The Council ended in December 1563, and its decrees were confirmed in a body in January 1564 by Pius IV. The General Chapter of 1566 directed all Visitors, Priors, and members of the Order to renew their lives in accordance with the Council's decrees. It went on to enjoin the practice of stability, and the avoidance of wanderings outside the enclosure to meet

¹⁹ Clark 2000, 20/28-21/33.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, 40/5-10.

²¹ *Ibidem*, 78/1-4.

²² *Ibidem*, 64/13-22.

²³ *Ibidem*, 95/8-15.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, 121/10-122/8.

ecclesiastics or seculars, unless they be bishops or princes who could hardly be denied. Attention is also given to the reception and formation of novices; unknown persons should not be accepted as novices; the progress of novices should be monitored.²⁵

Again the Chapter of 1567 emphasised renewal in line with the Council. Elections to office were to be by secret voting. The custom that Visitors should provide a house deprived of a pastor with a rector, to be confirmed by the next General Chapter, was declared not to be contrary to the mind of the Council.²⁶ Priors were to give an example of stability by residing in their monastery. They were to check against the ownership of possessions (*proprietas*), and were to have a key for all cells, or a master-key for all.²⁷ To enhance stability, no licences were to be given to leave the monastery, except in cases of urgent necessity, without reference to the General Chapter, the Prior General, or to Visitors. In order to ensure the singing of the divine office, the Visitors might direct that the numbers in a monastery be made up from another house.²⁸ Those who were transferred to other houses because of their importunity were not to be assisted with a large equipage, nor with money for the journey, but simply with their bundles and with reliable servants. Unsuitable monastic walks were to be revoked. The Papal prohibitions on the entry of women to charterhouses were to be read and enforced; monks might only converse with women once a year, with their mother and sisters in the gateway or in some other place.²⁹

Papal prohibitions on the admission of seculars to nuns' convents were to be enforced.³⁰ Presumably previous injunctions on this point had been less than totally successful!³¹

In accordance with earlier ordinances of the General Chapter and Papal letters, the Order was no longer committed to the governance of nuns who were not of the Order.³²

The Chapter of 1571 saw the tightening-up of discipline for the recalcitrant. Each year the Priors were to send the names of fugitives and of *criminosi* to the General Chapter. If possible, a licence was to be obtained from the Pope to send *criminosi* and *incorrigibiles* to the galleys, *ad tem-*

²⁵ Clark 2000, 150/36-151/24.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, 159/25-40.

²⁷ On keys in the charterhouses, see Mayo Escudero 2001.

²⁸ Clark 2000, 159/41-161/22.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 161/23-162/3.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 162/3-8.

³¹ Cf. note 87 on the directives of the General Chapter of 1560 for the nuns.

³² Clark 2000, 162/29-32.

pus vel in perpetuum.³³ – An interesting development from the ideals of St. Bruno! This would be realised at a later date, as the Chapter of 1589 was able to report³⁴, and subsequent *chartae* refer to a number of monks who were sent to the galleys for shorter or longer periods.³⁵ The Chapter of 1592 directed that any who laid violent hands on superiors should be sent to the galleys.³⁶

The Chapter of 1579 decreed that apostates were not to be received back after a third flight. It was recognised that some such had in fact been received back, but they were to be incapable (*inhabiles*) in future of holding any office.³⁷ However, in 1592 it was reported that some Priors were still receiving apostates back after a third, fourth, or fifth flight. The same Chapter required that the names of apostates should be published throughout the Order.³⁸ This was duly done in 1594; the list includes Franciscus Jayrius, a former Scribe of the General Chapter! In an imperfect world, the same General Chapter directed that fugitives after the fourth or fifth apostasy should only be received back into perpetual imprisonment.³⁹

