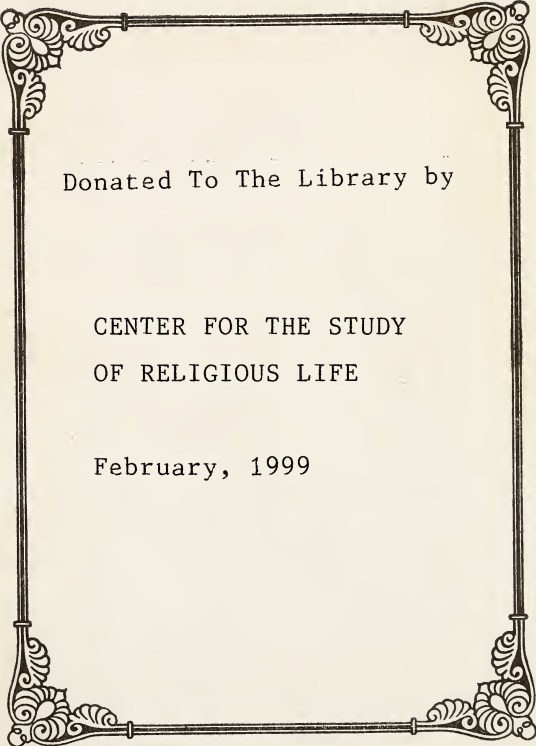


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CONSTITUTIONS
OF THE
SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE
OF
ST. MARY OF THE WOODS.

DIOCESE OF VINCENNES.



1897.
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PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE OF ST. MARY OF THE WOODS, VIGO COUNTY, IND.

Owing to the fact that the first edition of the Constitutions, as corrected and approved by the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, printed at the Press of the Propaganda, Rome, in 1887, was based on a translation made rather for examination than for publication, and was printed by those who did not know the English language, and withal hastily, it has been the desire of the Community to have inaccuracies of language eliminated, and repetitions avoided. For this reason we have carefully gone over the whole rule, as now arranged, and compared it with the original edition of the Propaganda Press of 1887, and have found it in accord with that edition, notwithstanding changes of order in chapters and numbers. We have, moreover, inserted in the text the changes which the Sacred Congregation ordered to be made by their Decrees of March 12, 1894, and of April 14, 1896.

While supervising the present edition of the Rules, for the convenience of the Community,

as is our duty, we take occasion to state that the original edition of 1887, printed at the Press of the Propaganda, and the two Decrees referred to March 12, 1894, and of April 14, 1896, must always be the guide for interpreting the meaning of the present edition, should any misunderstanding arise.

FRANCIS SILAS CHATARD,

Bishop of Vincennes.

St. Mary of the Woods, Vigo County, Indiana,
January 12, 1897.

CONSTITUTIONS
OF THE
SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE
OF
ST. MARY OF THE WOODS.

PART I.

CONSTITUTION I.

*The Congregation.**

1. The Sisters of Providence of St. Mary of the Woods, in the diocese of Vincennes, Indiana, form a Congregation of Sisters, who, bound by simple vows, are under the authority of a General Chapter and of a Superior General, assisted by a Privy Council. The Mother House of the entire Congregation is in the diocese of Vincennes, Indiana.

2. The end proposed by this Congregation, is to honor Divine Providence, and to promote God's merciful designs upon mankind, by devoting itself to works of charity, as will be explained elsewhere.

3. The spirit of the Congregation is a great zeal for the glory of God, an ardent desire to acquire perfection, and to contribute to the sanctification of our neighbor.

Chapters marked thus * are to be read aloud in the evening before spiritual reading.

4. The Sisters of Providence take the simple vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. Besides the Choir Sisters, there are at the Mother House, and, when necessary, at the various establishments, Sisters Coadjatrix for household work. They take the same vows as the Sisters.

5. The Congregation of the Sisters of Providence is under the patronage of the Holy Family; therefore, its patronal feasts are Christmas, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and the Feast of St. Joseph.

6. In accordance with the Constitutions, Part II, Chapter I, the daily spiritual exercises of the Sisters are: To recite in common the morning and night prayers, to spend one hour in meditation or spiritual reading, to assist at Holy Mass, to recite the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, to say the Rosary and make the particular and the general examinations of conscience. Besides these daily spiritual exercises, they shall go to Confession every eight days, receive Holy Communion on the days appointed, make a retreat of one day each month and a retreat of eight days every year.

CONSTITUTION II.

The Holy See and the Ordinary.

7. The Sisters shall have recourse to the Holy See in all cases that it has reserved to itself; namely,

(a) For the dispensation of the Vows of any Sister, though the said Vows are only simple.

(b) For the dismissal from the Congregation of a Sister professed with Perpetual Vows, or for the dismissal of a Sister under Temporary Vows, within the time covered by her Vows.

(c) For the establishment, if necessary, of new Novitiates or new Provinces of the Congregation.

(d) For the modification or alteration of the present Constitutions.

(e) For the sale of property belonging to the Congregation and for incurring debt.

8. The jurisdiction of the Ordinary shall be complete over the Institute in conformity with the holy canons and the Apostolic Constitutions.

CONSTITUTION III.

The General Chapter.

9. The General Chapter represents the entire Congregation. The members by right are, the Superior General, the six Councillors, and the Superiors of the establishments that have at least ten Sisters. Those by election shall be an equal number of professed Sisters with Perpetual Vows, who are to be chosen by the Sisters who have a right to vote, divided into as many sections as there are Sisters to be voted for. Three months before the election, the Superior General, assisted by her Council, shall divide the Sisters into such sections, fixing the place and the manner in which the said sections shall proceed to vote; and of all this,

she shall inform at once the various houses of the Congregation.

10. Only the Sisters composing the General Chapter have the right of suffrage. They shall decide all the elections by a majority of votes, as will be explained hereafter.

11. To be a member of the General Chapter, it is necessary to have been professed at least five years.

12. The General Chapter shall assemble at least once every six years, unless hindered by some extraordinary difficulty. All the members should be convoked for each assembly. The Chapter can transact no business unless two-thirds of the members be present.

13. The ordinary rule is, the Chapter assembles on the summons of the Superior General, by the advice of her Council, and with the consent of the Ordinary; and, in case of the death, absence, or incapacity of the Superior General, on the summons of the Assistant, with the consent of the Privy Council, and the approval of the Ordinary. In an exceptional and extreme case, the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda shall be informed and give their advice. The Ordinary of the place presides at the Chapter, in quality of Apostolic Delegate. If prevented, he shall appoint a suitable person to replace him. A report of the deliberations of the Chapter shall be drawn up, and a copy thereof sent to the Sacred Congregation.

