

Preamble Regarding Obligations of the Society of Schoolmen

The Society of Scholastics is a union of philosophers brought together by fidelity to the principles, methods, and doctrines of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Prince of Scholastics, which we hold inviolate, in order that, by association, we may promote the autonomous rights of the philosophical sciences as the highest and most universal sciences investigable by reason alone —sciences which are neither mere handmaidens of theology nor simply apologetic tools—and, thus, work for the reconciliation of philosophy with the partial sciences.

Members of the Society are bound to its principles and goals, to which the signs of fidelity shall be the following:

- 1) Recognizing that a small error in principle is a large error in conclusion, one must subscribe fully to the Twenty-Four Thomistic Theses proposed by the Congregation of Studies and approved by Pope Saint Pius X as clearly containing not only the principles and major propositions of Thomas and of Scholastic Thomism, but also as being among the most fundamental principles of reality.
- 2) Recognizing that the genius of Scholastic Thomism is rightly ascribed in predominance to Thomas himself and not to one's own explanation or novel presentation of the same philosophy, one must treat the philosophic writings of Thomas as primary to all others.
- 3) Recognizing that we are among the least in the affairs of philosophy, one must energetically defend the philosophic doctrines of Thomas in his explanations of them, even if one does not fully grasp their meaning or import.
- 4) Recognizing that we are far removed from the mind of Master Thomas, when a point of contention arises regarding his meaning, one must first and foremost seek its resolution in the consensus of the philosophers of the continuous line of Scholastic Thomists who are recognized as faithfully and intentionally adhering to Thomas's doctrine. This line includes, but is not limited to, Herve de Nedellec, Thomas Sutton,

Durandus of Aurillac, John Capreolus, Cajetan, Conrad Kollin, Sylvester de Ferraris, Francis of Vittoria, Dominic Soto, Melchior Cano, Peter de Soto, Dominic Banez, John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, Vincent Gotti, Salvatore Roselli, Sanseverino, Charles Rene Billuart, Benedetto Lorenzelli, Edouard Hugon, Thomas Zigliara, H.D. Gardeil, Norbertus del Prado, Santiago Ramirez, and Garrigou-Lagrange. This line excludes those who explicitly or implicitly reject the principles, methods, or conclusions of the Scholastic Thomistic tradition and its continuous and organic development.

- 5) Recognizing that truth cannot contradict truth and that, thus, demonstration cannot contradict demonstration, one must not only explicate the conclusions of Scholastic Thomism but must also make great efforts to reveal the reconciliation of surface

inconsistencies a) among the rational demonstrations of Thomas themselves and b) between those demonstrations and the demonstrated facts of the modern partial sciences.

For their fidelity to the Scholastic tenets, members of the Society will find available to them numerous educational resources and academic benefits as well as opportunities to actively participate in the erection and sustention of various projects supported by the Society of Schoolmen. These benefits will be elaborated herein.

CONSTITUTION

Above have been most generally outlined the obligations incumbent upon all members of the Society of Schoolmen. The essential goals, structure, and functions of the Society must now be dealt with in detail. However, as there will prove to be different paths toward the promotion of Scholastic thought, some more suited to certain centers of activity and educational spheres than others, and as there will prove to be functions more or less contributive by different members and levels of members it is most opportune to keep these regulations general, though firm. There will be an advantage to leaving ample room for the superiors of the Society to support, develop, and even disband projects as they see fit, for the invariability of the principles to which the Society holds demands the plasticity of the individuals who become involved. If members are found failing in the resolve of the Scholastic principles, they will corrupt the Scholastic doctrines. For, *“parvus error in principio magnus*

est in fine.”

ARTICLE I—NAME

This society shall be known officially as the *Societas Scholasticorum*. In English it may be referred to as the Society of Schoolmen. Informally, the *Societas Scholasticorum* may be referred to as the Society of Scholastics, and its highest members will be referred to as the Schoolmen or Scholastics. In other languages the names of this society and its members will be decided by local Member-Societies and Councils united by the language in question, but it must always be a legitimate and honorable derivation of “*Societas*” and “*Scholasticus*” for reasons that will be made evident by the following.