The Chapter of 1571, in its heavy body of legislation, emphasised the obligation of a biennial visitation, in accordance with the Council of Trent and the Statutes. The strictly enclosed character of the Order was underlined in the prohibition of public preaching outside the monastery, and of the hearing of women's confessions.⁴⁰ Standards of dress were also maintained; in Provinces where there was no danger from enemies of the Faith, monks were to dress according to the form of the Order.⁴¹ This was reaffirmed in 1572, with explicit reference to monks on journeys.⁴²

The Chapter of 1572 also explicitly forbade members of the Order to administer the sacraments (including baptism of children) to seculars, except as provided by the Statutes and by common law.⁴³ Stability remained a concern; the same Chapter decreed that henceforward no-one was to change monasteries unless he had first completed four years in one charterhouse.⁴⁴

³³ Clark 2001a, 2/6-9.

³⁴ Clark 2001b, 9/33-36.

³⁵ Various interesting instances are listed by Hogg 1991a, 9-10.

³⁶ Clark 2001b, 57/5-7.

³⁷ Clark 2001a, 62/18-21.

³⁸ Clark 2001b, p. 57/8-23.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 76/27-42.

⁴⁰ Clark 2001a, 2/12-19.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, 2/37-38.

⁴² *Ibidem*, 13/4-16.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, 13/17-23.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, 13/24-36.

The Chapter of 1574 directed that the election of Priors should be according to the form laid down by Council of Trent.⁴⁵

The Chapter of 1577 tightened up on a number of points. Every monk had the right to write directly to the Prior General. Such letters were not to be intercepted, and Visitors were to check that this privilege was respected.⁴⁶ The confidentiality of letters addressed to the Prior General or to the Scribe of the General Chapter would be underlined by the Chapter of 1587.⁴⁷

There was a long-standing ordinance, dating from 1528, that office-holders who wrote to kings, princes, cardinals, or other magnates, to put pressure on the Reverend Father or the General Chapter, should be deposed and permanently incapable of holding office. This had been renewed at the Chapter of 1566.⁴⁸ It is a sign of the times that the Chapter of 1577, while re-affirming the prohibition of recourse to princes and magnates, allowed that monks might have recourse to Inquisitors where matters of faith were concerned!⁴⁹

At the same Chapter concern was expressed lest the dissolution of the Order might be imminent, because visitations were not being carried out thoroughly enough. Visitors were to show not only kindness, but the zeal enjoined by the Council of Trent; reports of the visitations were to be transmitted to the Reverend Father.⁵⁰

Again, still bearing in mind the decrees of the Council, the Order took a firmer line on the holding of possessions. In some houses the custom had grown up of giving money to the *antiquiores* or others who handled the accounts. At the Chapter of 1581 this practice was condemned; Priors or other officials who gave money to monks were to be deposed, and monks who accepted money on many pretext were to be imprisoned.⁵¹

In line with the Council, the Chapter of 1582 decreed that office-books were to be conformed to the corrected books of the Grande Chartreuse.⁵² This was re-affirmed in 1583, with the provision that Biblical readings

⁴⁵ Clark 2001a, 26/32-34.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, 45/23-34.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, 124/11-17.

⁴⁸ Clark 2000, 151/25-38.

⁴⁹ Clark 2001a, 45/35-46/5.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, 46/6-19.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, 74/16-25.

⁵² *Ibidem*, 80/33-81/15.

were to be conformed to the approved text of the doctors of Louvain⁵³, and again re-affirmed in 1584.⁵⁴

The Chapter of 1587 reflects the Order's determination to maintain its monasteries, and where possible to recover lost houses. Because many houses had passed into alien hands, and proofs of original ownership had been lost, Priors and rectors were directed to send any foundation-charters of their houses to the Grande Chartreuse by the next chapter, to be kept there as a permanent record, so that recourse might be had to them in time of need.⁵⁵

The same Chapter reminded superiors of their obligations: all Priors, Rectors, and Vicars of convents were required to visit the Grande Chartreuse in the first or second year after their promotion, on pain of deposition.⁵⁶