14. The Chapter, by an absolute majority of votes, appoints the Superior General and all

the members of her Council. In the First Session it examines and passes upon the annual accounts of the Council; and, in general, it passes judgment upon the most important affairs of the Congregation. For all expenses, sales of property, and to incur debt beyond what is usual, the permission of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda is required. When an imperative necessity imposes upon it the painful duty, it asks of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda the dismissal of any Sister under perpetual vows, who has been proved guilty of some grave fault and is incorrigible; and it can itself, for just cause, with the consent of the Ordinary, decree the dismissal of Sisters who have taken vows for three or five years, but only at the end of the time covered by the vows. If it be found necessary to dismiss a Sister before the expiration of the time covered by the temporary vows, her case, like that of a Sister under perpetual vows, must be submitted to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda.

15. The Sisters who compose the General Chapter have the right of suffrage only in the general government of the Congregation. Out of the enclosure of the Chapter they have no special privilege.

16. Besides the elections which, according to the Rule, are to be conducted by secret ballot, other questions shall be decided in the same way, provided that at least five members ask that the suffrage shall be secret; otherwise the

suffrage shall be open. Usually, in a General Chapter affairs are treated of which from their very nature, demand a discreet silence or an inviolable secrecy and which may be a strict obligation of conscience.

17. The Superior General shall be chosen from among the Sisters who are at least (unless by dispensation) forty years of age, who have been ten years professed and under perpetual vows for two years. She is to be elected by an absolute majority of votes and a secret ballot. The term of her office shall be six years, but she may be elected a second time provided she have two-thirds of all the votes. For a third term a dispensation of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda is requisite. If, in the counting of the votes, no name has an absolute majority, the Chapter shall proceed to a second, and, if need be, to a third ballot. If on a third ballot, there should be a like result the naming of the Superior General will, by right, devolve upon the Ordinary presiding, who shall choose between the two who will have received the greatest number of votes. The minutes of the three ballots, together with an account of the proceedings, shall be sent to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda by the Ordinary who has presided over the General Chapter.

18. Having elected the Superior General, the Chapter proceeds to the election of the several members of the Privy Council, which Council consists of six Assistants, one of whom shall be

elected Procuratrix by the Chapter and another elected Secretary; they shall all be at least thirty-five years of age and two years professed with perpetual vows. The term of each of these offices shall also be six years, and those who hold them may be re-elected every six years by an absolute majority of votes, and always by secret suffrage. In case of a vacancy or the incapacity of an Assistant, the place shall be supplied for the remainder of the term by a vote of the Superior General and her Council, the majority deciding. The Superior General, when she has retired from office, cannot be a member of the Council until after the lapse of six years.

19. Every six years an account of the condition of the Institute shall be sent to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda. It shall include the personnel, the number of houses, the Novitiate, the observance of the Constitutions and the financial condition of the Institute. This account should be approved by the General Chapter, signed by each member of the Chapter, and approved by the Ordinary of the Diocese to which the Mother House belongs.

CONSTITUTION IV.

The Superior General.

20. All affairs of simple administration are under the authority of the Superior General, aided by her Council. She makes all the regulations concerning the temporal welfare of the

entire Congregation, sees to the observance of the Constitutions, makes the appointments for the various employments throughout the Congregation, and recalls or replaces the Sisters when she judges it necessary, without being obliged to give an account of her reasons. She visits the several houses of the Congregation, or has them visited by a member of her Council; opens the letters of the Sisters, excepting those directed to the Ordinary of the place, or received from him; receives young aspirants as Postulants, admits them to the habit and the Novitiate; and afterwards to the vows of three years, then to those of five, and, finally, to the perpetual vows. In a word, upon her devolves the entire administration of the Congregation.

21. The Superior General shares her authority and her administration with the Council, in a manner more or less extended, according to the nature and importance of the affairs. She shall convoke her Council whenever she judges it proper, and, at least one meeting shall be held every month. She directs the deliberations and gives a decision according to the majority of votes. In case of an equal division of votes, her vote preponderates. Even in the secret suffrage, she can, should she so desire, give the casting vote.

22. She should have the consent of the Council in the following cases: (a) For the admission of aspirants to the Novitiate, afterwards to the Habit, and finally to the profession of the temporary and perpetual vows. (b) When,

during the interval of the Session of the General Chapter, there is urgent need to submit to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, either the case of a Sister under perpetual vows, who has become guilty of a grave fault and is incorrigible; or, to decree the dismissal of a Sister under temporary vows, who has become culpable and incorrigible. (c) For the nomination and the recalling of the Local Superiors and the Directresses of the Boarding Schools. (d) For the acceptance or the suppression of any house, having first obtained the consent of the Ordinaries. (e) In all important affairs of the Congregation, not reserved for the General Chapter, or which, in cases of urgency, cannot be referred to it.

For all other things of little importance, or, being of importance are contained in these Constitutions, the Superior General can act of herself or hear her Council as she deems prudent.

23. Whenever the Council is to meet, all its members shall be summoned in due time, and if it be impossible for some to attend, an effort must be made to ascertain their opinions, which, with the reasons that suggested them, shall be taken into consideration, in order that all may be done in the spirit of religious harmony. It is to be understood that questions shall be decided by a majority of the members present.

24. Most of the deliberations of the Council of their own nature impose an obligation of secrecy more or less binding, either perpetually

or at least for a time. This obligation is sometimes strict and serious. The ballot shall be secret not only when the Superior General judges it proper, but also whenever it is demanded by two members of the Council. Nevertheless the obligation does not hold in relation to the Holy See, nor in regard to the Ordinary of the place.

25. It is of the highest importance that there exist perfect union between the Superior General and the members of her Council, for upon this union depends in a great measure the prosperity of the Congregation.

26. In case of the absence, illness, or temporary infirmity of the Superior General, the government of the house in ordinary affairs devolves upon the Assistant who was first chosen.

CONSTITUTION V.

Visitation of the Houses.

