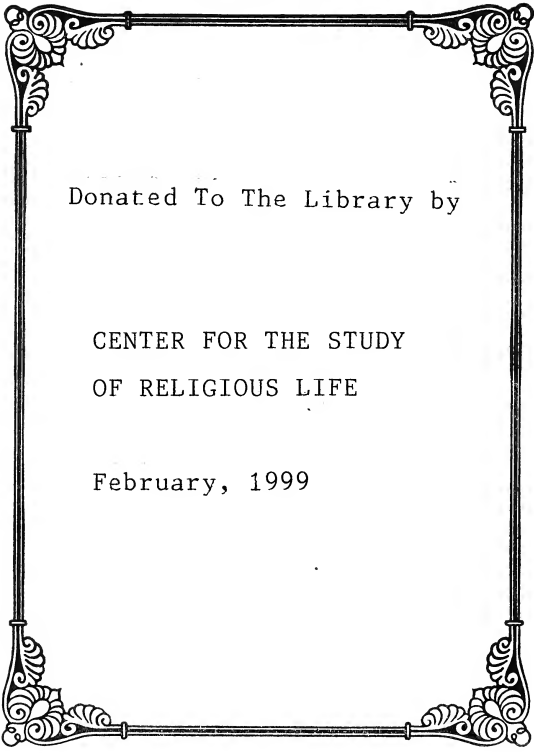


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COMMON OBSERVANCES

OF THE

# Sisters of Charity

of the

Blessed Virgin Mary



BVM  
MOUNT CARMEL ARCHIVES  
DUBUQUE, IOWA



SAINT JOSEPH'S CONVENT

MOUNT CARMEL

Dubuque, Iowa

1915



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## PREFACE

In this book of "Common Observances," compiled originally at the desire of our venerated Foundress, Mother Mary Frances Clarke, our Congregation will find a collection of the practices and forms commonly employed by us in the discharge of our several duties, both spiritual and temporal, since the earliest days of its existence. Many of these customs were introduced by our Very Reverend Founder, Father Donaghoe, as aids to the observance of Rule and to the promotion of uniformity among us. Time has tested their utility, and we have been taught to prize them as well calculated to effect that for which they were intended; therefore as time progresses, and our numbers increase, these worthy practices should not fall into disuse.

Many of us can still recall the days when, a feeble few, we began these observances under the immediate care of our beloved Founder and Father, and our gentle, tender-hearted Mother Foundress, Mary Frances Clarke, both of happy memory.

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# COMMON OBSERVANCES.

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## CHAPTER I.

### SPECIAL DEVOTIONS.

1. On rising, each Sister makes the Sign of the Cross as a consecration of the day to God's service, and dresses herself with all possible modesty and diligence, at the same time saying or answering the prayers to be said while dressing, namely: "In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, crucified, I rise this day;" a decade of the Rosary and the De Profundis for all who died during the night; "O clement Jesus, fond lover of souls," and the aspirations to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

All should rise promptly, otherwise, Rule on this point is not kept, and there will be little time for recollection and for that quiet preparation for Holy Communion which a fervent religious ought to make.

2. Having concluded the vocal prayers, we recall to mind the points read on the evening previous for the morning meditation. Twenty minutes are allowed for dressing, then all assemble in the chapel or oratory. In a clear, audible voice, and in a manner neither hurried nor indifferent, the Lector recites the prayers prescribed in the booklet, "Community Prayers," makes the act of the Presence of God, says the prayer before medi-

tation, and reads the first point. Usually ten minutes are allowed for each point, one half-hour for the whole meditation.

Our Reverend Founder recommended change of posture in order to prevent distraction from fatigue or drowsiness, so we kneel during the reading of the points and sit during meditation. However, each Sister is free to assume the position which will best aid her in meditating well. The Superior will see that the chapel is well lighted during the time of public prayer. The lights must not be lowered after the reading of the points for meditation.

3. At the conclusion of the meditation we recite the prayer of St. Ignatius, "Soul of Christ," then review the manner in which we made the meditation.

4. The Angelus is to be said when the bell rings. Should this interrupt another spiritual exercise, we say only the Angelus proper, ending with the prayer, "Pour forth we beseech Thee, O Lord." Where no "Angelus bell" rings, we say the Angelus with the Community prayers.

5. In the missions it may be necessary for the Sisters to perform some of their household duties before Mass. The Superior will so arrange that no Sister may be obliged to remain from Mass, when by a proper management of time and duty this privation may be avoided.

If the Sisters go to the church for Mass, they must leave the house together and return together in proper order.

6. When the clock strikes, we say the customary prayer in honor of the Sacred Heart, an Ave Maria, "Eternal rest" and "We beseech Thee O blessed Jesus, Save us whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy Precious Blood." In presence of strangers a short aspiration may be said mentally. The Superior, and in her absence, the Sister next in rank, will recite these prayers, as well as Grace before and after meals. Grace must not be said until the Community is assembled. All should obey the bell promptly.

7. The daily prayers and the Sunday Office are recited by a Sister to whom this duty is assigned. The spiritual lectures are read by the Lector appointed for the week.

8. At the Mother-House, the bell rings for the Particular Examen at a quarter before twelve. In the missions, the Superior must so provide that the Examen may be made by all before the afternoon session begins.

The time allowed for Examen is ten minutes. About one third of this time should be spent in the scrutiny of conscience; the remainder in exciting sorrow for faults committed, begging for grace and returning thanks to God for His great mercies.

9. Only spiritual books or other edifying and instructive reading shall be introduced at dinner and at supper. The Superior shall name the book to be read, and shall be careful to see that at dinner a chapter from the "Imitation" and at supper some passages from the Holy Scriptures be read

first. Immediately after dinner we make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and recite the prayers named for this occasion. Where we cannot visit the Blessed Sacrament, we are to say these prayers either in the oratory, or in the refectory, as the Superior shall direct.

10. At the Mother-House, a general visit to the Blessed Sacrament is made at two o'clock in the afternoon. In the missions, the Superior will appoint the time best suited for this visit.

11. Half an hour's spiritual reading from Rodríguez's "Christian Perfection," St. Liguori's "Nun Sanctified," or some similar work, is to be taken daily by all the Sisters. Spiritual reading is closed by making the Sign of the Cross.

12. On Sundays and feast-days we recite the "Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary." Where the Sisters attend Vespers in the church, each Sister may there recite the Vespers and Compline of the Office, though the Vespers of the Church will suffice.

13. At the Mother-House, two or three hours are daily given to the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. At least one hour daily should be given in the missions, two Sisters going one-half hour each day, according to "number."

14. The Sisters should assemble once a week, if possible, for the Holy Hour. If this cannot be performed as a community exercise, it may be made privately.

15. Novenas will be made in preparation for First Fridays, and for the feasts of Christmas, the

Circumcision, Pentecost, the Sacred Heart, the Purification, Visitation, Assumption, Immaculate Conception, Annunciation, and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, Help of Christians, Mount Carmel, All Saints, also of St. Joseph and St. Patrick. The Litany of the Saints will be recited on Rogation days. The sacristan will remind the Superior of the approach of each feast. The special devotions for Lent and the months of March, May, June, July, October and November, are to be faithfully performed in the mission houses as also in the Mother-House.

Superiors shall take care that the specified novenas are made at some time other than that set apart for night prayers.

16. When the Sisters meet, also when they enter a room where any member of the Community may be, they will say the aspiration recommended by our Reverend Founder, "Praise be to Jesus, Mary and Joseph," or respond "Now and forevermore. Amen."

17. St. Joseph's Day. As St. Joseph is our special patron, we celebrate his feast, March 19th, as a holy day throughout the entire Congregation. The Local Superiors will obtain a dispensation from school duties on this day.

18. Feast of St. James. As a tribute of love and gratitude to the memory of our saintly Founder, we observe the feast of St. James, July 25th, as a day of great devotion. Our Holy Communion on this day will be offered for the repose of the soul of Very Reverend Father Donaghoe.

19. Every year the general Retreat will be held in the Mother-House and in the largest central missions. The annual eight-day Retreat must not be shortened without permission from Mother General.

20. The spiritual exercises prescribed by Rule are not to be omitted, either wholly or in part, when lectures, recitals, or other entertainments are given in our schools, nor when the Sisters are busy preparing for examinations, for entertainments, or for other things of the kind. Material things should not be practically placed above those that are spiritual.

21. Without permission no Sister may absent herself from any spiritual exercise, nor may she leave the chapel during a community exercise without having obtained the permission of the Superior.

22. Our Constitutions, Article 271, lay special stress on the silence to be observed in the chapel; only the most urgent necessity should cause even one word to be spoken there.

23. After the signal is given, five minutes will be allowed for the Sisters to assemble, before any exercise begins.

24. Our Congregation is affiliated to the Roman Prima Primaria, to the Apostleship of Prayer, and to the Arch-confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, and we participate in the spiritual treasures they offer. The only requirement on the part of each Sister is to make once a month, one continuous hour of adoration before the



Blessed Sacrament, either exposed or in the tabernacle. We are free as to the day, hour or chapel, and if we choose we may change the time and place every month.

25. By reciting at any time six Paters, Aves, and Glorias in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, we may gain all the indulgences of the Portiuncula, of Jerusalem, of the Roman Stations, and of St. James of Compostella, an almost incalculable number. Let us offer these suffrages generously for the holy souls in Purgatory, for all especially who have been benefactors of our Congregation, and are now in need of prayers.

## CHAPTER II.

### RENOVATION OF VOWS.

26. "Twice a year, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, and at the close of the annual eight-day retreat, a devotional renewal of Vows will be made by all the Sisters. Besides these devotional renewals, the Sisters will pronounce their Vows on the day on which their earlier Vows expire, as specified in Article 141 of the Constitutions."—Article 147.

27. The ceremonial for the renovation of Vows made for a new term, is as follows: At Mass, after the Communion of the celebrant, and after the recitation of the Confiteor and the words said before the Communion of the faithful, that is, to the end of the "Domine non sum dignus," the Sisters, if two or more make their Vows on the same

day, will recite the formula together as far as "I vow to Thee, etc." These words each Sister separately will pronounce aloud. Then together they will recite the remainder of the formula, beginning with the words, "O Father of Mercies." The time is to be explicitly enunciated in the utterance of the formula by saying—for a year—, or, for three years—, or, forever.

28. It is to be said also that Profession is made in the hands of the Superior General, or of a Sister deputed by her for this purpose, who accepts it in the name of the Institute.—Constitutions, Article 142.

29. "After each juridical renovation of Vows, temporary, or in perpetuity, a written testimony thereof will be signed by the Superior General or by her delegate, and by the Sister who made her Vows. This document is then sent to the Mother-House."—Constitutions, Article 143.

30. The Devotional Renovation—that is, the renovation when the Vows are not made for a new term—must be made before Mass, and if on this occasion, the Sisters may receive Holy Communion before Mass, they will recite together the "Formula for Devotional Renewal," as expressed in the Constitutions, Article 149, after the Confiteor, at the end of the "Domine non sum dignus." If the Sisters may not receive Holy Communion before Mass, the renewal will be made before the priest descends the steps of the altar to begin the Mass. In all cases, the formula must be read aloud.

31. Sisters do not need permission for the Devotional Renewal of Vows. For the Annual or the Triennial Renovation, or the making of Perpetual Vows, permission must be obtained from Mother General.