The General Chapter of 1589 decreed that no-one in future entering the Carthusian Order from another Order might be promoted to any office; those who had already been admitted to the noviciate from other Orders might be promoted at the discretion of their superiors.⁵⁷ No-one who had committed a grave offence (*crimen*) might ever be promoted to Prior, Vicar, *antiquior*, procurator, or sacrist – even less to Visitor.⁵⁸

Appended to the *charta* for 1596 are directives from the Apostolic Visitors. These include the stipulation that no-one who does not conform to regular observance in food and dress, and in attendance at the divine offices in choir, should be promoted to superior of a charterhouse.⁵⁹

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, even more explicit directives were given concerning the formation of novices, upon the initiative of Pope Sixtus V. The Chapter of 1589 directed that no-one should be admitted to the habit or to profession, until all the requirements in the Papal bulls had been fulfilled. On the basis of the same constitution, no religious superior might be appointed who was of illegitimate birth, without Papal dispensation.⁶⁰

The same Chapter required that each province should depute two or more monasteries, whose superiors should supervise the reception and

⁵³ Clark 2001a, 85/18-86/2.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, 91/9-27.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, 124/18-35.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, 124/36-125/5.

⁵⁷ Clark 2001b, 11/7-12.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 11/36-41.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, 94/23-95/9.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, 9/37-10/13.

formation of novices according to the Papal constitution.⁶¹ The Chapter of 1594 required that in future no novice should be admitted to a house where the office was not sung in full, and where there was not proper observance of silence and other religious customs; details of prospective novices were to sent to the provincial Visitors.⁶²

The Chapter of 1597 confirmed that novices should only be admitted to houses where the full night as well as day offices were sung by at least eight monks.⁶³

The Chapter of 1595 demanded a census of all members of the Order. Priors were to send details of all their monks, converses, and *donati*: their age, length of profession, and house of profession, and offices held. They were also to list those who had come and gone from the house in the last year.⁶⁴

Throughout the sixteenth century the General Chapter showed a consistent care for the ordering of the liturgy. The institution of the feast of St. Bruno has already been mentioned. The *charta* for 1542 directed a commemoration of St. Bruno throughout his octave.⁶⁵ There are refinements for the celebration of St. Bruno's octave in 1544⁶⁶ and 1545.⁶⁷ The Chapter of 1543, conscious of the threat to the Order not only from Protestant Christians, but also in Eastern Europe from the Moslem Turks, directed that after the daily conventual Mass the hymn *O salutaris hostia* should be sung kneeling, with other prayers added.⁶⁸ The same Chapter noted with concern that some Carthusian priests were only celebrating Mass infrequently; all priests of the Order were recalled to the cultivation of the interior life, and to the frequent and fervent celebration of Mass.⁶⁹

Liturgical conformity within the Order was seen as important, even before the final outcome of the Council of Trent. In 1549 the General Chapter forbade the printing, or procurement of printing, of Missals, Breviaries, or Hours of Our Lady, or any other books (*quoscunque alios libros*) without the express licence of the Prior General, under pain of

⁶¹ Clark 2001b, 10/38-11/6.

⁶² *Ibidem*, 76/7-17.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, 100/30-101/2.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, 85/38-86/2.

⁶⁵ Clark 2000, 28/15-19.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 39/40-40/4.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, 47/11-17.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, 34/20-33.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, 34/34-35/4.

dismissal from office for officials, or general discipline for other monks.⁷⁰ This was confirmed next year.⁷¹

Bearing in mind the calamitous times, the General Chapter of 1567 invoked especially the aid of St. Joseph, and directed that his festival on March 19th be kept as a solemnity throughout the Order.⁷² This was confirmed the following year, with full liturgical prescription; the same Chapter directed that the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas be kept in conformity with the Pope's instructions.⁷³ The General Chapter of 1569 considered that increased devotion to St. Anne would avail for the extirpation of error and heresy; directions for the observance of her feast were given accordingly. Copies of the Papal directives on the singing of litanies and processions were also to be sent to each house.⁷⁴