27. At least every two years each house shall be visited by the Superior General or by one of the Sisters of her Council. Upon her arrival, the Sister Visitor shall assume the government of the house, see the Sisters in private, examine the classes, take cognizance of the domestic administration, examine and balance the accounts of the house, and, finally, she shall counsel or command as she deems expedient. She shall make out a report of what she observes in each house and send it to the Mother

House to be registered in the Archives for reference when needed.

28. In particular cases the Superior General may employ a Local Superior or any other Sister worthy of confidence, to visit a house. In such exceptional cases, the delegated Sister should keep exactly within the limits of her commission.

CONSTITUTION VI.

Local Superiors.

29. The duties of the Local Superiors are extensive. Their principal study should be the right government, spiritual and temporal, of their respective houses and schools; and they shall see that the Constitutions are observed by the Sisters under their care.

They shall accept with respect all the measures adopted by the authorities of the Congregation, and they shall undertake nothing of importance without having previously consulted the Superior General, to whom they should write every four months, in order that she may be well acquainted with all that concerns the various establishments.

They shall read the letters written or received by the Sisters, except those to, or from, the Ordinary, the Superior General and the members of the Privy Council.

CONSTITUTION VII.

Intercourse of the Sisters with Ecclesiastics.

30. The Sisters should always act through a spirit of faith, considering their Pastors and other Ecclesiastics as ministers of Jesus Christ. They shall be very reserved in their intercourse with them, conduct themselves towards them with the most profound deference, speak to them with the greatest respect, and avoid everything that could have the appearance of levity, loss of time, and familiarity.

If, unfortunately, they can not avoid seeing in them some defects or even faults, they shall not speak of this among themselves, but, lamenting it before God, they shall always preserve the same respect for the sacred character of the Priesthood.

Should difficulties arise between the Parish Priest and his parishioners, or between Ecclesiastics of the place and those of the neighborhood, the Sisters will take part with no one, but shall treat all kindly and speak only words of peace fitted to harmonize spirits.

CONSTITUTION VIII.

Benefactors.

31. Gratitude is one of the virtues which should distinguish the Sisters of Providence. They shall conscientiously comply with the intentions of the founders and other benefactors of the Congregation, treat them with due re-

spect, keep them in remembrance, and pray for them.

CONSTITUTION IX.

New Houses.

32. Before the Congregation accepts a house, there must be: (a) The formal consent of the Ordinary of the place. (b) A dwelling and furniture suited to its purpose. (c) A sufficient revenue whereby the Sisters may be moderately, yet respectably maintained. Under these conditions the Superior General with her Council, may accept the proposed establishment. She will be careful to have a copy of all the authentic acts and documents necessary for the legalization of contracts, and to secure the future stability of the foundation.

In each house there must be, at least, three Sisters.

CONSTITUTION X.

Postulants and Novices.

33. Those who seek admission to the Congregation, should be the offspring of legitimate marriage, be of a respectable family, of moral integrity, and in good health. They should present certificates of Baptism, Confirmation, and of blameless life. Before being admitted to the Noviceship they shall remain as Postulants for three or four months.

34. A widow cannot be received without a special Indult from the Sacred Congregation;

and, in case of admission, she cannot be a Local Superior, nor exercise other superior offices. No one can be admitted who has tried her religious vocation in another Community and remained in it for a considerable time; for example, if she had taken the habit.

35. It is necessary that those who desire to embrace this holy Institute should not be inclined to melancholy or levity. They must have a good spirit and an upright mind, with a disposition candid and submissive to the will of Superiors. They should be amiable and conciliatory, so as to live with others in union of heart and mind. They must be judged capable of instructing youth or of taking care of the sick; or, at least, they must show an aptitude for acquiring what they do not possess.

36. An exact account shall be taken of what a Postulant brings, —linen, clothes, goods, or money,—so that, should she not persevere, all may be returned to her.

37. Three months after the entrance of a Postulant, or after a longer period, the Privy Council shall deliberate upon her admission to the Novitiate, or upon her dismissal. If she be admitted, after being examined by the Ordinary, she shall receive the religious Habit and enter upon her Novitiate; if not admitted, she shall be sent away immediately. The majority of voices shall decide the case.

38. After the ceremony of taking the Habit, her Novitiate shall begin at the Mother House. The Novitiate shall last, at least, two years,

the first of which shall be passed in the Mother House.

39. The principal reasons for the dismissal of Novices, and which, had they been known, would have prevented their admission into the Novitiate, are the following: (a) Unfitness for the duties of the Congregation; (b) Infirmities, physical or moral, discovered or occurring during the Novitiate; (c) Engagements made before their entrance and still binding; (d) Hereditary diseases, such as epilepsy, insanity, etc.; (e) A violent and unsociable disposition, which is directly opposed to the religious spirit.

While some one of these causes taken by itself might not justify the dismissal of a Novice, the union of several of them would be more than a sufficient reason. It is for the Superior General, in concert with her Council, to decide in each case as prudence shall direct. The decision, being final, requires no formal statement.

40. The Novice thus dismissed receives back what she brought to the Congregation; deduction being made for the expenses of her board and clothing.

41. If, on the contrary, the Novice is admitted and allowed to take the triennial vows, she belongs to the Congregation and may exercise its various duties, since there is then a reciprocity of engagement and of justice between her and the Congregation for the time covered by the vows. The Sisters cannot leave the Congregation, nor can the Congregation send them away, except for causes nearly the same as

those which justify the sending away of a professed Sister with perpetual vows.

The dismissal of a Sister, at the end of the period covered by the temporary vows, is to be decided by the General Chapter, if it be then in session, or will in a short time assemble; otherwise, or in case of urgency, it shall be decided by the Superior General with the advice of her Council, and the expressed consent of the Ordinary.

A Sister by the fact of her dismissal within the time covered by her vows, is not released from her vows for the remaining time of her profession, unless, at her own request, she be dispensed by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda.

CONSTITUTION XI.

The Profession.

42. At the end of the term for which the first vows are taken, should any Sister be deemed plainly unfitted for the duties of the Congregation, or be judged to have no vocation to this manner of life, she shall be dismissed, taking with her whatever she brought to the Community, as said above of the Novices. Those who have proved their fitness and their religious spirit, are permitted to renew their vows for a period of five years.

In the eighth year from the first vows, the Sisters shall return to the Novitiate, to undergo a second Noviceship of one year, that is, a

scholastic year of ten months, before being allowed to bind themselves by perpetual vows. Having thus proved their stability and renewed their fervor, they are admitted to the profession of perpetual vows. Henceforward, between them and the Community there exists for all time a mutual obligation of justice. The Congregation has a right to exact of them conduct becoming good and holy daughters of the Institute; and the Sisters have a right to live, for the remainder of their days, in health or sickness, in the Congregation, their adopted family.