#### CONFESSION.

32. In approaching the tribunal of Penance, we recite the Confiteor before entering the Confessional. We should, if possible, perform our sacramental penance before leaving the church or chapel.

33. Should it happen that a Confessor be prevented from hearing confessions at the usual time, the Sisters should not complain, but cheerfully submit to the unavoidable privation, and prepare all the more fervently to receive the Holy Sacraments when the opportunity is presented.

34. The Superior will carefully observe the prescriptions of the Holy See, especially those contained in the Decrees: "Quemadmodum," and "Cum De Sacramentalibus."

#### HOLY COMMUNION.

35. Our Sisters should approach the Holy Table with the utmost reverence and devotion, which should be discernible in their manner, neatness of attire, and their whole exterior.

36. It is customary to offer our Holy Communion for some specified intention. Besides this general intention, each Sister may have her own special intentions for which she may offer her Holy Communion,

37. Twenty-five minutes are to be spent in thanksgiving, and are to be counted from the time of receiving Holy Communion, not from the end of Mass.

38. The Sisters will approach the Holy Table in the order given in "Order of Precedence" in the Custom Book.

#### HOLY COMMUNION INTENTIONS FOR FEAST DAYS.

39. All Sundays in the year, for the Congregation.

First Friday of every month, in reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Ash Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, for each Sister's private intention.

Holy Thursday, for Paschal Communion.

The remaining Fridays not festivals, for the conversion of sinners.

Feast of the local Patron, for the local Mission.

The day of entering the Novitiate, for each Sister's private intention.

Jan. 1., Circumcision, in thanksgiving to God for all His graces during the past year.

Jan. 6, Epiphany, for the Rt. Rev. Bishop.

Jan. 29, St. Francis de Sales, for the local Confessor.

Feb. 2, Purification of the B. V. M., for Benefactors.

March 19, St. Joseph, for the Congregation. Thanksgiving.

March 25, Annunciation of the B. V. M., for the Congregation. Thanksgiving.

May 8, St. Michael, for a happy death.

May 24, Help of Christians, for Very Rev. Father Donaghoe.

Ascension Thursday, for the souls in Purgatory.

Corpus Christi, for all Bishops, Priests and Religious.

Feast of the Sacred Heart, for the Congregation. Reparation.

June 24, St. John the Baptist, for the Superiors of the Congregation

June 29, St. Peter and St. Paul, for the Pope.

July 2, Visitation of the B. V. M., for deceased Parents and Relatives.

July 16, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, for Missions, Sisters and Children.

July 19, St. Vincent of Paul, for the Congregation.

July 25, St. James, for Very Rev. Father Donaghoe.

July 31, St. Ignatius, for the conversion of sinners.

Aug. 15, Assumption of the B. V. M., for all in their last agony.

Sept. 8, Nativity of the B. V. M., for the Sisters' private intention.

Sept. 24, Our Lady of Mercy, for all suffering persecution.

Sept. 29, St Michael, for Very Rev. Father Donaghoe.

Oct. 2, Guardian Angels, for the Congregation.

Oct. 4, St. Francis Assisium, for Mother.

Oct. 15, St. Theresa, for the Sisters' private intention.

Nov. 1, All Saints, for Very Rev. Father' Donaghoe.

Nov. 2, All Souls, for all the souls of the faithful departed.

Nov. 21, Presentation of the B. V. M., for the Congregation.

Dec. 8, Immaculate Conception, for our Holy Father, the Pope.

Dec. 25, Christmas Day, for the Sisters' private intention.

Dec. 27, St John the Evangelist, for the Rt. Rev. Bishop.

#### FOR DAYS NOT FEASTS.

40. First Mondays, for Father and Mother and deceased Sisters.

The remaining Mondays, for the souls of the faithful departed.

Tuesday, for each Sister's private intention.

Wednesday, in honor of St. Joseph, in thanksgiving.

Thursday, in honor of the Blessed Sacrament, in atonement and reparation.

Friday, for the conversion of sinners.

Saturday, in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin to obtain worthy and efficient members.

41. Pater and Ave after Holy Communion on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, for the Propagation of the Faith; Wednesday, for the conversion of sinners; Friday, for the Souls in Purgatory; Sunday, for varied intentions.

42. One Mass each month for Father and Mother and deceased Sisters.

One Mass each month for the Souls in Purgatory.

#### MASS AND VESPERS.

43. We should be careful to assist at the ceremonies of the church in a uniform manner; all should stand or kneel or sit at the same time. We should know before-hand what services are to take place, and so prepare for them that we may understand the ceremonies, especially those of Holy Week.

44. When assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, or at other offices of the Church, we must carefully avoid all unnecessary movements, also repeated coughing, rattling of beads and anything by which annoyance or cause of distraction might be given to others. We should preserve a grave and serious demeanor, guard against recognizing friends and acquaintances on entering and leaving the church, and pass in and out in a way to attract as little attention as possible.

45. The order to be observed at Mass and Vespers according to the rubrics is given in the

Appendix. If this prescribed order is not followed in the churches we attend, we conform to the custom established in the parishes.

#### BENEDICTION.

46. On May 6, 1894, His Grace, the Most Reverend John Hennessy, D. D., Archbishop of Dubuque, granted permission to the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary for Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, in the Mother-House, during the year, as follows:

##### Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

1. First Friday of every month.
2. Feast of Corpus Christi.
3. Feast of the Sacred Heart.
4. Holy Hour, once a week.

##### Benediction.

1. All Sundays and Holydays of obligation.
2. All Feasts of the Blessed Virgin in the Calendar of the diocese.
3. Every day during May.
4. Every day during October.
5. Every day during the Octave of Corpus Christi.
6. Wednesdays and Fridays during Lent.
7. Feasts of the Apostles and Evangelists.
8. Feasts of the Archangels, Gabriel, Michael, Raphael.

Feasts of the Epiphany, St. Agnes, St. Francis de Sales, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Gertrude, St. Aloysius, St. Stanislaus,



St. John the Baptist, St. Bonaventure, St. Mary Magdalen, Sts. Joachim and Ann, St. Ignatius, St. Alphonsus Ligouri, St. Rose of Lima, St. Teresa, St. Cecilia; also on the first and last days of March; in Thanksgiving on the last day of the year; and during the Novenas preceding the Feasts of St. Joseph, the Assumption, and the Immaculate Conception.

On January 11, 1913, the privileges of Exposition and Benediction on the days enumerated above were extended indefinitely by His Grace, the Most Reverend James J. Keane, D. D., Archbishop of Dubuque.

#### SUFFRAGES FOR THE DEAD

47. "When a Sister dies, the entire Congregation must be notified. The Local Superior of the house in which the Sister died will have one high Mass offered for the soul of the deceased; besides this, three Masses will be said at the Mother-House, and one Mass in every other house of the Institute, for the relief of her soul. Each Sister shall receive Holy Communion three times, and shall recite a third part of the Rosary daily for nine days, in behalf of the deceased Sister."—Article 284.

48. "At the death of the Supreme Pontiff, one Mass will be offered for his soul in each of the houses of the Institute, and every Sister will recite a third part of the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary; the same will be done in the case of the death of our Cardinal Protector."—Article 285.

49. To keep in perpetual and loving remembrance all who have labored in the Congregation

and from it have happily passed to their everlasting reward, the Lector at morning prayers will publicly announce the name of each Sister on the anniversary of her death, and will say a Pater, Ave, and De Profundis for the eternal repose of the souls of all whose anniversary is commemorated, not one for each deceased Sister.

#### FASTS.

50. "They shall keep with great fervor the fasts and vigils of the Church; and in order that they may be distinguished by greater mortification than the other faithful in Christ, let them fast also on the vigil of the feast of the Purification and of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and abstain from meat on the three days preceding the renovation of their vows."—Constitutions, Article 61.

51. Dispensations from fasts prescribed by Rule may be obtained from Local Superiors. Dispensations from fasts prescribed by the Church must be obtained from the Confessor.

52. On account of their laborious duties as teachers, the Sisters are usually dispensed from the long fast of Lent; but during this time, they should certainly practice some self-denial in regard to food. On the Ember days and the vigils of festivals, all who are in good health ought to observe the fast of the Church. These fast days occur seldom during the year, and their observance cannot possibly injure health.

53. There has been some diversity of practice in regard to the observance of the three days

of abstinence preceding the renovation of vows; some have interpreted the Rule to refer to the three days preceding the devotional renovation, others, to the three days preceding the triennial renovation. The Rule says simply "renovation," without any qualifying adjective, and it evidently means that the three days of abstinence are to be observed before each renovation.

#### COMMUNITY PRAYERS.

54. The community prayers must not be omitted or changed, nor may Local Superiors introduce additional vocal prayers. In order to maintain uniformity in all things, we specify the prayers to be used in the public novenas and in the monthly devotions. Other prayers may be said privately.

55. Our vocal prayers must be said in a devotional tone, and not too hurriedly. In the two-part prayers, such as the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the aspirations, the first part should be finished before the second part is begun.

56. To the prescribed prayers nothing more than one Pater, Ave, and De Profundis, or an equivalent, may be added. In all our devotions, we pray for the intentions of the Holy Father, for our Congregation, and for special needs.

57. Our venerated Founder taught unceasingly that the success of a petition depends not upon a superfluity of words but upon our fervor; and St. Benedict writes: "In community let vocal prayers be always short."

58. Let our Sisters practice mental prayer. In this they shall take delight, and shall find in it their comfort and refreshment after care and fatigue.

59. Community Prayers are compiled in a separate booklet.

#### SCHEDULE OF TIME.

60. The time for rising is 5 A. M. Mass, 6; Breakfast, 7:15; Particular Examen, 11:45; Dinner, 12.

61. Visit to the Blessed Sacrament, 2 P. M. In the Missions, 5. Supper, 5:30; Spiritual Lecture 8; Night Prayers, 8:30.

62. The time allowed for breakfast is twenty minutes; for dinner, thirty minutes; for supper, twenty-five minutes.

63. Novenas and special devotions, at a time specified by the Superior—never at Night Prayers.

64. Hour for retiring, 9:30 P. M.

### CHAPTER III.

#### SILENCE AND MODESTY.

65. The rule of silence being one of those fundamental laws on which the perfection of the religious life greatly depends, its practice is of the utmost importance, and our Reverend Founders have made it of obligation among us, in the hours specified for its observance.

66. Our strictest, or "solemn silence" lasts from night prayers till after morning meditation,

that the mind may be wholly occupied with the preparation for that most important duty. In proportion as we are more or less faithful to this custom, will be the facility with which we shall meditate.

67. To maintain this spirit of recollection, we have always been required to observe silence and to keep the eyes modestly cast down in the streets and in the churches; and in our houses, in the dormitories, halls, and wardrobes. In these places we must keep silence at all times, unless necessity or charity requires us to speak.

68. As this silence may be broken by unnecessary noise, as well as by loud conversation, we should avoid precipitation in walking and other actions, cultivate a gentle manner of handling furniture, dishes, and other things by which noise might be made, and be careful to open and close doors gently and to walk quietly through the house, especially at night.

69. Our manner should be indicative of religious tranquillity, modesty, self-possession and recollection, and on all occasions, it should be in harmony with our holy profession.