The General Chapter of 1571, taking compassion on human weakness, directed that the litanies which were sung according to the Papal directive should be sung before Mass, but should not be repeated as was the custom of the Order; the same Chapter directed that the feasts of Saints Joseph and Anne should be celebrated by converses as by monks, and that there should be a cessation from work on these days.⁷⁵

Because of the variety of feasts observed in different dioceses, the General Chapter of 1577 ordered that each charterhouse was to conform to the usage of its diocese as regards making feast-days a holiday from work. The Invention of the Holy Cross was to be observed in the same way as the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.⁷⁶

In 1586 the feast of St. Hugh of Grenoble, among others, was upgraded to a feast *cum capitulo*; other liturgical adjustments were made in accordance with a Bull of Sixtus V.⁷⁷

Already the *Tertia Compilatio* had devoted its twelfth chapter, with twenty-seven paragraphs, to the nuns of the Carthusian Order.⁷⁸ In the course of the sixteenth century there is a great deal more about the nuns. Aspirants for the convents were numerous, but could be unruly. By 1544 more girls were being admitted than the resources would sustain. In future no girl under ten or twelve was to be admitted! Provision was still

⁷⁰ Clark 2000, 70/21-29.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, 73/36-40.

⁷² *Ibidem*, 157/26-158/2.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, 164/18-165/12.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, 176/25-34.

⁷⁵ Clark 2001a, 1/26-2/5.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, 46/20-29.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, 104/18-24.

⁷⁸ Hogg 1993, 209-217.

made for the reception of certain well-connected young ladies, for whom an approach had been made to the Prior General! Various nuns had committed the offence of building fireplaces in their cells, including the Sub-Prioress of La Salette, who was deposed from office; suitable penances were imposed on those concerned.⁷⁹ In 1545 there was still a problem; fireplaces and windows which had been installed were to be removed within two months on pain of excommunication. Some of the nuns had private incomes, which amounted to *proprietas*. No men were to be admitted to the convent without special licence of the Vicar, nor were any men who were admitted with this licence to take food or drink in the monastery or in the nuns' cells.⁸⁰ Problems at La Salette continued in 1546⁸¹, and in 1547 there were again stern injunctions to Vicars and Prioresses of convents and nuns, and persons of the Order, against admitting to convents nuns or girls above what the resources allowed, on pain of deposition and perpetual inability to hold office for all officials.⁸²

The Chapter of 1552 again gave attention to the nuns. Just as the male charterhouses were hard pressed, so the temporal situation of the nuns was daily getting worse. The Visitors were to give attention to the material situation of the nuns, and assess how many monks and female religious could in future be accommodated in them, and report to the next Chapter. Turning specifically to La Salette, the well-connected young ladies to whom reference had been made some years before were to be admitted as soon as there was space, *etiam non expectata regulatione siue moderatione fienda*. In accordance with law and with Papal decretals, it was repeated that no men other than those of the Carthusian Order were to be admitted to Carthusian convents; the Vicars and Prioresses might only give licences for doctors, surgeons, and men doing necessary works to be admitted.⁸³

In the Chapter of 1554 attention was given to the nuns at Mélan. It was clear that in the Provinces of Geneva, Provence, and Burgundy, the resources of the convents were over-stretched; so again in accordance with law and Papal decretals no girls were to be admitted until the number of nuns was regulated according to the convents' resources.⁸⁴ In 1555 the number of permitted nuns for each convent was given; La Salette was the

⁷⁹ Clark 2000, 42/34-44/2.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, 49/4-50/16.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, 55/30-56/6.