“*Societas*” is to be understood as a more-than-passing union of Philosophers united by intellectual and moral assent to fulfill the ideals of the Scholastic synthesis, such as are outlined in Article II, while under obedience to the authorities empowered to direct the union towards said ideals. Consequently, should at any time the intellectual and moral assent of any member of the *Societas Scholasticorum* to the ideals set forth in Article II be compromised or be commonly regarded as highly suspect, said member will be ejected from the union. General signs of fidelity to these ideals are outlined in the preamble of this Constitution whereas suspicion of infidelity shall be credible in the absence of these signs.

“*Scholasticus*” is to be understood as referring to that most commonly held coordination of philosophical sciences—comprising both its doctrinal and didactic elements—prevalent in the Medieval universities of Christendom beginning more or less in the 12th century, developing most fully during the 13th century, declining from that point forward, embracing preeminently the philosophical principles of Aristotle AS SYNTHESIZED SUPEREMINENTLY IN THE MIND OF THOMAS OF AQUIN--whose methods, principles, and doctrines are taken as our inviolable guide—and expounded by his legitimate commentators (i.e., those who upheld the Scholastic synthesis or its various revivals).

We do not hold fast to this philosophic and Scholastic Thomism on account of reasons from authority, for “*locus ab auctoritate quae fundatur super ratione humana est infirmissimus.*” Rather, we hold to this philosophic and Scholastic Thomism as devotees of truth; realizing that its tenets have been obtained by reason alone and verified by unassailable proofs from logical demonstration and empirical experimentation.

Article II—PURPOSE

Holding as we do that the intellectual method of investigation and instruction formulated in the Scholastic synthesis, and that the philosophical doctrines concluded therefrom, together represent the pinnacle of rational activity, and holding as we do that intellectual development is the highest achievement of man insofar as he is a rational being, it is our purpose to reestablish the Scholastic synthesis in all speculative and practical fields as offering the normative model for rational inquiry and practical activity that results in personal perfection (including the habits of art and science), economic stability, and political faultlessness. Our efforts shall be directed at seeking out and promoting various projects that will resurrect Scholasticism by our providing the intellectual resources and backing to allow others to incorporate proper reasoning into daily thought. The Society will strive to cause in others knowledge of the highest metaphysical analysis, in order that they may carry philosophic principles into their respective fields, thus reestablishing philosophical sciences as the unifying constituent of logical artifact (i.e., perfection of purely rational knowledge).

The resurrection and universal adoption of the Scholastic synthesis will be achieved through:

1. Gathering a pool of traditional Scholastic philosophers dedicated to the same principles and ends, in order to make good through association what fails the individual.
2. Supporting various projects that specifically embody these principles and aim towards these ends.

The first part will be achieved through the levels of membership outlined below. The second part will be achieved through three distinct yet unified general pursuits:

1. Negatively, the Schoolmen will defend Scholasticism by supporting projects that counter those false opinions destructive to it, yet always in manners befitting our rational ideals.
2. Positively, the Society will seek to promote those projects that teach Scholasticism by making it available in its classical, unadulterated form which is faithful not only to the content of Scholastic Thomism but to the structure of it as well.
3. By means of this education, the Society will, finally, support projects that encourage others to carry the conclusions of Scholasticism into their own occupational fields

and

ethical conduct.

Given that the matter dealt with by the Scholastic synthesis is the totality of reality, it is inconvenient to specify here within the Constitution itself the projects and precise activities that the *Societas Scholasticorum* will undertake. Such decisions will be left to the ingenuity of various men at various times and will deal with all conceivable speculative and practical activity. However, the activities and promotions of the Society must always be measured by the Marks of Fidelity, be guided by the doctrinal and didactic principles of Scholastic Thomism, meet with agreement by the Counselors, and ultimately be approved by the President General.