70. We must guard against the desire to see and hear all that happens. We must refrain from approaching doors or windows to look at processions or to gratify curiosity.

71. Each Mission house must be provided with a gong or call-bell, in order to prevent loss of time in calling the Sisters; it will also preserve order and prevent the violation of silence.

72. The Sisters must be most vigilant as to their demeanor, and never allow anything in word, or manner that could evince levity or a fondness for worldliness. In their intercourse with pupils no extravagant demonstrations of affection should be permitted, nor such familiarities as are unbecoming.

73. Should there be any necessity for reading secular newspapers, let the Superior indicate the articles to be read, and let the reading be confined to these. Newspapers should not be read when traveling on trains or in street cars. Catholic and educational periodicals should be furnished, and with permission of the Superior, reference books may be procured from the library. Individual Sisters may not be supplied with reading matter by relatives or others, without the knowledge and permission of Superiors.

74. In order to observe the modesty so forcibly recommended in our Holy Rule, we ought not to converse with one another when in public conveyances or when walking through the street. If on such occasions we should be very careful to avoid anything that might possibly cause disedification, how much more careful should we be to avoid loud talking or laughing or anything else that might attract attention.

75. In a word, we should give constant examples of virtue and piety, and not permit the most rigorous scrutiny to observe anything but exact agreement between our conduct and our profession. By our habit, we publicly declare that

we are religious, consequently, all our actions should tend to strengthen in those who see us, the conviction that we are virtuous, and eminently so, and that we walk in the footsteps of our Divine Lord. We should be able to say at all times and under all circumstances, "Be ye imitators of me as I am of Christ."

#### RECREATION.

76. All must endeavor to pass the time of recreation religiously, lest by too much freedom in conversation charity be wounded. Recreation should be taken in the place and at the time appointed by obedience, and no Sister should absent herself from the common recreation without permission and real necessity.

77. As our recreation consists in pleasant conversation, we must, by kindness and sociability, endeavor to contribute to the general enjoyment. Hence, we should avoid sadness, dejection, and anything that could intimate that we dislike the Community recreation or take no interest in it. We should carefully refrain from boisterous conduct, worldly conversation, egotism, sarcasm, and unkind remarks, also from contradicting and disputing, and from discussing the private affairs and the government of the Congregation. School matters and business affairs should not, as a general thing, be discussed at recreation.

78. During the evening recreation the Superior may permit the reading aloud of something interesting. Games and amusements are not forbidden, but this kind of recreation must be exclusively among ourselves.

79. A Sister whose occupations prevent her habitually or even frequently from coming to recreation at seven o'clock in the evening, must state the case to the Provincial.

80. Whether in vacation, or at any other time, recreation may never be taken at the expense of shortening or omitting any spiritual exercise prescribed by Rule.

81. Recreation must not begin until the signal is given.

82. When extra recreation is given in the evening, it must not extend beyond half-past eight o'clock.

#### CHARITY.

83. Sisters should always treat one another with the respect and affection of true Sisters, and daughters of the same Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. This affection should be manifested to all, irrespective of office or position, age or nationality.

84. Our young members should show great charity and deference toward the more aged. A young Sister should not take a seat while an older one is standing, nor should any Sister do so while a Superior stands.

85. Superiors are responsible for the Sisters under their charge, and should be careful to see that by word and example the young members of our Congregation are taught the gentle gravity and necessary reserve so characteristic of the true religious.



86. Sisters should never be permitted to speak disrespectfully of things that should be held sacred; such as, "Chapter," the "Visitation," Confession; nor to repeat what is said there.

87. Let no Sister speak unkindly of the absent, make known the defects of others, or belittle the good they do. Rather let us lovingly honor one another, and rejoice with our whole heart at the success of our Sisters.

88. Under no circumstances whatever, should the Sisters speak to priests, or to others outside the Congregation, about the failings of members, their disagreements, or any irregularity in the discipline of the house, or in the conduct or management of Superiors. These are matters that must remain within the Congregation and be dealt with there. Nobody outside can remedy them. The worst enemies of religious communities are those members who, without just cause, expose the faults of their brethren, and who do not guard the honor of their institute. Such unworthy religious bring contempt upon *themselves* as well as upon the *institute* to which they belong.

89. Community affairs and regulations, no matter of what nature, should not be made known to any one who is not a member of the Congregation.

90. When a Sister from another house of our Congregation visits us, we should treat her with all the affection and charity that we must ever manifest for one another; yet, we must guard against unnecessary inquiries into the business of other

houses, as this inquisitiveness is often a source of trouble.

91. In visiting one of our houses, we first see the Superior, acquaint her with the object of our visit, and if the Blessed Sacrament be reserved in that house, go immediately to adore Our Lord, to thank Him for His merciful protection, and to implore His blessing on all our undertakings; we should make another visit before taking our departure.

92. In traveling, we must be attentive to one another. If any Sister be in poor health, her companions must endeavor to save her from all anxiety and inconvenience. We should never leave a Sister alone or under the care of strangers while traveling.

93. Sisters of another Order must be received with great charity and entertained kindly, if we have rooms for their proper accommodation; but we are not to invite them to any Community exercise.

94. If through necessity or charity, we visit convents not of our Congregation, we must avoid curiously inquiring into the affairs of their Order and communicating to them matters belonging exclusively to our own. Such intercourse might be productive of much trouble, and should be avoided.

95. Politeness requires that before entering the apartment of the Superior, the school-rooms, offices, and reception-rooms, we give notice by

gently knocking at the door. In the schools we must teach the children this practice.

#### LETTERS.

96. Useless correspondence tends to the neglect of special duties, and is a waste of precious time. Every letter requiring an answer should be promptly answered, but it should be a rule with every religious to write no letters except those which business, propriety or affection render practically necessary.

97. Let our letters be so written that not only the matter but the manner may edify the reader.

98. A Sister who has been transferred from one mission to another, should not, without the permission of the Provincial, keep up a correspondence with seculars in the parish which she has left.

99. "Letters sent by the Sisters, and to them, should be delivered to the Local Superior, who may read them. This faculty the Superiors will use with prudent moderation and charity, and with observance of the secret."—Constitutions, Article 81.

100. Such letters as Superiors feel bound in conscience to withhold, should be sent to the Provincial Superior.

101. "From all inspection of Superiors are excepted letters to the Superior General or to the Provincial, to the Councillors General, to the Bishop, and to the Sacred Congregation, and letters from these to the Sisters."—Constitutions, Article 82.

102. Should a Superior inadvertently open a letter exempted from inspection, both the Superior and the Sister to whom the letter was addressed should notify the Mother General.

103. Circular letters, sent from the Mother-House and addressed to the Congregation, must be read by the Superior to the Sisters assembled in the Community-room as soon as possible after said letters have been received.

104. No letters, except those on business, are written or received by the Sisters in Lent or in Advent or during Retreat.

105. Of Interfering.—Though we should always be ready to assist one another in our duties, and should not wait to be asked when we see help needed, still, we must guard against interfering with another's occupation, by making suggestions or giving commands that belong only to Superiors; such interference is generally prejudicial to order and charity.

106. Murmuring.—The murmuring to which this article refers is complaining of the directions, arrangements, or commands of Superiors. Few things are more likely to hinder individual perfection, to destroy religious discipline, to disturb the peace and harmony of a community, and to afflict Superiors, than murmuring; therefore, all should concur in carefully excluding such an evil, which, of itself, is sufficient to ruin a community. Our Sisters should carefully abstain from either publicly or privately criticising or complaining, or in any manner manifesting to each other disapproval of the government of the house.

## CHAPTER IV.

## OBEDIENCE.

107. "Let the Obedience which all the Sisters should practice be such, that everywhere and always, they subject themselves completely and with great humility to the will of their Superior; so that in all things in which sin does not manifestly appear, they render to their Superior, whoever she may be, whether amiable or severe, that Obedience of which Our Lord has given so sublime an example, since they should understand that they are obeying not man, but God Himself, in the person of the Superior."—Constitutions, Article 48.

108. We should not only honor and respect our Superiors, but seek and follow their opinion in the fulfilment of our duties, and receive their advice and counsel with docility.

109. This respect is to be shown not only to the Mother General, to the Provincial Superior, and to the Local Superior under whose charge we are placed, but to all Sisters in authority so far as their jurisdiction extends.

110. We may best show this respectful love for our Superiors by our willingness to comply with their wishes and by strict observance of our Rule.

## HOLY POVERTY.

111. Our Sisters should remember that the property of the Congregation belongs to those who have made themselves poor for the love of

Our Lord, and that He will not permit the goods of His servants to be destroyed or wasted with impunity. Therefore, we must be careful of everything in our charge; such as, clothing, books, or whatever is given us for our personal use or the needs of our several duties, even as loving children defend from injury all that belongs to their parents.

112. No Sister should appropriate to her own use an article destined for another, without the knowledge of the latter and the permission of the Superior. We are not permitted to open desks, drawers, or trunks belonging to another Sister, without her knowledge and permission; but, to Superiors, all such things are free and open.

113. That we may not waste the time spent in recreation, each Sister is required to provide herself with some light work during that time. If she has no work suitable, she should apply to the Superior for it, that even that short period may not pass uselessly.

114. The primitive spirit of our Congregation is one of humility and simplicity, and opposed to all extravagance or unnecessary expense in our manner of living. Should a mission not be self-supporting, we are not allowed to contract debt, but must apply to the Provincial Superior for aid or advice.

115. Should persons apply to us for help in their need, the Superior of the house may give them food, clothing, or whatever they most need, seldom money—but always mindful of her Vow

of Poverty, and with the general or special permission of the Provincial.

116. The furniture of our houses should be in keeping with the poverty we profess.

117. Parlor.—In our parlors, only cane-seated chairs, plain tables, etc., are allowed. No expensive furniture is admissible, except in our boarding-schools; and even there, it must not be elaborate.

118. Community-Room.—Our Community-rooms are furnished with long tables, inexpensive chairs, and cheaply-framed pictures. The floors may be oiled, plain, or covered with cheap carpet.

119. Refectory.—Our Refectories are furnished with long tables, in which are drawers containing knife, fork, and spoon, for the use of each Sister. These tables should be covered with oil cloth. Wooden chairs are used for seats; a few cheap pictures in plain frames, a reading desk, and a crucifix complete the furniture of the Refectory.

120. Chapel.—Our Chapels may be as richly ornamented as the circumstances of our houses will permit.

121. Food.—The food should be wholesome, sufficient in quantity, prepared with great care, and with due regard for the bodily needs of the Sisters.

122. A light lunch is allowed to those whose laborious duties or delicate state of health may seem to require it.

123. In a spirit of poverty, the Sisters should take care not to waste food by leaving fragments of anything in such a state as would unfit it to be presented to the Community again.

124. Clothing.—Each Sister may have for her own use the necessary and customary clothing. She may not receive anything superfluous, nor shall she be refused what is necessary.