43. The dismissal of a professed Sister is extremely deplorable, and ought to be unheard of in the Congregation of Providence. It can only take place when there is question of faults of a dishonorable and scandalous nature, such as theft, drunkenness, impurity; or of a kind subversive of religious discipline, such as formal disobedience or cabals against the authority of Superiors, and only then, when the person is judged to be incorrigible. The Superior General, with the advice of her Council, first gives an admonition. In case of a repetition of the fault, she gives a second admonition. If there be a third relapse, she calls the unfortunate Sister to spend six months at the Mother House, where she shall be employed in humble and laborious work. If after this there is no reform, the Sister should be considered incorrigible; and then, either the General Chapter, if it be in session or will soon meet; or, in case of ur-

gency, between the Sessions of the General Chapter, the Superior General with the consent of her Council, shall refer the case of the unworthy Sister to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda with a judicial statement, in order that she may be dismissed forever from the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence.

The immediate dismissal of a Sister may be decreed, either by the General Chapter, or by the Superior General in concert with her Council in the following cases:

(a) If a Sister has been sentenced for some disgraceful crime by judicial authority.

(b) If a Sister has been guilty of some disgraceful fault against morals, of public notoriety.

In either case, the matter must be reported to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda for its ratification.

44. In all these painful circumstances, the decisions either of the General Chapter or of the Council, should be made by a majority of two-thirds of the votes and by secret ballot.

45. When a Sister is dismissed from the Congregation, or when she leaves it of her own accord, by no right can she claim more than the amount she brought to the Congregation, deduction being made, however, for the expenses of her board and clothing during the time of her Novitiate. She can never be readmitted.

CONSTITUTION XII.

The Vow of Poverty.

46. The professed Sisters of this Institute may keep the simple ownership of what they possess; but they are absolutely forbidden to keep in their hands the administration, the usufruct and the use thereof. In consequence, before they make their profession, they must by special act, give up such administration, usufruct, and use to whom they think fit, even to the Institute itself, if such be their pleasure. The act of cession, however, may bear the clause that this cession is revokable at the will of the Sister; but she cannot in conscience revoke it without the consent of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda. This applies also to whatever may fall to the Sisters by way of inheritance, or gift after their profession. As to the simple ownership, the Sisters may dispose of it, by will or by gift, with the permission of the Superior General, which disposition will put an end to the cession made of the administration, the usufruct, and the use, unless they desire such cession to remain notwithstanding the giving away the simple ownership for any period they judge proper. For the rest, the professed Sisters are not forbidden to perform, with permission of the Superior General, the acts of ownership required by law.

The dower given to the Institute is not included in the above mention of simple ownership. It cannot be disposed of by the Sisters.

CONSTITUTION XIII.

The Vow of Chastity.

47. Besides the obligation of not contracting marriage, the vow of Chastity imposes upon the Sisters that of avoiding faults, interior and exterior, against the Sixth Commandment of God. The vow adds a new obligation to that of the Commandment, so that the religious who violates her vow, commits a sacrilege in addition to her sin against the Commandment.

CONSTITUTION XIV.

The Vow of Obedience.

48. The vow of Poverty immolates to God temporal goods; the vow of Chastity immolates the body; but the vow of Obedience immolates the will, that is to say, one's own self. The vow of Obedience, the bond and essence of the religious life, imposes the obligation to obey the Holy See, the General Chapter, and the Superior General, in all that is conformable to the letter and the spirit of the Constitutions, and in all that is not contrary to them, nor otherwise unlawful. In either case, the submission is of serious obligation, when there is gravity of matter, and authority commands (which is of rare occurrence) in virtue of holy Obedience, or in equivalent terms. The Sisters of Providence should always obey through a motive of faith, in order not to be deprived of the great merit of Religious Obedience; and they should obey in this wise, the Local Superiors and sub-

ordinate officers through whom the authority of the head Superior is exercised.

CONSTITUTION XV.

The Works of Charity to be Performed by the Sisters.

49. The Sisters do not engage themselves to perform all the works of charity which present themselves in regard to our neighbor, but they promise to employ themselves, when the Superior General judges it proper, in the usual works of the Institute, namely,

(a) The instruction and education of children.

(b) The care of the sick, whether at their homes or in hospitals.

(c) The relief of the unfortunate, whether in prisons or in charitable institutions.

The Sisters are obliged to accept, when Obedience exacts it, the employments above indicated.

CONSTITUTION XVI.

The Temporalities Belonging to the General Administration.

50. The Temporalities of the General Administration consist,

(a) Of the revenues of real estate belonging to the Mother House;

(b) Of the casual revenues arising especially from the profits of the Boarding School annexed to the Mother House;

(c) Of the surplus revenues of the various houses.

Each house deducts from its revenue what is necessary for its suitable support; then the surplus, if there be any, is deposited in the hands of the Superior General.

51. By means of these diverse resources, the Superior General meets the expenses in the disbursements of the Central Administration, and provides for the accidental and necessary needs of the various houses. Sometimes it is in her power to contribute to the erection of new houses, especially when these houses may be of great utility to the Congregation.

CONSTITUTION XVII.

Depository.

52. For the security of the Depository of the Congregation, there should be a fire-proof safe, in which shall be kept all the valuables, as well as the documents and deeds of importance belonging to the Congregation. The safe shall be provided with three separate keys, one of which shall be in the possession of the Superior General, another, in that of the Procuratrix, and the third, in that of the Treasurer.

An inventory shall be kept of all its contents, on which shall be further inscribed, as circumstances require, other documents and deeds, placed in the safe or taken therefrom.

PART II.*

53. The following Constitutions make known to the Sisters more in detail, what they have to do to sanctify themselves, and to live according to the spirit of their holy vocation.

The duties of the Sisters may be classified thus:

(a) The employment of the day, and the several spiritual exercises of the Congregation.

(b) The virtues which the Sisters should practice with special care.

(c) What concerns the instruction of the Sisters; likewise, their food, clothing, furniture, travelling, etc.

(d) The particular duties of the Sisters.

CHAPTER I.