ARTICLE III—LANGUAGE

Given the considerations of practicality and the nearly worldwide recognition of English as the new common language, it serves the purposes of the *Societas Scholasticorum* to utilize English as our official language. However, it is the hope of the Society that Latin will eventually find a place of preference in all official documents and correspondence, given its practically unalterable character as well as the importance of continuity between the old Scholastic masters and the ones to come. Should the President General of the Society and the Counselors at some point in the future deem it feasible to replace English with Latin as the official language of the society, this Constitution is to be amended in accordance with that judgment.

ARTICLE IV—MEMBERSHIP: GENERAL STRUCTURE

Holding such universal goals as does the *Societas Scholasticorum*, and considering that these goals depend upon such precise and closely guarded principles, it seem necessary to establish several distinct and exactly separated levels of membership with varying levels of control exercisable by the superiors. In this way, the fundamental doctrines of the Society and the activities undertaken to promote them will be entirely commanded by the superiors of the Society, while, at the same time, there will be opportunities for an unlimited number of members who share the same general goals outlined in this Constitution. Therefore, the Society will be comprised of three distinct levels of membership: the lowest level is comprised of Associates

or Simple Members, the next level is comprised of Distinguished Members, and the highest level is comprised of Scholastics. These three levels shall be constructed and perform as follows:

(A) Associate Members. Comprising the lowest level of membership in the *Societas Scholasticorum*, the Associate position is open to all who manifest a minimum fidelity to the goals of the Society. The sign of this minimum fidelity shall be an affirmation of assent and commitment to uphold the twenty-four Thomistic theses and the restoration of Scholastic Thomism. Associates shall have no say in the governance of the Society or in the election of its superiors. However, the associates shall have a limited access to the resources of the Society (e.g., academic works of the superiors, free participation in most Society sponsored events, official Society libraries--should they be established--website privileges should a website be developed, etc.). The exact extent of participation that associates will have is to be decided on a project-by-project basis and must be approved by the President General in consultation with the Counselors.

(B) Distinguished Members. Comprising the second level of membership in the *Societas Scholasticorum*, the honor of complete membership shall be granted to all who, having been admitted as an associate, present to the President General a certain number of academic works deemed to be in harmony with the goals of the Society and deemed to be of a sufficient intellectual grade to merit fuller participation of the Associate in the activity of the Society. What constitutes the number of worthy documents or activities will be determined at a later date. In addition, the applicable member must meet whatever specific rational demands are made by the President General in consultation with the Counselors. Distinguished members, in addition to whatever benefits may be bestowed on Associates, will be allowed to participate in all local elections that fall within their geographic boundaries. Moreover, they will have the opportunity to contribute philosophical works to Society publications, to host Society events, to contact and consult the Scholastics, and to proffer projects for consideration by the President General in consultation with the Counselors. Further benefits will develop with the growth of projects and will be left to the discretion of the President General.

(C) Scholastics. Comprising the highest level of membership in the *Societas Scholasticorum*, the position of Scholastic is by invitation only. It is granted solely by the President General, in consultation with the Counselors, to those distinguished intellectuals, be they already members of the Society or not, whose goals are in complete accord with those of the Society and whose presence is deemed to be of most fruitful benefit to the restoration of Scholasticism. It is highly recommended that Scholastics be especially trained in the Scholasticism synthesized by Thomas Aquinas according to the traditional Scholastic method. They must not be found wanting in any doctrinal area and must be of prudent judgment in supporting any new thinkers that are proposed to be Thomistic. Scholastics have complete access to all benefits that may be developed by the Society. In addition, they have the opportunity to teach in the name of the Society, to sponsor projects in the name of the Society, and to participate in the elections of superiors.

ARTICLE V—BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors shall be constructed from among the Scholastics.

This Board will include three types of offices:

- i) *Successive*: the President General,
- ii) *Appointive*: the Vice President General,
- iii) *Elective*: a Secretary General, a Treasurer General, and
- iv) *Mixed Successive/Appointive/Elective*: an Advisory Board consisting of three, six, or nine counselors.