125. List of Clothing.—

- 2 full suits of serge.
- 1 old serge working suit.
- 1 serge cloak and woolen lining.
- 1 shoulder shawl—black.
- 3 full suits winter underwear.
- 4 full suits summer underwear.
- 3 night-caps—plain.
- 3 calico night-gowns.
- 2 outing night-gowns (if necessary.)
- 2 winter skirts.
- 2 summer skirts.
- 3 outing underskirts (if necessary.)
- 4 pairs summer hose—cotton
- 4 pairs winter hose.
- 12 handkerchiefs.
- 1 pair rubbers
- 1 pair overshoes.
- 1 pair knitted leggins (if necessary.)
- 4 towels.
- corsets, if necessary.
- 1 woolen jacket which may not be seen below cape.
- 2 pairs plain leather shoes—front-laced.



4 pieces of each article of head-dress, except veils, of which three black ones are needed, and three hoods.

For Sisters engaged in manual labor, 2 full suits of old black serge, 6 gingham aprons, in addition.

126 The Sisters may ask for more clothing than is specified in the above list, if they find it necessary.

127. When the Sisters are sent from one mission to another, the Superior of the house they leave, must carefully renew or supply all necessary articles.

128. After the Sisters are professed, they should be provided for in every respect by the Community. If parents, or others, wish to aid in the support of the Sisters, let them place the means in the hands of the Superiors.

129. Each Sister is allowed to keep a Prayer Book, Rule Book, Office Book, an "Imitation of Christ," and, if she desires, a Missal, or Holy Week Book, and a Meditation Book. It is the duty of each Superior to supply other necessary reading matter for the Sisters entrusted to her care.

130 Teachers should understand that they neglect a duty when they do not exert themselves to collect tuition fees justly due to the Community; and they offend against justice, when they charge pupils for lessons that have not been given. Any one who is entrusted with money matters and who does not keep exact accounts can hardly act with a safe conscience.

131. The Sisters are not allowed to borrow, to lend, or to dispose of books, sheet music; or anything else, without the knowledge and permission of Superiors.

132. All bills for goods bought on credit should be made out in the name of the institution, or the school for which the goods are purchased; and for the sake of ready identification, the name of the Sister who makes the purchases should be added.

133. Sisters who receive school or music funds from the pupils, or revenues from any source, must be scrupulously exact in delivering them to the Superior, and must never appropriate the smallest sum.

134. This precept must not be evaded under the pretext of getting a present for the Superior, or something useful for the house; our Vow of Poverty admits of no such interpretation.

135. Superiors must remember that their position gives them no right to incur, or to allow, useless expenditure—either for the house or for individuals.

136. Expenses exceeding the Rule limit, and which are evidently necessary, should be reported to the higher Superiors as soon as possible.

#### PRESENTS.

137. With regard to presents, the principle acted upon in well-regulated religious Communities is that persons who have made the Vow of Poverty have nothing to give. Without permis-

sion, the Sisters neither make nor receive personal gifts. Donations for the chapel or for the Congregation are not to be refused.

138. Through motives of charity, or in gratitude for services rendered, it may be expedient for the Superior as the representative of the Community to make, on certain occasions, some acknowledgement to ecclesiastics or to others, but such gifts should be in keeping with our religious profession. Generally speaking, these presents should be limited to articles made by the Sisters; such as, scapulars, Agnus Dei, purificators, corporals, burses, birettas.

139. Presents given to an individual, at any one time, must not exceed five dollars in value, and should not be made oftener than once a year, and then only by Superiors. Should there be reasons for giving more than one person something, or a larger sum than five dollars be deemed necessary, the circumstances should be made known to the proper authority and the required permission be obtained.

140. Only religious articles should be given as presents to relatives, or to other seculars, by the Sisters or by the Superiors.

141. Superiors, and others with permission, may on special occasions, give members of the Congregation useful things of small value; such as, an "Imitation," a prayerbook, or gloves.

142. When presents are given to a Sister, she shall bring them immediately to the Superior, mention from whom she received them, and leave

them at her disposal. Superiors shall not permit the Sisters to retain such presents as are either superfluous or valuable.

143. The celebration of Sisters' jubilees, and Superiors' feast days, should be kept strictly within the Community, and no permission to travel should be sought, for the purpose of being present on such occasions. No money nor presents of any kind should be solicited from seculars; and no elaborate or useless gifts, such as, richly bound books, fine material for habits or veils, fancy shoes, or expensive gloves, should be given to the Sisters or to the Superiors. The presents on such occasions should be spiritual gifts, and some simple tokens of affectionate remembrance, principally the handiwork of the Sisters.

144. Teachers are not allowed to take up petty collections among the pupils in order to procure presents for one another.

#### OUR TITLE.

145. "Let them ever bear in mind that they are Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary." —Constitutions, Article 11.

146. In writing the name of our Congregation, the full title, Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, should be given.

147. In the Congregation, the Superior General is spoken of as Mother, in speaking of her to externs, or in writing of her, we call her Mother General. In the Community, the Provincial and the Local Superior are addressed as Sister; to ex-

terns, they are spoken of as Sister Provincial and Sister Superior.

148. According to our Constitutions, the Directresses of Schools are the Local Superiors and the Provincial Directresses. Other school officials should be known as Prefect of Studies, Prefect of Discipline.

149. Religious courtesy forbids the lack of respectful deference implied in addressing a Sister by an abbreviated name. The beautiful name, Mary, given us as a mark of our special consecration to the service and veneration of the holy Mother of God should be very dear to every member of our Institute, and no one should allow it to be dropped from her title. The Sisters must address one another by the full name, Sister Mary ———. No pet names nor shortened names should ever be employed. This practice must be observed in our written correspondence as well as in our conversation.

#### ORDER OF PRECEDENCE.

150. Our revised Constitutions, instituting, as they do, provincial government and a number of new officials, make necessary a statement of the due order, or precedence, to be observed in the several houses of the Congregation. This order is as follows:

151. In the Mother-House, according to Article 79 of the Constitutions: "That due order may be kept, the Superior General will hold the first place, the first Sister Councillor the second

place, the second Sister Councillor the third place, and so forth, that is, the Councillors General must keep the place obtained in their election; then come the Secretary General and the Procurator General; the other Sisters according to the time of their profession, will hold place in this order: Provincial Superiors, Local Superiors, the Mistress of Novices, Provincial and Local Councillors, Provincial and Local Procurators, the Perpetually Professed, the temporarily Professed; Novices and Postulants according to the time of their admission."

152. In a Provincial House, the Provincial Superior, the Local Superior, Provincial Councillors, Provincial Procurator, Directress, Local Councillors and Local Procurator.

153. In a Local Mission, the Local Superior, Local Councillors and Local Procurator; the Superior General, or a General Councillor acting with her officially, or as her substitute, or a Provincial Superior in her own Province, always takes the first place.

#### VISITING OFFICIALS.

154. Outside the Mother-House, the General Officials, with the exception of the Superior General, or a General Councillor acting in her place, rank below the Local Superior.

155. The Provincial Superior and her officials, outside their Province, are placed below the Local Superior.

156. Outside her Mission, a Local Superior follows the Superior of the house visited. Local

Councillors, outside their Mission, follow the Councillors of the house visited.

157. When visiting a house in their own Province, the Provincial Councillors, Procurator and Directress, take place below the Local Superior.

158. The Provincial Directresses, at the Mother-House, and in all the missions, follow the Provincial Procurator.

159. When two or more visiting officials of different rank are placed below the Local Superior, the order of their respective precedence is in accordance with Article 79.

160. When Sisters not of our Congregation are with us in the chapel or elsewhere, they are placed through courtesy next to the Superior of the house in which they are visiting.

## CHAPTER V.

### PENANCES.

161. As in all well-ordered governments discipline is maintained by law, and its infractions are punished according to the gravity of the offense, so in religious communities where the Rule is the law, and the members bind themselves to its observance, it becomes necessary to defend and maintain the Rule by imposing penance as a reparation for faults committed. Father Rodriguez says:

“In a religious order when there is no fault committed against the Rule that is not presently

followed by a penance, we may say that observance of Rule is in its vigor; but when on the other hand there are frequent violations and no punishments, it is true to say that the Rules are no longer observed."

162. We append a few acts of penance in use among us and approved by our holy Founders:

163. Tardiness in attending or absence from the public visit to the Blessed Sacrament, from the recitation of the Office, from spiritual reading, or from any other exercise made in common, should be acknowledged in the Chapter of Faults in presence of the Community.

164. Uncharitable remarks made of a Sister should be partially repaired by asking pardon of all in whose presence such remarks were made. Should any Sister by rude or unkind language offend another, let her make ample apology. This apology should be made, when the Sisters are assembled for spiritual reading.

165. To disturb the religious silence of the house by slamming doors, walking heavily, handling dishes or furniture roughly, talking or laughing aloud, is an offense which should be mentioned in the Chapter of Faults .

166. The omission of the half-hour's adoration, and the failure to perform an assigned duty must be explained to the Superior as soon as possible.

167. Breaking or injuring anything belonging to the house must be acknowledged to the Superior.



168. An obstinate unwillingness to obey when required to do a certain duty not above her strength or ability, subjects a Sister to privation of all other duties, until the required duty be fulfilled.

169. Wasteful extravagance in the care or use of food, clothing, fuel, etc., should have an appropriate penance.

170. Privation of Office.—Should a Superior violate the Rule which restricts her in regard to the letters written to the higher Superiors by the Sisters, or by them to the Sisters, she proves herself unworthy of her office and should be deprived of it. A Superior who treats her Sisters, or even one Sister, with unkindness, so as to cause general dissatisfaction in the house, or injury to the health of a Sister, is unfit to hold so responsible a position, and should be relieved of her charge.

#### CHAPTER OF FAULTS.

171. The Chapter of Faults is one of the very few humiliations prescribed by our Rule. It has been in use among us from the beginning of our Institute, and our saintly Founder esteemed it, when properly performed, as of the greatest service in the religious life. Under date of April 20, 1841, Very Reverend Father Donaghoe writes:

“My dear Children—It has been your custom for some time past, to meet in Chapter once a week, and there to accuse yourselves and be accused of any breach of rule of which you may have been guilty. This practice, when properly performed, is of the greatest service in the reli-

gious life. Humility should dictate every word. Even should a Sister, believing she spoke the truth, bring a false accusation against another, the accused Sister must receive the accusation as given in the spirit of charity. She may feel mortified and humbled, but one word of reply or defence is never to be allowed—NO, NEVER. Pride may strive, even against the will for the mastery, but the lips must remain sealed. . . . If the Sisters are anxious to correct their defects, and to punish themselves for their failings, every aid, no matter how roughly offered, should be received with gratitude, or at least with the deep conviction that if left to themselves, self-love would blind them to their faults, or induce them to treat these faults too indulgently. . . . May my beloved children always try to make this weekly humiliation a means for advancing towards perfection and towards union with God, who receives with infinite tenderness the meek and humble of heart, and enriches their souls with His choicest favors.”

172. Since the writing of this letter, the Church has abolished the custom which in religious institutes permitted accusation of one another, therefore, the practice has been discontinued amongst us.

173. The Chapter of Faults shall be held semi-monthly, on Friday evening, if possible, in all the houses of the Congregation. In the missions, the only convenient time for holding the Chapter seems to be the half-hour usually devoted to spiritual reading. Where the community is small, and the Chapter occupies less than half an hour,

what remains of the half-hour must be given to the ordinary spiritual reading. In the larger communities, each Sister must make her accusation, even though this may cause the Chapter to last longer than half an hour.