*Employment of the Day.**

54. The Sisters shall rise, in all seasons, at five o'clock. A little before half-past five, they shall commence morning prayers, which should last but a few minutes, and be followed by half an hour's meditation.

At six o'clock they shall recite Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None, of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, after which they shall assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

At a quarter past seven, breakfast shall be served; this should last but a quarter of an hour, after which, each Sister shall attend to her duty. Immediately before dinner, they shall make for a quarter of an hour, the particular examen. At twelve o'clock dinner shall be in common in the refectory. At the Mother House, and at the houses where there are at least ten Sisters, there shall be reading during the whole time of the meal. At the other houses it will suffice to read a sketch of the life of a Saint at the commencement, and a paragraph of the "Following of Christ" at the end of the meal. The recreation after dinner shall last till half-past one o'clock. During this time the Sisters shall be employed in some useful work; they shall observe religious modesty, and be careful not to wound charity nor allow it to be wounded by those under their charge.

At half-past four o'clock they shall recite Vespers and Complin.

At five o'clock supper shall be served, during which there shall be reading as at dinner, except at the smaller houses, where, at the end of the meal, they shall read four or five verses from the New Testament. At half-past six o'clock they shall say the Rosary, which shall be followed by half an hour of spiritual reading and meditation. The evening recreation shall begin at half-past seven and last one hour.

At half-past eight o'clock they shall recite Matins and Lauds, after which they shall say

night prayers and then read, or hear read, the subject of the next day's meditation.

All the Sisters should be in bed by half-past nine o'clock.

55. If a Sister be prevented, on account of her employment, from performing a spiritual exercise at the time prescribed by rule, she shall so manage her time and so order things as not to omit it.

56. If, in the evening, there yet remain a spiritual exercise not performed, she should not defer the time of going to bed. Should the omission have happened through her fault, she should humble herself before God, resolve to guard against a similar negligence, and retire at the appointed time. Regularity requires this.

57. If, in some house, the observance of the above order of hours be not possible, the Superior General, with the counsel of her Assistants, may make the change she deems necessary.

CHAPTER II.

*Meditation.**

58. Meditation is the nurse of holy thoughts, pious affections, and good resolutions. It is to the soul as a fountain of living water, maintaining in perpetual beauty and vigor obedience, humility, silence, recollection, and the other virtues. Therefore, the Sisters shall love this holy exercise and prepare themselves for it carefully.

In the morning, after a short preparatory prayer, they shall read again the points of the meditation, reflect upon them for half an hour and, before closing the exercise, take resolutions according to their needs, fervently asking of God grace to put them in practice.

CHAPTER III.

*Holy Mass.**

59. Holy Mass is by excellence the supreme act of religion. It is the great sacrifice of which God spoke by the mouth of Malachias: "From the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles: and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation." (Mal. 1, ii.)

"When a priest celebrates," says the author of the "Following of Christ," he honors God, he rejoices the Angels, he edifies the Church, he helps the living, he obtains rest for the dead." (Kempis, B. 4, Ch. V.)

The Sisters shall assist at Mass daily, with great devotion, adoring God in union with Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ, thanking Him with Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ, appeasing His wrath with Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ, asking, with Him and through Him grace for themselves and for the whole Church. When they do not actually receive Holy Communion, they shall, at least, make with piety a spiritual Communion.

At the Mother House, they shall every day conduct the Catholic pupils of the boarding school to Mass. In the parishes, when the Sisters cannot assist at Mass without interrupting the school, neither they nor their pupils shall go; they shall be satisfied with uniting their intention with that of the Priest offering the Holy Sacrifice.

CHAPTER IV.

*The Office.**

60. The Sisters shall recite daily the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, approved by the Sovereign Pontiff, St. Pius V. They shall say it with respect, attention, and devotion, keeping themselves as much as possible in the presence of God, heartily desiring to honor Him and to obtain His favors. This Office is of no more obligation than meditation and the other exercises; nevertheless, love for God, devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and the desire to obtain her powerful protection, should make them love it. They should not omit any part of it without a lawful cause.

CHAPTER V.

*Spiritual Reading.**

61. In the evening after Beads, all the Sisters, not hindered by their employment, shall be present at some spiritual reading, followed by meditation. The reading and meditation shall last half an hour. They shall regard this

reading as a heavenly manna, holy food, given them by God for the nourishment of their souls. At its commencement, they shall raise their minds to God, ask Him for light and grace, and then, after a quarter of an hour's reading, they shall meditate on the truths presented to them, try to penetrate and relish them, and to draw profit from them for their amendment and advancement in virtue.

CHAPTER VI.

*The Examination of Conscience.**

62. The Sisters shall esteem highly this exercise, which is a means to eradicate faults. They should bear in mind that the Saints compare the heart of one who practices the examination of conscience, to a flower garden, wherein are to be seen beautiful and fragrant flowers, while the heart of one who does not practice it, resembles the field of the sluggard, which is full of briars and thorns.

The Sisters shall make daily two examinations of conscience; the particular and the general.

The first shall be made, as far as possible, a quarter of an hour before dinner, upon a virtue which they are trying to acquire, or upon a fault which they are aiming to correct.

The second shall be made at night prayers upon their thoughts, words, and actions of the day, in order to discover if these have been in

conformity with the rectitude befitting their vocation.

To profit by the examination, they shall employ only half of the allotted time in discovering their faults, and the other half in exciting contrition, renewing their good resolutions, and in asking God's assistance to enable them to avoid the same faults for the future.

CHAPTER VII.

*Confession.**

63. The Sacrament of Penance resorted to in the right disposition, confers upon the soul inestimable advantages. It procures for it purity of conscience, peace of heart, knowledge in its doubts, consolation in its troubles, encouragement in its weakness, and the grace of vigilance, warning it against relapses.

The Sisters shall have recourse, with a holy eagerness to this salutary bath, to cleanse their souls from those stains which are offensive to the eyes of their Heavenly Spouse. They shall go to confession every eight days.

They shall prepare peacefully for this Sacrament, give a suitable time to the examination, excite in their hearts a true sorrow for their sins, and a firm resolution not to commit them again; then they shall go to the sacred tribunal with confidence in the divine mercy; and, after they have confessed their faults with humility, and received absolution, they shall banish all disquieting thoughts.