To follow the guidelines presented in these By-Laws, these Directors are bound in fidelity by the authority given them through the consent of the members of the Society insofar as the latter choose to be members of the Society.

(A) The President General. The *Societas Scholasticorum* is essentially monarchical with a line of succession. With a monarchical line of succession the chances are far greater of safeguarding the continued orthodoxy of the Society's mission than they would be in a democracy. The first President General is responsible for appointing his first successor, who will in turn appoint his successor, and so on. Each President General must appoint a Vice President General who should remain with the President General for the entirety of the latter's service. The President General is appointed until he dies or chooses to resign or else is considered unanimously by the Counselors, the Secretary General, and the Treasurer General to have lost control of his faculties.

Should he die without appointing a successor, the Vice President General will take immediate possession of the deceased President's office. After one year in the office, the acting President General will be subject to a vote of confidence by the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will vote to retain or release the acting President General. A two-thirds majority is needed for any decision to be considered legitimate. If he is retained, the acting President General becomes legitimized, may appoint a new Vice President General, and may name his own successor. If he is not retained, a unanimous vote is required by the advisory board in addition to a two-thirds majority vote of all Scholastics in order to appoint a new President General.

Should he choose to resign, he will name his successor. The successor holds the office under the same conditions. Each successor should be especially well versed in the Ethics and Politics of Aristotle as presented by Thomas Aquinas in order that he govern most rightly.

Should he suffer the loss of his faculties, a unanimous vote is required by the advisory board in addition to a two-thirds majority vote of all Scholastics in order to appoint a new President General.

The predominant role of the President General will be to ensure that the principles of Scholastic Thomism are pursued by the Society and nothing else besides. He must personally approve all projects undertaken by the Society on every level of activity. The President General, and only he, may appoint heads of projects and empower them to appoint others. In addition, he must appoint, at the beginning of his service, one-third new Counselors to the Advisory Board that will replace the third appointed by his predecessor. These Counselors MUST meet the requirements laid down for admission into the level of Scholastics. The President General is strongly encouraged to place among this third a good and holy priest who will serve as the President General's personal advisor. The President General should be obedient to this priest in every legitimate matter.

The President General should preside at all meetings of the Directors and all meetings where the entirety or majority of Scholastics is present. He should call special meetings of the Directors whenever deemed necessary, but he must meet with all of them together at least once a year. He shall sign all official documents and publications, as well as perform all other duties commonly attached to the office of a superior.

Amendment to the By-Laws cannot be made on the sole authority of the President General. He requires a two-thirds majority for any amendment to be undertaken and is bound to consult the Scholastics, though he is not bound by their opinion. Should at any point the members of the Society oppose the President General, they are absolutely free to leave. If after a prudent amount of time the President General is unable to find sufficient numbers to replace a diminishing society, especially the numbers of Directors, he may consider the Society abolished, but he must communicate it to the remaining members. However, should the President General who finds himself in such a situation still be holding to the Scholastics ideals, he is strongly encouraged not to abandon the mission of the Society but to reorganize it as he sees fit. It ought not, though, retain the name *Societas Scholasticorum*, for there is no guarantee of its fidelity to our principles.

If at any time the President General becomes unfaithful to the traditional principles of Scholasticism and especially to Thomas Aquinas and his commentators, i.e., if the President General fails to be identified by the Marks of Fidelity enumerated above, members of the Society are asked to resign.

The President General shall preside at all meetings of the directors at which he or she is present. The president shall perform such duties as the board of directors may prescribe and shall see that all orders and resolutions of the board are carried into effect. The President

General shall execute bonds, mortgages and other contracts requiring a seal, under the seal of the corporation, except where permitted by law to be otherwise signed and executed and except where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the board of directors to some other officer or agent of the corporation.