174. The faults which constitute the subject for accusation in Chapter are the exterior defects against the Rule and established customs. The accusation should be made in an humble tone and in a voice loud enough to be heard by all present. The Chapter penance should be said in private by each Sister.

#### THE REVEREND CLERGY.

“Let the priests,” says St. Paul, “be esteemed worthy of double honor.”

175. We must have at all times a profound regard for the ecclesiastical authorities in virtue of their sacred character, and we must teach our pupils to entertain towards them the highest respect and veneration. We should promote as much as possible the salutary influence of the priest on the pupils, and willingly permit an interruption of the ordinary exercises, if the priest wishes to prepare the children for the Sacraments. While the children are being instructed for their first Holy Communion, we should not impose upon them burdensome or unsuitable duties.

176. In all our intercourse with the Reverend Clergy, we must keep in mind that they are the representatives and ministers of Jesus Christ upon earth, and in our conversations with them, be

ever mindful of the respect due their sacred character.

177. We must impress the same sentiments on the minds of the children; and remembering the words of the Holy Ghost, "Touch not the Lord's Anointed," we should guard our pupils against the dangerous, but too prevalent custom of criticising the words and actions of priests, in a spirit of disrespect and censure.

178. When we are sent to take charge of a school, we must first pay our respects to the Reverend Pastor, receive his blessing, and ask advice concerning any arrangements that it may be necessary to make relative to the school, and always defer to his judgment and experience in matters relating to the religious instruction of the children.

179. When clergymen visit our schools, we should ask them to bless the children, the latter having been instructed to receive the blessing of a priest with faith and reverence.

## CHAPTER VI.

### INTERCOURSE WITH SECULARS.

180. The intercourse of the Sisters with seculars should be restricted to necessity or utility; and, when there is need of prolonging the visit beyond the half-hour prescribed, permission must be obtained.

181. In entertaining visitors the Sisters should avoid conversation on subjects foreign to their

calling, and should permit no comments opposed to charity. They should guard equally against levity and affected piety; and that they may in no way lessen the esteem in which our Congregation should be held, let their demeanor evince gravity, gentleness, and politeness.

182. According to our Constitutions, Article 90, visitors must be received in the parlor, not in the classrooms, nor in the Community room.

183. Visitors are not to be received during the seasons of Advent and Lent, unless for grave reasons. Without urgent necessity, no Sister may be called to the parlor from any spiritual exercise.

184. The Rule enjoining companionship in the parlor refers to social visits and must be observed by all the Sisters. Short interviews with parents of pupils or with others, on school matters, are not social visits, but they must, of course, be mentioned to the Superior.

185. To be worthy of our title, Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we should not neglect Article 85 of our Constitutions which says: "The Sisters may visit the sick, especially the poor." In these visits the welfare of the soul should be the chief concern, yet the Sisters should do all in their power to relieve the wants of the poor and to mitigate their sufferings. We should be generous in acts and words of kindness, and in those personal services which sometimes cost not a little in the way of self-sacrifice.

186. Should duty or charity require it, we may visit the parents of the children attending our

schools. Let us be mindful, however, that all visits should be made in the spirit of the Rule which says, "let them know that only necessary visits are allowed."

187. Sisters who reside in the same city as their parents are not allowed to make unnecessary visits to their homes.

188. In these visits we are permitted to take a glass of water or of lemonade, but no other refreshments unless compelled to do so by necessity, such as, distance from home.

189. Sisters may not use the telephone without permission, nor may they carry on prolonged conversation over the telephone.

190. Visits, which the Sisters are obliged to make to relatives living at a distance, should be limited to two days. "At a distance," in this case, means any place to which a Sister cannot go and return on the same day.

191. At picnics with the pupils, and at other social gatherings, the Sisters must not sit at table with seculars, even with the children.

192. The Rule requiring Sisters to be at home before dark is to be strictly observed by all. In order that the Rule may not be transgressed and to avoid giving unnecessary trouble to those who prepare the meals, the Sisters should be at home in time for supper, not later than 5:30 o'clock. In cities in which we have more than one house, Sisters visiting must not neglect to start for home until it is so late that they find themselves in the streets or in crowded street cars after dark. The

Sisters are not permitted to be out of their convents after dark—in automobiles, carriages, or in any other conveyance—except when they are obliged to go to trains or to return from them.

193. The Sisters may not go out at night to Benediction, or to any other service. Let them not think that they will thereby suffer any spiritual loss; God will bless them more abundantly if, in obedience, they remain at home, than if, disregarding rule, they go into the church.

194. Without permission from Mother General, Sisters may not conduct commencement exercises, if these are held at night in public halls.

195. Entertainments conducted by the Sisters should reflect credit on our Institute. The program should be carefully selected, and nothing in the slightest degree unbecoming or vulgar should be presented. The prohibition, "Let there be no dancing in the public entertainments given by the pupils," has not been removed. Entertainments given by the boys and the girls of our schools must be separate.

196. Our Sisters must not permit the pupils to use rouge, or things of the kind, even when preparing for entertainments. It ill becomes religious to foster such practices. The dress of the pupils on these occasions, must not in the slightest degree offend against the modesty it should be our glory to inculcate.

197. Neither Local Superiors nor other Sisters are permitted to attend commencement or similar exercises, when such attendance obliges

them to remain out of their own missions over night. Our Rule says: "She—the Local Superior—cannot grant leave to any Sister to travel, except for one day and that she return home on the same day. nor to receive valuable gifts, to make use of extraordinary remedies, to consult a specialist. For these the permission of the Provincial Superior is required."—Constitutions, Article 242.

198. Our Sisters must not attend theatres, even for the purpose of witnessing historical plays or other performances calculated to instruct and to edify. The closing exercises of Catholic schools may be attended, provided that this can be done without any violation of Rule.

199. Dress rehearsals or entertainments of any kind must not be attended when held on Sunday.

200. Without necessity, the Sisters should not travel at night, or on Sunday. Should necessity, however, require them to travel at night, they must secure sleeping-car accommodation.

201. The Sisters must not visit other houses of our Congregation on Sunday. They may, however, visit the sick or the afflicted in their own parish.

202. No visiting or shopping must be done in Holy Week. Strict silence must be observed from Spy Wednesday night until Holy Saturday noon. This has been the custom in the Congregation from its very beginning.

203. Sisters who go from the mission in which they are stationed to some other house of our



Congregation, for study, on business, or for any other purpose, should remember that they are subject to the Superior of that house while they remain there. They are to be guided in all things by her direction, and their correspondence is to be under her supervision.

204. Through respect for our Rule and for our Vow of Poverty, and to avoid disturbing the order of the house or engendering a spirit of dissipation, the Sisters must be content to remain in their respective missions during vacation, unless obliged to go elsewhere for the annual Retreat or for other exercises.

205. Where the Blessed Sacrament is not reserved in the convent chapel, two Sisters should always go together to the public church for the customary visit.

206. The Sisters are not permitted to accompany the remains of seculars, even of relatives, to the cemetery. They may, however, be present at the Requiem Mass celebrated on the day of the funeral.

207. In accordance with our Constitutions, Article 89, the Superior will appoint a companion for each Sister who for any purpose leaves the house. This rule of companionship must be strictly observed by all. ¶ No Sister shall ever be permitted to remain alone in any school building.

208. Two Sisters should go together into stores, offices, or wherever it is necessary to transact business with externs, no matter how short the time, nor how trifling the business may be.

209. In dental offices, and in all like places, the two Sisters must remain together during the entire time.

210. Sisters should not go to doctors' offices for treatment, unless it is impossible for the physicians to treat them in the convent.

211. Let the Sisters provide themselves with suitable reading matter, and leave untouched the books and periodicals in waiting-rooms and offices.

212. Boys over twelve years of age are not to be taught either vocal or instrumental music by the Sisters, nor shall boys come to the convent after five o'clock in the evening for study, or for practice of any kind.

213. No music or other lessons may be given after five o'clock P. M.

214. Superiors should see that our houses are closed at eight o'clock P. M., to all who are not members of the Community.

215. In our Constitutions, Chapter V., Article 94, we read: "No Sister shall ever be permitted, under any condition whatever, to take care of the sacristy, to direct the choir, or to play the organ, in any church or outside chapel; but at home they may make or repair anything that belongs to Divine worship." Hence, let no Sister presume to take care of the vestments, to decorate the altars, or to accept as a duty the care of the sanctuary lamp in any church or public chapel.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE LOCAL SUPERIOR.

216. A Local Superior should be a model of exact observance of Rule; in proportion to her fidelity, will be the fervor and spiritual progress of her household. Only for important reasons, should she absent herself from any Community exercise.

217. She must not exceed her authority in the dispensations she grants to herself or to others.

218. When a Superior has to reprove and correct her subjects, let her not use rude language, but correct in all humility and charity. If her feelings are aroused and she is moved to anger, let her understand that she must put off the correction; for although the wrongdoer is to be rebuked, yet this is to be done with such prudence and with such discretion, that the admonition be free from all bitterness.

219. The Infirmary.—While in the infirmary or in the hospital, and under the physician's care, a Sister can be visited only by her near relatives.

220. When a Sister's health is so impaired that she is not able to fulfill her duty, she should write to her Provincial Superior and inform her of the matter. The Provincial will write to the Mother General who will decide whether the Sister is to remain in the mission, or return to the Mother-House.

221. Visitations.—At least one week before the date set for the visitation of any house, the

Provincial Superior should notify the Local Superior, in order that she may have her accounts and all things else in readiness. In the visitation of the schools, the Provincial Superior should spend some time in each schoolroom of the mission visited, in order to become fully acquainted with the method and order of the school and the progress of the pupils. The Visitation should open with the prayer, "Come, Holy Ghost," and close with the "Magnificat."

222. Reports.—June 1, each year, the Provincial Superior will send to the Superior General the report of the religious discipline and the economic state of each house in her Province and the progress of each Sister, as stated in the Constitutions, Article 236. Every six months, the Provincial Superior will inform the Superior General of the economic state of the Province, and also of its individual houses.—Constitutions, Article 227.

223. Twice a year, November 1, and May 1, each Local Superior is bound to send to the Provincial Superior an account of her subjects, and of the progress of each Sister.—Constitutions, Article 246. At the end of every six months, the Local Superior will render to the Provincial Superior an account of the financial condition of the house.—Constitutions, Article 228.

224. In Easter Week, every year, each Provincial and Local Councillor will write to the Superior General, giving her a clear statement of the affairs of each house, as required by Article 216 of the Constitutions.

225. At the end of every six months, the Procurator General will give an account of the whole of her administration to the Superior General.—Constitutions, Article 225.

226. "Every six months the Provincial Procurator will render to the Provincial Superior an account of the economic state of the Province, and also of its individual houses."—Constitution, Article 227.

227. "Every month, the Local Procurator will give to the Local Superior an account of the financial condition of the house."—Constitutions, Article 228.

228. The attention of Superiors is called to the Decree, "Inter ea," and to Articles 212, 213, 214, of the Constitutions, regarding the duties of the Provincial and Local Councillors.

229. Entrance of Postulants.—In order to preserve regularity, Postulants are admitted into our Novitiate on the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19th, and on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, September 8th. Exceptional circumstances may warrant their coming at other times.