64. There shall be for each house, only one ordinary Confessor, in order that, the Sisters being under the same direction, there may be a stricter union among them. The ordinary and extraordinary Confessors shall be appointed by the local Bishop, conformably to the Canonical Regulations. Every Sister must present herself to the extraordinary. Moreover, while the prescriptions of the Holy Council of Trent (Sess 25, Cap. 10, de Regul.) retain their full vigor, as well as the decree of Benedict XIV, of holy memory, in the Constitution "Pastoralis Curae," his Holiness admonishes Superiors not to deny their subjects an extraordinary Confessor as often as the need of their conscience requires it.

65. The Sisters shall guard against making confession, the Confessor and the time spent in the confessional, a subject of remark or of conversation.

CHAPTER VIII.

*Communion.**

66. The Sisters should be distinguished for profound respect and tender love for Jesus Christ, their Divine Spouse, and they should ardently desire to be united with Him in Holy Communion.

They shall receive this Sacrament regularly on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, and on festivals having a public office; also on the feasts of our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles, the Archangel St. Michael, the Guar-

dian Angels, St. Joseph, St. Ann, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Francis de Sales, St. Francis Xavier, St. Theresa, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, St. Rose of Lima, and the Patron Saint of the local parish; also, on the first Friday of each month.

67. With permission of the Confessor, they may receive Holy Communion on other days not prescribed by Rule; but the Sisters who receive such permissions are bound to inform the Superior of them.

68. Every month each Sister shall offer a Communion for the needs of the Community and for its Benefactors, living and dead.

69. On the death of our Holy Father the Pope, they shall offer three Communions for him. They shall do the same on the death of the Ordinary of the place.

70. On the death of a Sister, they shall offer three Communions for her.

71. The intentions in their other Communions shall be at their own disposal.

CHAPTER IX.

*Prayer of Reunion.**

72. In the morning after the Angelus, at nine o'clock and at noon; in the afternoon at three o'clock; in the evening at the commencement of the beads, and at night after reading the subject of the next day's meditation, the Sisters shall recite in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus the prayer called Reunion. This prayer is so called because the Adorable Heart

of Jesus is as a rendezvous, where, notwithstanding the distance that separates them, the Sisters reunite to reanimate their love for our Lord, their confidence in His goodness, their desire to imitate His virtues, and their resolution to practice mutual charity.

This prayer, so beautiful, so pathetic, and so pleasing to the Heart of Jesus, should be very dear to the Sisters, and they shall faithfully and piously recite it.

CHAPTER X.

*The Annual Retreat.**

73. Every year, there shall be one retreat or more for the Sisters, at the time most convenient.

They shall be called thereto by a circular, wherein the Superior General will name those who remain to keep house. During the vacation those named shall make a retreat at their respective missions.

74. During the retreat, the Sisters shall examine themselves seriously on what they should have been, what they have been, and what they must be in the future; they shall make a review from the date of their last Annual Retreat, revive in themselves the spirit of piety, and draw thence additional strength to perform their duties with greater perfection.

75. They shall observe strict silence during the retreat; for the Holy Spirit does not communicate Himself to dissipated souls. How-

ever, the Sisters shall be allowed an hour's relaxation in silence after dinner and after supper. If they be obliged to speak, they must do it in a low tone of voice, and avoid making a noise.

76. Even if the Sisters should be allowed or directed to receive Communion during the retreat, nevertheless, it shall terminate with a general Communion. The professed Sisters shall renew their vows, in order to reanimate their desire to observe them well. On the same day, if the Ordinary of the place be present, he shall read the Obedience List, thus giving to each Sister her Mission. If he be not present, the Superior General shall read it.

CHAPTER XI.

*The Monthly Retreat.**

77. Zeal, the most active, will diminish if not kept up and renewed. In like manner, the pious sentiments awakened during the Annual Retreat, and the good resolutions then made, will soon grow weak unless care be taken to revive them from time to time by serious reflection on one's self.

If well made, the Monthly Retreat will be the guardian and protector of the resolutions taken during the Annual Retreat; by maintaining in the Sisters' piety and fervor, it will prepare them for death, according to the admonition of our Divine Master, "*Estote Parati: Be ready.*" (Luke xii, 40.)

For this reason the Sisters shall spend the first Sunday of every month in more than ordinary recollection; they shall carefully examine the state of their soul, comparing its present condition with that of the preceding month, to ascertain whether they are advancing or receding in the way of perfection. They shall earnestly endeavor to find out the fault into which they have most frequently fallen during the previous month, and the virtue it costs them the most to practice; they shall then form resolutions for the present month and endeavor to be faithful to them.

CHAPTER XII.

*Poverty.**

78. In all that relates to Poverty, the Sisters shall exert themselves to do nothing contrary to their vow, and for this end they shall observe the following rules:

Rule 1. They shall not without permission dispose of anything, by gift, by loan, by exchange, or by appropriation.

Rule 2. When asking for any of these permissions, they shall state their reasons with simplicity and uprightness; because a permission would be null if obtained by artifice or fraud, either by alleging reasons which do not exist, or by withholding circumstances which, if known, would justify a refusal; in either case the permission would not save the vow.

Rule 3. They shall make use of whatever is given to them for their service, in a spirit of dependence. They shall bear in mind that they have only the use of things and that they are not the proprietors. Consequently, they shall take reasonable care of objects allowed them, such as books, clothes, shoes, and other things confided to their charge; for, by wasting them through their own fault, they would not observe the vow.

Rule 4. In all that is allowed for their personal use, they shall be satisfied with articles of a moderate value, such as are determined by the Constitutions. Things which are rare or costly are opposed to religious Poverty, and not according to the spirit of the vow.

79. While faithfully fulfilling the engagements they have contracted by the vow of Poverty, they shall have particular care that the spirit of Poverty reign in their hearts. They shall love to contemplate our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, while Lord and Master of the universe, willed, for love of us to make Himself poor, and so poor, as not to have whereon to rest His Head. With such an example before them, they shall keep their hearts in perfect detachment.

If, at times, they be not served or provided for according to their desire; if, for their use, they be given things common, plain, somewhat worn, far from murmuring or complaining, they should be contented and should even

rejoice. “Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Matt. v. 3.)

CHAPTER XIII.

*Chastity.**

80. The perfection of Chastity, which the Sisters promise by the second vow of religion, is the ornament and glory of Christian virgins, and renders them singularly dear to the Heavenly Spouse, who delights in purity and “who feeds among lilies.” (Cant. vi, 2.)