(B) The Vice President General. The Vice President General is appointed by the President General at the beginning of the latter's service. The choice for Vice President General should be made from among the Scholastics, though an outside choice may be legitimate as long as the chosen is qualified to be admitted into the level of Scholastics. The President General should retain the same Vice President for the entirety of his service. Should the Vice President die, resign, or be removed for whatever reason, the President General must appoint a new one.

Above all, the Vice President General must seek to coordinate the designs of the Society with the necessary steps and practical measures to implement those designs. The Vice President General must be capable of overseeing all the projects sponsored by the Society, at least in a most general way, and monitoring the results and activities of said projects. In virtue of his appointed office, he may in turn appoint other Scholastics to oversee specific projects, but never without the approval of the President General.

In every temporary absence of the President General, the Vice President General assumes the former's powers and duties. Should the President General die or be in privation of the use of his faculties, the Vice President General assumes the powers and duties of the former for one year, at which point a vote of confidence will be cast as outlined in Article V(A).

The Vice President General shall, in the absence or disability of the president, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the president, and shall perform such other duties as the board of directors or the president may prescribe.

(C) The Secretary and Treasurer General. The Secretary General and the Treasurer General are each freely nominated by both the Scholastics and the Distinguished Members, though only the former may elect them to office. A simple majority is needed.

The Secretary General shall keep a record of all meetings of the Directors and all meetings of Scholastics where the President General presides. He shall prepare agendas and official meetings in coordination with the President General and the other superiors, as well as oversee whatever publications the Society shall produce. He shall submit a report quarterly on the progress of supported projects as well as make such information available to the other members of the Society insofar as it is deemed fit for release. He shall officially be the head of all member-Societies on the local level and procure information pertaining to each of them for the President General. He will issue and sign all official documents that are released to the

other levels of members, expedite all directions for the affairs of the Society, as well as perform all other functions generally reserved to a superior secretary.

The Secretary General shall keep or cause to be kept a record of all meetings of the members and the board of directors and record all votes and the minutes of all proceedings in a book to be kept for that purpose. The Secretary General shall give, or cause to be given, notice of all meetings of the members and special meetings of the board of directors, and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the board of directors or president, under whose supervision the secretary shall be. The Secretary General shall keep in safe custody the seal of the corporation and shall affix the same to any instrument requiring it. The assistant secretaries, if any, in order of their seniority shall, in the absence or disability of the secretary, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the secretary and shall perform such other duties as the board of directors may prescribe

As the *Societas Scholasticorum* will be established as a non-profit organization, the Treasurer General shall first and foremost direct his efforts to procuring funds for the mission of the Society. He shall direct the fundraising efforts of all Member-Societies and collect all appropriate monies. He shall deposit the funds in a designated checking account to be withdrawn with the approval of the President General to support the projects overseen by the Vice President General. Through the various stages of the projects supported by the Society, the Treasurer General shall keep a detailed record of all monies received and disbursed. He shall pay all budgetary obligations and submit financial reports to the Directors when requested and when needed for tax purposes.

The Treasurer General shall have the custody of the corporate funds and securities, shall keep full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the corporation, shall deposit all moneys and other valuable effects in the name and to the credit of the corporation in such depositories as may be designated by the board of directors and shall perform such other duties as the board of directors may prescribe.

(D) The Counselors. The Counselors that make up the Board of Advisors of the *Societas Scholasticorum* should be only the most qualified of Scholastic thinkers. Their function is to provide academic, administrative, and prudential guidance to the other superiors, most especially to the President General. The selection of Counselors should be made with the utmost reflection and their advice is not ever to be taken in stride. They are the minds that direct the Society and must be respected as the intellectual superiors of its every member. There is little excuse for the President General to take action contrary to their counsel, while there is no excuse for not consulting them at all. All decision of the President General regarding the acceptance of others into the ranks of Philosophers or Scholastics must involve the consultation of at least a third of the Counselors.