⁸² *Ibidem*, 60/1-14.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, 81/29-82/15.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, 86/25-87/9.

largest with thirty nuns.⁸⁵ There was more about this at the General Chapter of 1556 following a visitation by two Priors commissaries; again at La Salette it was stipulated that the number might be exceeded, as agreed by a previous Chapter, in the case of the daughters of certain *generosi domini*.⁸⁶

At the Chapter of 1560 it was apparent that there were problems of a different kind with some nuns, who had left their convents and deserted to the Lutherans and to Geneva and married; others had borne children; and many other bad things (*multa mala alia*) had occurred. Laymen and regular or secular clergy of whatever rank (*cuiuscunque gradus aut dignitatis sint*) were forbidden entry to the convents without the licence of the Prior General. Men and women might not speak with the nuns except through an iron grille and with the nun's face veiled, in the presence of the Prioress or Subprioress. A nun was to be appointed doorkeeper, and the door to be kept locked, only to be opened with the Prioress' permission; two separate keys to the door were to be kept by the Prioress and Subprioress; other safeguards were built in.⁸⁷

The Chapter of 1578 reflected continuing problems with the nuns. Those nuns who did not conform to the Council of Trent, to the Papal constitutions, to the General Chapter, and to the Reverend Father, should be excommunicated.⁸⁸ This was repeated in 1580.⁸⁹

The Chapter of 1585 ordered strict observance of the decrees of the Council of Trent by the nuns, in observing their monastic enclosure, in avoiding possessions (*proprietas*), and in living in communal simplicity. At the same time, in these difficult days the nuns were seriously lacking in temporal necessities. The Visitors were to make an assessment of the convents before the next Chapter, with regard to their resources and the need for building repairs. Meanwhile the ordinance of 1547, that numbers in convents should not exceed what the resources of the house permitted, must be observed. Prioresses and nuns were not to write to the Prior General requesting exceptions, since he was expressly forbidden by the Pope to make such exceptions.⁹⁰

In 1589, in order to preserve the quiet of the convents and to be of service to them, members of the Order were forbidden to visit or send

⁸⁵ Clark 2000, 92/19-93/7.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, 96/17-42.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, 116/21-117/22.

⁸⁸ Clark 2001a, 53/30-54/16.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, 70/3-8.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, 96/17-97/12.

their servants to the convents. – This did not apply to Visitors! If Priors or charterhouses wished to send gifts, they should be sent to the whole convent, not to individual nuns.⁹¹

In 1590 the General Chapter warned all the Order's nuns to accept the decrees of the Council of Trent regarding their monastic life; neither the General Chapter, even less the Prior General, had any power to dispense them. If they did not conform within a set time, the Order would be freed of them, and they would be placed under the jurisdiction of the diocesan bishops. Poletens, long a victim of the religious changes and of wars, was in decline. In the same Chapter, the Order retained its rights, with the agreement of the prince who ranked as its founder, to move the nuns elsewhere, and make the place a seminary for religious.⁹²

The Chapter of 1593 ordered the Visitors to arrange for a subvention of the poor nuns of the Order, *quo facilius ad reformationem et susceptionem clausurae perpetuae et uitae communis promoueanur*.⁹³

The first movement towards the *Nova Collectio Statutorum* is indicated a few years after the conclusion of the Council of Trent, at the General Chapter of 1571. At the request of many Priors the Reverend Father had already entrusted the revision of the Statutes to some Fathers of the Order; these were now to be submitted to some of the Fathers present at the Chapter, and referred for further revision.⁹⁴ At the 1572 Chapter five Priors, together with a monk of the Grande Chartreuse, were charged with the further revision of the text. Having completed their work, they recommended publication, with indices, as soon as possible. This should be done in two forms: one with marginal notes giving the sources, the other simply giving the text.⁹⁵ However, nothing further seems to have been done at this point, since the 1573 Chapter decided to invite all the Priors to comment on the text established.⁹⁶ The Chapter of 1574 was thinly attended, and the question of printing was put off until the following year.⁹⁷ In 1575 the Prior General said that the pressure of other business had prevented him from considering any modifications which had been proposed; he undertook to call a private Chapter during the

⁹¹ Clark 2001b, 11/28-35.