230. In regard to persons applying for admission into our Novitiate, it frequently happens that very little can be known about them except through the Sisters in the missions. At times, our own Sisters recommend very unsuitable candidates; some who are too old, some too delicate, some whose dispositions have not been studied, some who have neither education nor talent and

who are unwilling to do housework, or are unfitted for it. St. Francis de Sales says: "Nothing is so destructive to an Order as want of care in examining the spirit of those who would throw themselves into the cloister."

231. Sisters should not recommend as a candidate for our Novitiate any one who has passed her twenty-fifth year, unless she has special aptitude for the duties of our calling, or has received exceptional training which would make her a useful member of our Congregation.

232. Our Reception and Profession ceremonies are private, and to preserve the spirit of recollection and prayer so desirable on these solemn occasions, no visitors will be received on the day of the ceremonies.

233. Visits to the Mother General.—A Local Superior who finds it necessary to consult the Provincial Superior or the Mother General orally rather than by letter, must obtain permission for absence before leaving her mission.

234. When for any reason the Superior is absent, the First Councillor will take full charge of the house and given necessary permissions, even if the absence of the Superior is of short duration.

235. Miscellaneous Customs.—The Sisters shall not have their pictures taken—photographs or kodaks—without permission from the Mother General, nor shall they write in autograph books of any kind without the same permission.

236. In our missions, the Sisters engaged in household duties will carefully avoid all inter-

course with the pupils, and, when necessary, will refer them gently and politely to the Sisters who have charge of the schools.

237. Each Local Superior must defray the traveling expenses, the board, and the tuition of her Sisters attending Summer School.

238. Hospital bills and other extraordinary expenses must be met by each local house.

239. The general cleaning and the heavier housework should be done by help hired for the purpose.

240. Unless authorized by the Superior to do so, no Sister shall give directions, nor shall she speak to secular help engaged in our houses for any purpose.

241. The Sisters should always be very kind to the poor, not only supplying their actual needs when possible, but even going beyond this. Collections for costumes, for presents, and for other things, severely tax the resources of some parents; then let us be careful that our zeal in one direction does not become positive injustice in another.

242. Superiors must see that all the Customs are observed, and must carefully exclude innovations, for uniformity is essential to the best interests of our Congregation.

243. The Custom Book must be kept where all the Sisters may have access to it. The Constitutions and the Customs are to be read aloud for the Community once every two months, the Constitutions one month, the Customs the next.

244. Religious Dress.—Though uniformity be desirable in everything among us, it is particularly so in regard to our dress, which should be always neat as becomes religious. The dress now in use in our Congregation is the same that was approved by our venerated Founder, Very Reverend Father Donaghoe, and blessed by the Right Reverend Bishop Loras, and Superiors must not allow any part of this dress to be changed, without the express wish of the whole Congregation.

245. The street dress must be worn in public churches during divine service on Sundays; the children's Mass may be an exception. The outdoor dress must be worn on the street, except, when the Sisters go to the school located not more than one block from the convent.

246. To prevent the abuse of clothing, the Sisters may wear old house veils while cleaning school-rooms or other apartments. They may have for the same purpose a black calico or old serge habit.

247. The Sisters must not go about without their veils. Veils are to be worn in the kitchen, in sweeping and dusting,—at work of any kind.

248. All must have their shoes and clothes mended when necessary, and must wear them until they are no longer serviceable. The habits should not touch the floor. Silk handkerchiefs may not be used. (The crucifixes attached to the beads worn by the Sisters must be of brass, not of nickel.)



249. Clothing should be plainly marked in order to prevent unnecessary trouble in the laundry.

250. The length of veils will be in proportion to the height of the person. The shortest house veil will not be less than 60 inches; the longest will not exceed 66 inches; the shortest street veil 36 inches, the longest 40 inches.

251. The hem of habit sleeve when finished will be 2 inches; of apron  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch; of house veil  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch; of street veil 1 inch; of collar  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch; of border  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches. *13 made*

## CHAPTER VIII.

### REGARDING SCHOOLS.

252. The end of our Institute being our own perfection and the salvation of souls through the education of youth, we should be deeply penetrated with the importance of preparing thoroughly for our work; with holy and intelligent zeal, we should study to increase our usefulness, the better to accomplish the end of our vocation, and to merit the confidence of our patrons in our ability as teachers.

253. For the classes of every grade, preparation is necessary. The Sisters who teach must carefully employ the time allotted for study, and should not be content with the simple fulfilment of their obligations as teachers, but should go to the extent of their ability, observing no other limit

than that imposed by prudence, wisdom, and obedience.

254. We must attach the chief importance to religious instruction and to exercises of piety, in comparison with which, all other instruction and exercises are to be viewed merely as subsidiary. Our most important business is to instruct our pupils in the truths of salvation and to make them good and intelligent Christians. Should we succeed eminently well in teaching all other branches of knowledge and fail in this, we fail in the most essential object of a Christian school, and we frustrate the purpose of our calling.

255. The text books in all our schools must be, as far as possible, Catholic, especially our Readers, Literatures, Geographies and Histories; but we are permitted to consult other standard authors on all subjects of interest, and to read useful and instructive works. According to the means of the house, the Superior may subscribe for educational periodicals and for approved religious papers or magazines.

256. We must keep the school-rooms neat and orderly, and require the children to keep their desks in good order. Instruction in personal neatness and in polite deportment must be given regularly.

257. The Sisters must endeavor to be in their class-rooms at least half an hour before the opening of each session.

258. Whether in the school-room or on the playground, let each Sister devote to her own

classes all the time allowed, avoiding unnecessary intercourse with the pupils of another Sister.

259. From the moment the children present themselves in the morning until they are dismissed in the evening, we must give them our undivided attention. While they are present, we are not permitted to engage in any kind of needle work, nor to read any book or paper, but must interest ourselves in the welfare and progress of the children in class hours, and in their conduct and in the care of the school furniture during the time of recreation.

260. Let the Sisters guard against allowing the children to remain longer than the proper time, either in school or music rooms, or on the school grounds, after dismissal. Such waste of time is productive of much disorder.

261. We must carefully study the characters of those we teach that we may deal with them in the way best suited to each; and if it be allowable to manifest a special interest in any one pupil, let it be in the child of inferior abilities.

262. Teachers should not require from pupils an unreasonable amount of night work. Let the tasks, assigned for home study, be light and consist of exercises in matter that has been explained to the children, and the principles of which they understand.

263. In giving correction it is best to reprove the individual in private. Every expedient must be tried before resorting to corporal punishment,

and correction of this kind should be given privately, during intermissions, and only with permission of Superiors. Girls should never be punished in this manner. We should always be calm in the presence of children, but especially so when obliged to give reproof.

264. Pupils detained after school must not be required to remain longer than half an hour.

265. Sisters should not speak to any pupil of the affairs of the convent or of another pupil's progress or disposition or of private affairs of any kind; nor should they tell pupils the family names of any of the Sisters. The injustice of showing partiality must be strictly avoided.

266. We should ever evince in our conduct toward one another, the deepest regard and affection. What scandal if our pupils perceive that there is not a good feeling among us, if they should see the least mark of disagreement! Do not let us be deceived; children are more clear-sighted than many of us seem to suppose. A look, an impatient word, a smile even, may do more to scandalize them than years of teaching will be able to remove.

267. Should the conduct of a Sister prove a scandal to her pupils, or arouse the suspicion that she is actuated by unworthy motives, all her words of counsel would become like the idle winds, all her acts of devotion would bear the sad impress of pretense and hypocrisy.

268. Lastly, there is an obligation of such weight that all other obligations unite in enforcing

it upon us; it is, that we never fail to give to our pupils good example, for example is the very highest means of persuasion.

269. Bound as we are to imbue our pupils with strong religious principles, how necessary it is that we ourselves possess them in an eminent degree. We shall find in them the indispensable means to reach the two-fold end of our vocation, "our own perfection, and the salvation of our neighbor."

## CHAPTER IX.

### OBSERVANCE OF RULE.

270. Our Constitutions are worthy of all reverence, and are lacking in nothing that could inspire us with veneration for them. They have received the sanction and the confirmation of the Holy See, which has recognized them as wise and just. To us they should be sacred, and our fidelity to them, and our love for them should at all times be evident.

271. To the faithful Sister of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary nothing is comparable to what is contained in her Rules or taught or commanded by them, for in receiving the approbation of the Church, they are marked with the seal of the Holy Ghost. Any attempt to lessen their dignity or their force, under pretext of granting us more freedom, or a wider range of work, should meet with no favor from us. As loyal children of our venerated Founders, we desire no freedom

from the complete fulfilment of what we have voluntarily and solemnly promised, no loosening of the ties that bind us to our Divine Lord, no narrowing of the distance that separates us from the world and worldliness.

272. When a Rule has received the approbation of the Church, it must be observed in its entirety; it can neither be added to nor diminished, without the approval of the Church. Our Constitutions have this stability, and the Superiors of our Congregation can grant no general dispensations from the Rule; that is, they cannot grant a dispensation, abrogating or doing away with a Rule for a whole house; even the Superior General cannot grant such a dispensation. Superiors cannot grant a dispensation doing away with a Rule for an individual for all time. A Local Superior may, for sufficient cause, grant a dispensation for a time in a particular case, but for frequent dispensations of this kind, she must consult the Provincial.

273. In granting a dispensation, the length of time for which it is granted should be clearly specified. At the expiration of this period, if the necessity still exists, it may be renewed. Dispensations are to be asked for, in the first instance, from the Local Superior. Before applying for a permission to a higher superior, the Sisters should inform their Local Superior.

274. Each Sister is bound in charity to contribute to the welfare of our Congregation; its prosperity, and the good accomplished by any

and all of our members, should be her joy. For us there is no nobler heroism than living the common life, seeking no exemption, shunning all singularity, keeping intact and inviolable our beautiful Constitutions, our Rules, so full of the Spirit of God.

## CONCLUSION.

PRAYER OF OUR VENERATED FOUNDER,  
VERY REV. FATHER DONAGHOE.

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A Prayer for the Preservation of Peace and Regularity in the Community.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Omnipotent God, who hast selected this place for Thy service and for glorifying Thy holy name by the faithful observance of Thy commandments, grant to us Thy servants peace, security, health, concord, charity, and all the virtues of our state. Direct our Superiors according to Thy holy will and our necessities, that they may fear Thee, keep Thy law, and love us in true charity. Preserve, O Lord, this place from all grievous sin and scandal, from every snare and temptation of the devil. Do Thou, O Lord, who hast in the wisdom of Thy Providence, united us in this house that we may glorify Thy adorable name, send Thy holy angel from Thy heavenly court to assist, protect and defend us, that we may labor successfully in the great work

of our sanctification. O Lord Jesus Christ, our merciful Redeemer, turn away Thy eyes from our sins, and consider them not. Give ear to the supplication of Thy tender Mother, the ever Blessed and Glorious Virgin Mary, and by her intercession and that of Thy holy precursor, St. John Baptist; of Thy blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, John and Andrew; and of Thy holy Confessors, Benedict and Bernard, and of all Thy saints reigning with Thee, assist us according to the extent of our spiritual and corporal necessities, that we may serve Thee in peace, and having faithfully fulfilled our promises to Thee, O Savior of the world, we may deserve to glorify Thee with the Father and the Holy Ghost in Thy heavenly kingdom for ages without end. Amen.