As stated in Article V(A), the President General must appoint one, two, or three

Counselors to replace the third appointed by his predecessor. Members of the remaining two thirds name their successors from among the ranks of the Scholastics. Should they die without naming a successor, the President General will appoint one. Both the Scholastics and the Distinguished Members nominate the final third but only from among the ranks of the Scholastics. They are voted in by a simple majority of Scholastics and are approved by the President General.

ARTICLE VI—SPECIFIC STRUCTURE

Above has been outlined the very general structure of the *Societas Scholasticorum*. Specifically, each Scholastic member of the Society will be empowered to form his own Member-Society in his own geographic locale. Should there be several Scholastics in a single geographic location, they will form a Local Council of Scholastics.

Each Member-Society of Scholastics and each Council of Scholastics will be given the responsibility of implementing the Society's supported projects on a local level. Each Member-Society and Council will formulate its own bylaws under the direction of the local Scholastics for the approval of the President General. Each Member-Society will be composed of a President Specific, Vice President(s) Specific (in the case of several Scholastics in the same area), Secretary Specific, and Treasurer Specific.

Further elaboration of the organization of local Member-Societies and Councils is far too contingent to pertain to the Society's present constitutional structure. It will be expounded as the needs of the Society progress.

ARTICLE VII--ACTIVITIES

By "project" one is to understand any academic or social endeavor designed to promote the synthesis of Scholasticism in a particular field by the efforts of noted philosophers. The Society in its bare constitutional form supports no particular endeavor to this end because the myriad of possibilities to promote Scholasticism make an *a priori* outline of our future activities quite impossible. We do make the distinction between "personal projects" and "societal projects."

Personal projects are academic or social endeavors designed to promote Scholasticism in a particular field but only immediately through the efforts of an individual (e.g., publishing a book on the Scholastic method, teaching a small class on Scholastic logic, etc.). Small personal projects may be proposed at any time by Distinguished Members of the Society and especially by Scholastics themselves. Acceptance is purely at the discretion of the Directors, but if accepted, the petitioner is allocated a certain grant (should finances be available), the intellectual

backing of all members, and the name of the Society as a sponsor. No individual who is not a Distinguished or Scholastic Member of the Society will be granted finances or intellectual support from the society as a whole.

Societal projects promote Scholasticism while involving the concerted effort of a number of individuals within the Society or the Society as a whole. Support for these projects may be requested by anyone at anytime. Outside individuals and private institutions can approach local Society members to petition them to have proposals heard by the Directors. Should these projects be deemed harmonious with the principles and ends of the Society, a grant or loan will be given (should finances be available), the full intellectual cooperation of all members will be expected, and the name of the Society will be loaned to the project. The requirements for the Society's cooperation will be determined by the Directors on a case-by-case basis. However, the Society reserves the right to abandon a project previously supported and condemn the use of our name by that project should at any time those involved compromise the aims of the Society.

The Society especially encourages projects that:

(1) *Defend*

The Society seeks projects that, primarily through literary work, defend Scholastic Thomism by countering those false opinions destructive to it. Among the most dangerous adversaries to the perennial realism epitomized in the philosophic writing of Thomas, we count Modernism, Idealism, Neo-Cartesian Phenomenology, Empiricism, Positivism, Existentialism and Fideism.

(2) *Explain*

The Society seeks projects that, primarily through common work, explain Scholastic Thomism by making it available in its classical, unadulterated form. This includes the preparation and presentation of educational materials that follow not only the content of Thomism but its structure as well. To the traditional method of instruction we oppose "Historical Thomism", "Analytic Thomism", "Existential Thomism", "Semiotic Thomism," and "Paleo-Thomism."

(3) *Expound*

The Society seeks projects that, primarily through research, empirical experiment, and its subsequent presentation, expound upon the perennial philosophy of Scholastic Thomism by disputing questions most pertinent to our own times that are not dealt with explicitly by Thomas

or the line of Thomistic Commentators. The principles by which such disputations must take place (though especially applicable to these disputations) are the same that guide all the

activities of the Society, and are known by the Marks of Fidelity enumerated above.