⁹² *Ibidem*, 26/19-27/17. In 1607 the General Chapter would transfer to La Salette the last surviving nun of Poletens, and unite the possessions of Poletens to the new charterhouse of Lyon. Cf. Clark 2001c, 24/1-6.

⁹³ Clark 2001b, 67/3-19.

⁹⁴ Clark 2001a, 3/6-15.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, 10/26- 12/7.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, 20/13-17.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, 26/17-26.

year, or else to refer the matter to the following General Chapter.⁹⁸ However, there is nothing about the matter in the *chartae* for 1576 or 1577. In 1578 four Priors, together with the Vicar of the Grande Chartreuse, were directed to revise and correct the text, and to submit it again to the Reverend Father.⁹⁹ Their text was approved by the General Chapter of 1579, and declared to be the rule of the Order.¹⁰⁰ In 1580 warfare in the area of the Grande Chartreuse caused the General Chapter to be convened at Chambéry. The text of the *Nova Collectio* was confirmed in 1581¹⁰¹, and in 1582 was committed to printing. It was directed that when the new text was received by each charterhouse, it should be read before all the community, and a Mass of the Holy Trinity be celebrated, as was done at the Grande Chartreuse.¹⁰²

The *Statutes* consisted of three Parts. It was decreed that in 1582 the First Part of the *Nova Collectio* should be printed separately as the *Ordinarium Cartusiense*.¹⁰³ The *Ordinarium* was revised by Dom Jean Michel de Vesly, Prior of Paris, who would die as Prior General in 1600, and who is remembered as the author of various significant ascetical works.¹⁰⁴

The *Nova Collectio* came into immediate effect. The Chapter of 1583 ordered that in accordance with its requirements, the expenses of Visitors should be paid within three months.¹⁰⁵

Adjustments and updating continued. The Chapter of 1586 modified the directions of the *Nova Collectio* concerning the responsibility of maintaining monks who were transferred to another house, to ensure that when such monks were a burden rather than an asset for their new house, the house of their profession should maintain them.¹⁰⁶

The 1595 Chapter enjoined Priors to write to the Grande Chartreuse concerning any recent ordinances which they considered unhelpful, so that they might be reviewed.¹⁰⁷ The Chapter of the following year still called for comments on the legislation, since replies had been limited.¹⁰⁸ In 1597 the Chapter observed that multiplication of ordinances led to their being ignored; accordingly, all ordinances made since the publication of

⁹⁸ Clark 2001a, 32/20-31.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, 53/21-29.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, 62/27-33.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, 74/26-75/7.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, 80/14-32.

¹⁰³ Hogg 1992a, vol. 5, v, 14 (part 2, chap. 1, par. 3).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, v.

¹⁰⁵ Clark 2001a, 86/10-13.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, 104/29-105/5.

¹⁰⁷ Clark 2001b, 83/33-84/7.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, 92/14-20.

the *Nova Collectio* were revoked, except those listed in an appendix to the *charta*. In particular there was modification of many new liturgical observances, including the feasts of the Holy Name, St. Joachim, St. Hugh of Grenoble, and of some other saints. These adjustments were subject to confirmation by the two following chapters¹⁰⁹, which was duly done.¹¹⁰

The drastic changes in circumstances of the sixteenth century left a firm body of Carthusians faithful to their vocation, embracing the renewal of the Counter-Reformation and the Council of Trent. The new legislation expressed the Order's determination to maintain this ideal, a determination which had already borne fruit in new foundations in Spain and Portugal before the sixteenth century was done, and which would lead to new foundations in France and further a field in the years ahead.

¹⁰⁹ Clark 2001b, 99/16-100/25. Other legislation: 100/26-101/28.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 104/12-13 & 112/18-24.