They shall endeavor, then, to preserve in its integrity this angelic virtue; and, as they bear it in frail vessels, they shall be ever on their guard, avoiding all that could endanger it.

Their looks, words, actions, and their whole deportment, should show decorum, gravity, modesty, and purity. No rough play should be allowed among them. When speaking with men they shall be very reserved, and behave in such a manner as to make all respect the title they bear of Spouses of Jesus Christ.

While avoiding all that could awaken in their hearts fatal passions, they shall apply themselves to the practice of humility, piety, and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in order to obtain the beautiful gift of Chastity.

CHAPTER XIV.

*Obedience.**

81. The Sisters shall apply themselves earnestly to the practice of Obedience, in order to

imitate our Divine Savior, Who said, “I came down from Heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.” (St. John vi-38.)

To enter well upon the path of Obedience, they should be confirmed in the following dispositions:

(a) They shall entertain a great hatred of their own will; regarding it as their chief enemy, and the greatest obstacle to their perfection; they shall subdue it in its least movements.

(b) They shall take the firm resolution to do in all things the will of God, whether it be in avoiding what it forbids, or in doing what it ordains.

(c) They shall respect in Superiors the Authority with which God has invested them.

82. When they shall have for foundation the above mentioned disposition, it will not be difficult for them to obey; but to obey with the perfection their state requires, they should:

(a) Obey promptly, whether it be the voice of the Superior, or the signal for the exercises that commands them.

(b) Obey willingly and with a serene countenance, thus showing that they carry the yoke of the Lord joyfully. Should there arise in their heart some feeling of discontent or an inclination to murmur, they shall immediately suppress the emotion and humble themselves before God for their little stock of virtue.

(c) Obey with simplicity and indulge in no conjectures, being firmly persuaded that the Superior has good reasons for what she enjoins.

(d) Obey for the love of God and purely to please Him, banishing from their minds all such thoughts as to appear good, to be in favor with Superiors, etc.

83. By acting thus, they will gain the victory and afterward the recompense which God has promised to the perfect in Obedience.

Respectful representations, which proceed from a motive of utility and not from pride, attachment to one's own will, love of one's ease, or any other vicious principle, are not opposed to the perfection of Obedience, but they should be made humbly and with a heart disposed to comply with the decision of the Superior.

CHAPTER XV.

*The Love of God.**

84. The Sisters shall often recall these words: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole strength." (Luke x, 27.)

They shall take to heart the fulfillment of this great commandment, and dread, above all things, the cooling of their charity.

They shall apply themselves, then, to love the Lord their God, with their whole mind, by directing to Him and to His glory, their thoughts, their designs, and their intentions. They shall apply themselves to love Him with

their whole heart, by directing to Him their desires and their affections. They shall apply themselves to love Him with all their strength, by employing their health, their life, and their talents, in doing what He demands of them. In fine, their hearts should be inflamed with love for God. He will then be the object, the center and the end of their whole being.

It will not suffice for them to love Him, to serve Him, and to glorify Him; they shall ardently desire to make Him known, loved, and served by others, also.

This desire to glorify God should be the essential spirit and the distinctive characteristic of the Sisters of Providence, whose special object is the fulfillment of the several works of mercy mentioned in Constitution XV; for what is their aim in the services they render their neighbor, if it be not to gain souls to God, and to make His love reign in the hearts of men?

CHAPTER XVI.

*Union Among the Sisters.**

85. "Before all things have a mutual charity." (1 Pet. iv, 8.) Thus spoke St. Peter to the first Christians. This mutual charity the Sisters of Providence should have singularly at heart. As they are members of the same body, children of the same family, they should, as far as possible, have but one heart and one soul. Let them often represent our Divine Master saying to them as formerly He said to His

Apostles: “A new Commandment I give unto you: that you love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples.” (John xiii, 34, 35.)

To preserve among them this union, the Sisters shall honor and speak to one another with mildness, affability, and politeness. They shall be kind and obliging in their manners, without, however, meddling in the employment of one another.

They shall shun, as causes of discord, sharp words, cold and disdainful manners, disputes, raillery, and indiscreet reports. They shall banish from their mind all thoughts of jealousy, and rejoice in the talents and success of their Sisters as in their own.

If there be among them a want of sympathy, they shall have recourse to God, and try to reform nature by grace; in this case, they shall recall the words of the Apostle, “Bear with one another;” also, those of our Lord, “Why seest thou a mote in thy brother’s eye, and seest not a beam in thy own eye?” (Matt. vii, 2.) They shall show no preference for one more than for another, and shun carefully particular friendships, so that the charity which unites them may be supernatural and without blemish.

86. If a Sister has had the misfortune to offend one of her Sisters by a disobliging word, an improper tone of voice, or manner of acting, she should not fail to ask pardon before the end of the day. They shall be merciful to one

another, pardoning one another with their whole heart.

87. Should a Sister perceive that one of her Sisters is undergoing a strong temptation, she shall inform the Superior, in order that by her maternal care and charitable advice, she may apply a suitable remedy.

CHAPTER XVII.

*Humility.**

88. All good comes to us with humility; for, "God protects the humble; He delivers them from danger; He loves the humble and comforts them; He inclines toward them, and sweetly draws and invites them to Himself; and, after the abasement of this life, He crowns them with glory in Heaven." (Kempis; B. 11, Ch. 2.)

This virtue, then, shall be especially dear to the Sisters of Providence; they shall entertain a low opinion of themselves, considering their weakness, their misery, their sins, and their inability to do the least good of themselves.

Being well persuaded of their nothingness, they shall be simple, modest, unaffected, and unpretentious; they shall neither seek the esteem of men, nor intrigue for any employment, but shall accept willingly the lowest, if assigned them. If they meet with humiliations or subjects of confusion, they shall say "I deserve much more on account of my sins," and then be in peace.

89. They shall avoid speaking of themselves, of their family, and of anything of a nature to flatter their vanity. In their intercourse with their Sisters and others, they shall not affect superiority, on account of their education, talents, ability, or any advantages they may have had in the world.

90. They shall appear willingly to ignore any service they may have rendered to the Congregation, or to a house, by their wealth, ability, or devotedness; they shall attribute nothing of this to themselves, because, in reality, of ourselves we are nothing and can do nothing.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Chapter.

91. The Chapter of Faults has been established to aid the sisters in the practice of holy humility, and to assist them to correct their imperfections, by the humble acknowledgment they shall make of them.