ORDER TO BE OBSERVED AT MASS  
AND VESPERS.

(These pages are not to be read aloud, but are to be used for reference.)

Order to be Observed at Low Mass.

According to the rubrics of the Missal, all assisting at Low Mass should kneel during the whole service, except at the Gospel.

After the blessing at the end of Mass, all rise and stand, until after the last Gospel. Should the celebrant genuflect, during the reading of the Gospel, all genuflect with him. Whenever the celebrant genuflects during Mass, and all are standing, all should genuflect with him.



When the celebrant descends from the altar, all kneel and recite with him the "Prayers after Mass."

#### Order to be Observed at High Mass.

1. All should stand when the celebrant enters the sanctuary. All should kneel when the celebrant descends from the altar to begin Mass, and remain kneeling until the Gloria in Excelsis is intoned, when all stand, and remain standing, until the celebrant takes his seat; then all may sit.

2. When the celebrant rises after the singing of the "Gloria," all should rise with him, and remain standing while he sings the prayers.

3. All may sit, when the celebrant commences the Epistle, and remain sitting, until he commences the Gospel.

4. All stand while the Gospel is being sung. At a Solemn High Mass, they do not stand when the celebrant reads the Gospel, but only when the deacon commences to sing it.

5. All stand, while the celebrant intones the Credo, and remain standing, until the celebrant takes his seat.

6. At the conclusion of the Credo, all rise with the celebrant and remain standing, while he sings the "Dominus Vobiscum" and "Oremus," when all may sit.

7. All remain sitting, until the celebrant commences the "Per omnia saecula saeculorum" at the Preface, when all rise, and stand until the Sanctus.

8. All kneel at the Sanctus, and remain kneeling, until after the first ablution, when they may sit.

9. When the celebrant goes to the Missal, after covering the chalice, all stand and remain standing, during the singing of the prayers.

10. All kneel for the blessing, and stand during the last Gospel, at the end of which they kneel until the celebrant has left the sanctuary.

#### Order to be Observed at Requiem High Mass.

1. All stand when the celebrant enters the sanctuary. All kneel when the celebrant descends from the altar to begin Mass, and remain kneeling until the celebrant turns around to sing the "Dominus vobiscum," when all stand.

2. When the choir sings the response, "Et cum spiritu tuo," all kneel, and remain kneeling, during the singing of the prayers for the departed.

3. All may sit during the Epistle, and remain sitting until the deacon commences to sing the Gospel; then all rise, and remain standing during the singing of the Gospel and the "Dominus vobiscum" and the "Oremus" after the Gospel. All may then sit until the commencement of the Preface. In a Solemn Requiem Mass, it is not necessary to stand when the celebrant reads the Gospel, but only when the deacon commences to sing it.

4. During the Preface, all stand, and remain standing, until the Sanctus.

5. All kneel at the Sanctus, and remain kneeling, until after the first ablution, when all may sit.

6. When the celebrant goes to the Missal, all rise and stand, while he sings the "Dominus vobiscum."

7. All then kneel, while he sings the prayers for the departed, and remain kneeling, until the last Gospel is commenced.

8. During the last Gospel, all stand. At its conclusion, they kneel, and remain kneeling, until the celebrant has left the sanctuary.

#### Order to be Observed at Vespers.

1. All should stand, when the celebrant enters the sanctuary, and remain standing, until he has arrived at the altar.

2. All kneel, when the celebrant kneels to say the Pater Noster, and Ave Maria, at the foot of the altar.

3. All rise, when the celebrant rises, and remain standing, until the celebrant takes his seat after intoning the "Deus in adjutorium."

4. All incline the head at the "Gloria Patri" at the end of each psalm.

5. All should rise, when the celebrant rises to sing the "Capitulum" or "Little Chapter," and remain standing, until the celebrant is seated.

6. All should make the sign of the Cross at the "Deus in adjutorium," at the beginning of the "Magnificat," at the "Fidelium animae," at the

“Dominus det nobis suam pacem,” at the conclusion, when the celebrant says “Divinum auxilium maneat semper nobiscum.”

7. All should remain standing until the celebrant has left the sanctuary.

(To be read aloud with Customs.)

EPISTLE OF ST. IGNATIUS.

On the Virtue of Obedience

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Ignatius of Loyola to the Brethren of the Society of Jesus who are in Portugal, wishes grace and love everlasting in Christ our Lord.

1. It is a cause of great comfort to me, most dear Brethren in Christ, when I hear it reported with how earnest desire and endeavor you strive to attain to the highest perfection of all virtue and piety, by His favor, Who, as He has called you to this kind of life, so in His mercy keeps you in the same, and directs you to that blessed end, whereunto those that are chosen by Him do arrive.

2. And truly, though I wish you to be perfect in all spiritual gifts and ornaments, yet especially do I desire (as you have understood of me heretofore) to see you most eminent in the virtue of Obedience; and this not only for the excellent and singular fruits thereof, which are proved by many testimonies of Holy Writ, and by examples both

in the Old and New Testament; but also because, as St. Gregory says, \*Obedience is the only virtue that plants all other virtues in the mind, and preserves them after they are once planted. As long as this virtue shall flourish, all others doubtless will flourish, and bring forth such fruits as I desire in your hearts, and He with good reason requires, Who by His salutary Obedience repaired mankind when afflicted and destroyed through the crime of disobedience, †becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross.

3. More easily may we suffer ourselves to be surpassed by other Religious Orders in fasting, watching and other severities in diet and apparel, which, according to their institute and rule, every one does piously practice; but in true and perfect Obedience and the abnegation of our will and judgment, I greatly desire, most dear brethren; that those who serve God in this Society should be conspicuous, and that the true and genuine progeny of the same should, as it were, be distinguished by this mark, that they regard not the individual whom they obey, but in him Christ our Lord, for Whose love they obey. For the Superior is not to be obeyed because he is prudent, or virtuous, or excels in any other divine gift whatsoever it be; but for this only, that he is in the place of God, and has authority from Him Who says, ‡He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me. Neither, on the other hand, if he be of less understanding or prudence, is he therefore to be the less obeyed in that wherein he is Superior; since he bears His Person

\*L. 35. Moral c. 10. †Ad Philip ii. 8. ‡Lu. c. x. 16.

Whose Wisdom cannot be deceived, and who will supply whatsoever shall be wanting in His substitute, whether it be virtue or other qualities. Wherefore Christ our Lord, when He said in express and open terms, \*Upon the chair of Moses have sitten the Scribes and Pharisees; presently added, all things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works, do ye not.

4. Wherefore, I desire that you should earnestly endeavor, with all care and diligence, to acknowledge Christ in every Superior, and, with great devotion, reverence and obey in him the Divine Majesty. This will seem to you less strange, if you consider how the Apostle St. Paul commands us to obey even secular Superiors and Gentiles as Christ Himself, from Whom all well-ordered authority is derived; for thus he writes to the Ephesians: †Be obedient to them that are your temporal lords according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the simplicity of your heart, as to Christ; not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with a good will serving as to the Lord and not to men. And from this you yourselves may judge what account in his heart a religious man ought to make of his Superior, to whom he has given himself to be ruled and governed, not only as to a Superior, but expressly as to one that has the place of Christ:—whether he should look on him as a man or as the Vicar of Christ.

\*Matt. xxiii. 2.

†vi. 5.

5. Moreover, I desire that this should be thoroughly understood and deeply imprinted in your minds, that it is but a base and very imperfect kind of Obedience which consists in the external execution only of that which is commanded; and that it is not worthy the name of virtue, unless it pass to a further degree, making the will of the Superior our will, and so agreeing with the same that not only is there external fulfillment of the command, but also agreement of will; so that both may be of one mind in willing and not willing the same. And for this reason it is said in Holy Writ, \*Obedience is better than sacrifices. For, as St. Gregory teaches us, †In victims the flesh of another, but in obedience our own will is killed. And because this part of the soul is so excellent, hence it is that the offering of it to our Lord and Creator through Obedience, is of great price and value.

6. Oh, in how great and dangerous an error are not only they involved, who, in things appertaining to flesh and blood, but such also as in things otherwise very holy and spiritual, as fasting, prayer, or other good works, think it lawful to swerve from the will and appointment of their Superior; let them give ear to what Cassian prudently remarks in the Conference of Daniel the Abbot, saying: ‡It is one and the selfsame kind of disobedience, whether in earnestness of labor, or the desire of ease, one breaks the command of the Superior, and as prejudicial to go against the statutes of the Monastery out of sloth as out of watchfulness; and finally, it is as much to trans-

\*Reg. xv.22. †L.22. Moral c.10. ‡Serm. ad Milit. Templ. c.13.

gress the precept of the Abbot to read, as to condemn it to sleep. Holy was the action of Martha, holy the contemplation of Mary Magdalene, and holy the penance and tears wherewith she watered the feet of Christ our Lord; but all this was to be done in Bethania, which word is interpreted the house of Obedience, whereby our Lord would signify to us, as St. Bernard says: \*that neither the endeavor of good works, nor the quiet of contemplation, nor the tears of the penitent, could have been grateful unto Him out of Bethania.

7. Wherefore, most dear Brethren, cast off wholly, as far as you can, your own wills; deliver freely and dedicate to your Creator in His substitute the freedom He has bestowed upon you. Consider it no little advantage of your free-will, that you are able to give it back fully, through Obedience, to Him from whom you received it. And by so doing, you not only do not lose the same, but rather increase and perfect it; since, by this means, you direct all your wills, by that most certain rule of rectitude, the will of God interpreted unto you by him, who, in place of God, governs you.

8. And, for this reason, you must always be very careful that you never seek to wrest the Superior's will (which you ought to hold for the will of God Himself) unto your own; for this would be not to conform your will unto God's, but to endeavor to rule His will by yours, inverting the order of His Divine Wisdom. Oh, how great an error it is, and one which belongs to such as self-love has blinded, to account themselves



obedient, when, by some means or other, they have brought the Superior to that which they desire. Listen to St. Bernard, a man eminently experienced in this matter: \*Whosoever, says he, endeavors either openly or covertly to have his Spiritual Father enjoin him what he himself desires, he deceives himself if he flatters himself he is a true follower of obedience; for in that he does not obey his Superior, but rather the Superior obeys him. It follows, therefore, that whosoever is desirous of the virtue of Obedience, must necessarily attain to this second degree, so as not only to fulfill the Superior's command, but to make also the Superior's will his own will, or rather to put off his own will that he may put on the will of God, declared to him by his Superior.

9. But he that will wholly sacrifice himself to God, besides his will, must also offer up his understanding (which is the third and highest degree of Obedience), that he may not only will, but also think the selfsame with his Superior; and submit his own judgment unto him so far as a devout will can bend the understanding. For though this part of the soul has not that freedom wherewith the will is endowed, and by nature itself is drawn to assent to whatsoever is represented unto it as true, yet, nevertheless, in many things, in which the evidence of the known truth does not force it, it may, by the strength of the will, be inclined more one way than another. When these things happen, whosoever professes Obedience must submit himself to the judgment of the Superior. For, Obedience, being a holocaust, in which the

\*Serm. de trib. Ordin. Eccl.

whole man, nothing at all excepted, is offered up unto his Creator and Lord in the fire of charity, through the hands of His substitute, and as it is also a full renunciation, in which a religious man freely yields up all his own rights, to dedicate and bind himself to God, to be possessed and governed by His Divine Providence by means of his Superior; it cannot be denied that Obedience comprehends, not only the execution, so that the person do that which is commanded, and the will so that he do it willingly, but also the judgment, that whatsoever the Superior commands and thinks good, seems just and reasonable to the inferior, so far, as I have said, as the will by its force and vigor can bend the understanding.

10. Would that this Obedience of the understanding and judgment were as much understood and put in practice by men, as it is grateful to God, and necessary to those who live in religion. For, as in the celestial bodies and globes to the end that one may receive motion and influence from another, it is necessary that, with certain conformity and order, the inferior globe be subject to the superior; so, amongst men, when one is moved by another's authority (as happens in Obedience), it is necessary that he who depends upon another be subject and subordinate, to the end that he may receive some virtue and influence from him who commands. Now, this kind of subjection and Obedience can, in no wise stand, unless the will and judgment of the inferior agree with the will and judgment of the Superior.

11. Moreover, if we regard the end and intention of Obedience, as our will, so our judgment may be deceived as to what is good for us; wherefore if, lest our will should stray, we conform it to the will of the Superior, our understanding is also to be ruled by his, to the end it may not err: \*Lean not upon thy own prudence, says the Holy Scripture. And, even in worldly matters, those who are wise, judge it to be the part of a prudent man, not to trust his own wisdom, especially in his own cause, in which, when the mind is troubled, one can hardly be a good judge. And, if in matters concerning ourselves, we are to prefer the judgment and counsel of another, who is not our Superior, before our own; how much more the counsel and judgment of the Superior, to whom we have yielded ourselves to be directed, as to one who is in place of God, and interpreter of His Divine Will. And certain it is, that, in spiritual matters and persons so much the more heed is to be taken, as the danger of a spiritual course is greater, when one runs along therein without the bridle of counsel and discretion. Wherefore, Cassian, in the Conference of Abbot Moses, says: †By no other vice does the devil draw a monk headlong and bring him to death sooner, than by persuading him to neglect the counsel of the Elders, and trust to his own judgment and determination.

12. Moreover, unless we have this Obedience of our understanding, it is impossible that either the consent of our will, or the execution, will be such as they ought to be; for, nature itself has so

\*Prov. iii. 5,

†Col. ii. 11.

ordained that the concupiscible power of the soul must follow the apprehensive, and the will without violence, cannot long obey against the understanding. And if there be any who for some time obey, induced by that common apprehension, that obey they must, though commanded amiss; yet, doubtless, this cannot be firm and constant, and so perseverance fails, or at least the perfection of Obedience, which consists in obeying promptly and with alacrity: for, there can be no alacrity and diligence, where there is discord of minds and opinions. There perishes that zeal and speed in performing, when we doubt whether it be expedient or not, to do what we are commanded; there perishes that renowned simplicity of blind Obedience, when we call in question the justice of the command, and, perhaps even we condemn the Superior, because he bids us do such things as are not very pleasing unto us; there fails humility, for although, on the one hand, we obey, yet on the other, we prefer ourselves before our Superior; there fails fortitude in difficult enterprises, and (to conclude in brief) the whole force and dignity of this virtue is lost. And in place thereof there arise pain, trouble, reluctance, weariness, murmurings, excuses, and other vices of no small moment, by which the value and merit of Obedience is wholly destroyed. Wherefore, St. Bernard, of those who take it ill when things are enjoined that seem somewhat hard unto them, speaks as follows; \*if you begin to grieve at this, to judge, your Superior, to murmur in your heart, though outwardly you fulfill what is commanded

\*Serm. 3 de Circumcis.

yet this is not the virtue of patience, but a cloak of your malice. And if peace and tranquillity of mind is desired, he certainly shall never arrive unto it, who has within himself the cause of his disquiet and trouble, to-wit: the disagreeing of his own judgment from the law of Obedience.

13. And, therefore, for the maintaining of union, which is the bond of every society, the Apostle so earnestly exhorts all †to think and say the same thing, that, by the agreeing of their wills and judgments, they may be mutually comforted and sustained. Now, if there must be one and the self-same sentiment between the members and the head, you may easily judge whether it is more just that the head should yield to the members, or the members unto the head. It is plain, then, by what has been hitherto said, how necessary is this Obedience of the understanding.

14. But how perfect the same is in itself, and how pleasing to God, we may gather by this: first, because thereby the most excellent and precious part of man is consecrated unto Him; secondly, because the obedient man is by this means made a living holocaust most grateful to His Divine Majesty, keeping nothing whatsoever to himself; lastly, by reason of the great difficulty of the combat; for the obedient man overcomes himself for the love of God, and resists that natural inclination which all men have, to embrace and follow their own opinion. Hence, therefore, it follows, that Obedience, though its proper fruit seems to be to perfect the will, inasmuch as it makes it prompt and ready at the beck of the

†Rom. xv. 5. I Cor. i. 10. 2. Cor. xxiii. 11 Philip. ii. 2.

Superior; yet, it must also belong to the understanding, as we have declared, and bring it to be of the self-same opinion in all things with the Superior, that, all the forces of our will and understanding, being united together, we may fulfill what is commanded with all speed and integrity.

15. It seems to me, most dear brethren, I hear you say, that you now no longer doubt of the necessity of this virtue, but that you earnestly desire to know how you may attain to the perfection thereof. To this question, I answer with St. Leo: Nothing is difficult unto the humble, and nothing hard unto the meek: so that, if you want not humility nor mildness, assuredly God will not be wanting in His Goodness, to help you to perform that which you have promised Him, not only patiently but also willingly.

16. Moreover, three things I will lay down unto you, which will greatly further you in the attainment of this Obedience of your understanding. The first is: that, as I said in the beginning, you do not behold in the person of your Superior a man subject to errors and miseries but Christ Himself, Who is the Highest Wisdom, Immeasurable Goodness, and Infinite Charity, Who neither can be deceived, nor will deceive you. And, because you are conscious within yourselves, that you have undergone this yoke of Obedience for the love of God, to the end that you might, in following the Superior's will, more assuredly follow the Divine Will; doubt not, but the most faithful charity of our Lord continually directs you, and leads you the right way, by the hands of those

whom He has given you for Superiors. Wherefore, hear their voice no otherwise than if it were the voice of Christ, seeing that the Apostle writing to the Colossians\* and exhorting subjects to obey their lords, says as follows: Whatsoever you do, do it from the heart, as to the Lord, and not to man, knowing that you shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance; serve ye the Lord Christ. And St. Bernard: †Whether God, or man, His substitute, commands anything, we must obey with equal diligence, and perform it with like reverence, when, however, man commands nothing that is contrary to God. And thus, if you do not look upon man, with the eyes of the body, but God, with those of the soul, it will certainly not be hard to conform your will and judgment to that rule which you yourselves have chosen.

17. Another means is, that you always seriously endeavor to defend within yourselves that which your Superior commands or thinks good, but never to disapprove of it. And to this it will help, to be well affected towards whatsoever he shall command; whereby you shall not only obey without trouble, but even with joy and pleasure. For, as St. Leo says: ‡It is not hard to serve, where we love that which is commanded.

18. The last means to subject your understanding, both more easy and secure, and also in use among the holy Fathers, is to determine within yourselves whatsoever the Superior commands, to be the commandment and will of Almighty God Himself; and as to believe what the Catholic Faith proposes, you at once bend all the forces of

\*iii. 23. †Tract, de Precep. et Dispen. C. xii.

‡Serm, 4 de jejun, sep. mensis.

your mind to consent thereunto; so in doing that which your Superior commands, you must be carried with a kind of blind impulse of your will, desirous to obey. So it is to be thought that Abraham\* did, when bid to sacrifice his son Isaac; so, in time of the New Testament, did some of those holy Fathers whom Cassian speaks of; as John, the Abbott, † who did not question whether that which he was commanded was profitable or not, as when, with such great and continued labor, for a year together, he watered a dry stick; nor whether it could be done or not, as when he endeavored so earnestly to move a huge rock, which many men together could not have stirred. This kind of Obedience, we see sometimes to have been confirmed by miracle. For, to say nothing of others, whom you yourselves are not ignorant of, Maurus, St. Benedict's disciple, ‡ going by command of his Superior into a lake, did not sink. Another § being bid by his Superior to bring a lioness to him, took hold of her and brought her unto him. Wherefore, this manner of subjecting our own judgment, so as without questioning to sanction and approve within ourselves whatsoever the Superior commands, is not only a common practice among holy men, but also to be imitated by all who are desirous of perfect Obedience in all things where manifestly there appears no sin.

19. Neither are you hindered by this, if anything occurs to you different from the Superior's opinion, and it seems (after you have commended the same humbly to God) that it ought to be declared, but that you may propose it unto him;

\*Gen. xxii. †L. 4 C. xxiv et xxvi, ‡Greg. 2. Dial. C. vii. §In vit. P.P.L. 5, libel. 14, n. 4.



wherein lest self-love and your own judgment should deceive you, this precaution is to be taken, that you remain both before and after you have made the proposition most indifferent, not only as to undertaking or relinquishing the matter of which there is question; but, also, as to approving and thinking better, whatsoever seems good to the Superior.

20. And this which I have said of Obedience, is equally to be observed by every private person toward his immediate Superior, and by the Rectors and local Superiors towards the Provincial, by the Provincials towards the General, and by the General towards him whom God has placed over him, to-wit: His Vicar upon earth; to the end that thus, a perfect distinction of degrees, and, consequently, peace and charity, may be preserved; without which the right government, neither of our Society, nor of any other congregation, can be maintained. And this kind of proceeding the Divine Providence uses, in disposing all things sweetly, and bringing them to their appointed ends, the lowest by the middlemost, and the middlemost by the highest. Whence, also, flows that subordination in angels of one Hierarchy towards another, and that perfect harmony of the celestial bodies and all things which are moved, each in its own determined place and position; whose revolutions and motions proceed orderly from one supreme mover by degrees unto the lowest. The same we see upon earth, as well as in all well-ordered commonwealths, as most of all in the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, whose members

and functions are all derived from one General Vicar of Christ our Lord; and by how much the more exactly this disposition and order is kept, by so much the whole government is better; and, on the other hand, by the neglect hereof, what grievous damages have befallen various congregations, there is no one who does not see. And, therefore, in this Society, whereof our Lord has delivered unto me some charge and care, I desire this virtue should be practiced as diligently, and flourish as perfectly, as if the whole good and safety of our Society depended hereon.

21. Wherefore, that where my Epistle began, there it may also end, I most earnestly beseech you for Christ our Lord's sake, Who gave himself unto us, not only as a Master, but also as an Example of Obedience, that you will bend all your forces to the attaining of this virtue; and that, desirous and greedy of so glorious a victory, you will endeavor to overcome yourselves, that is, to conquer and subdue the most excellent and difficult part of your soul, your will, I say, and understanding; to the end the true and solid knowledge and love of God Almighty, our Lord, may draw you wholly unto Him, and rule and govern you in the whole course of this life and pilgrimage, until at length He bring you, and many others assisted by your help and example, to the last and most happy end of bliss everlasting.

I commend myself most earnestly to God in your prayers.

From Rome, the 26th of March, 1553.







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