At the Mother House and in the various houses, the Chapter shall be held every two weeks, and shall commence with the "Veni Sancte," after which the Superior shall give an exhortation or a short spiritual reading; then each Sister in turn, according to rank of profession, shall kneel respectfully before the Superior and Community, and accuse herself humbly of her exterior faults and the non-observance of Rules.

The Superior shall impose upon each Sister a light penance, suitable, however, to make a salutary impression and to correct her.

The exercise shall close with the “Sub Tuum.”

CHAPTER XIX.

*Mortification.**

92. The Sisters shall lead exteriorly a common life, and shall not be subjected to any practices of penance, besides those for the faithful in general. They can, nevertheless, impose upon themselves such as may be useful for their spiritual advancement, but with the advice of their Confessor, and never without the permission of the Superior General, if the penances be exterior and of long duration.

On the other hand, they shall apply themselves constantly to acquire the habit of mortification of the senses, both exterior and interior, by watching continually over themselves. They shall not seek pleasures, enjoyments, nor satisfactions; they shall bear, as says St. Paul, the mortification of Jesus Christ in their flesh, showing on all occasions the most perfect abnegation of self, and striving to correct and reform their inclinations, their disposition, their character, thus endeavoring in all things to resemble Jesus Christ, their Divine Model.

CHAPTER XX.

*Silence.**

93. The Wise man assures us, "He who bridles his tongue keeps his soul." (Prov. xiii, 3.) The Sisters shall love silence, for the habit of speaking much extinguishes the fervor of charity and the spirit of prayer; it introduces levity, dissipation, and distraction and is the cause of detraction, criticism, murmuring, etc.

94. From the end of the evening recreation until after the morning Office of the next day, strict silence must be faithfully observed. During this time, they may speak only when it is absolutely necessary or when the matter cannot be deferred, and then in few words and a low tone of voice.

95. Besides, the Sisters shall cultivate habitually the spirit of recollection, not speaking during the day outside the time of recreation, except through necessity, politeness, or charity. They shall always speak in a moderate tone of voice and avoid making a noise in walking and in opening and closing the doors.

CHAPTER XXI.

*The Presence of God.**

96. The remembrance of the presence of God procures for the soul inestimable advantages. It infuses into it a salutary fear of sin, encourages it in the fulfillment of duties and in the practice of virtue; it gives confidence in the

time of temptation, and consolation in trials. The Sisters shall strive earnestly to advance in an exercise so adapted to lead them to perfection.

The more their works of charity expose them to contract numerous acquaintances and lose the habit of recollection, the more vigilant should they be to raise their thoughts to God and to keep themselves in His Divine presence. They shall be careful to make from time to time, every day, acts of faith in this truth: "God sees me; God observes me." When recalling His Divine presence, they shall affectionately offer Him their hearts and renew their intention of fulfilling well their duties, solely to please Him and to prove to Him their love.

CHAPTER XXII.

*The Instruction of the Sisters.**

97. The principal end of the Congregation being the education and training of young girls and the care of the sick, the Sisters shall exert themselves, as well in the Novitiate as in the various houses, to acquire the necessary knowledge to perform well these duties.

They shall endeavor to acquire accurate knowledge in the following branches and to learn the best method of teaching them: religion and its principles, reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, geography, history, and the various kinds of needlework suited to those whom they will have to instruct.

98. The Superior General will designate those who are to learn or to teach the ornamental branches, and no one can apply herself to them without her permission.

99. They shall also acquire a knowledge of ordinary diseases and of the remedies which they may apply while waiting for a physician, whom they will be the first to call for if the illness appear to be of a serious nature.

100. They shall have a knowledge of the elements of pharmacy, and know how to prepare common remedies, that they may be able to render service when needed.

CHAPTER XXIII.

*Traveling.**

101. The Sisters shall never travel but by the order or with the permission of the Superior General, who will not allow them to go alone except in a case of real necessity.

In whatever place they are, or before whomsoever they have to appear, their modesty must be such as to command respect and love for virtue.

102. When traveling the Sisters shall lodge in one of the houses of the Congregation, if there be one in the place where they stay. While there they shall be under obedience to the Local Superior unless by their office or as delegate of the Superior General, they are above her.

103. If obliged to go to a hotel, they shall ask for a private apartment and be served there; they shall never eat with seculars unless it be impossible to do otherwise.

104. They shall not, even to defend a good cause, engage in controversies into which others would draw them. Their silence and their prudent reserve will speak more eloquently than words.

105. They shall never omit their exercises of piety under the pretext of traveling, unless it be morally impossible to perform them.

106. They shall not ask permission to visit their relatives, except it be for important affairs; and the traveling expenses should be defrayed by the family.

107. They shall not even visit the Sisters of another house without the permission of the Superior General. When two or more houses are in proximity, the Local Superior can grant this permission in a manner more or less general, according to her discretion.

CHAPTER XXIV.

*Conduct of the Sisters Toward Seculars.**

108. The Sisters, bearing in mind that they are Virgins consecrated to God and living in the midst of the world, must watch over themselves more vigilantly than the religious who live in the retirement of their convents. Their words, their actions, and their whole proceedings should bear the character of holiness, and

they should show by their manners and conversation that their thoughts are in Heaven. To this end they shall bear in mind the rules that treat particularly of modesty.

109. They shall avoid paying or receiving unnecessary visits; charity alone will warrant them to do either.

110. Should a Sister be visited by one of the opposite sex, whoever he may be, she shall avoid remaining alone with him, that no cause for censure may be given.

111. The Sisters shall always maintain a well regulated exterior. Their conversation should be characterized by mildness, cordiality, and charity; they shall neither judge nor speak ill of any one, nor take part in any dissensions.

They shall not occupy themselves with the opinions of others, especially on political subjects; they shall freely acknowledge that these topics are not suitable to their state, and that, instead, they should apply to what will aid them in the fulfillment of their duties as Sisters of Providence.

112. They shall not stop to speak to persons on the street or in the road unless through necessity. They shall never take part in private family affairs, especially in what may relate to marriages.

CHAPTER XXV.

Food.

113. The food of the Sisters shall be frugal and wholesome, prepared without attention to daintiness, yet, according to the most generally approved taste and usages.

It shall consist of meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk-food and vegetables. The bread shall be good, and nothing that is spoiled shall be served. Generally, there shall be two dishes served at dinner.

114. On days of fast, an extra dish shall be served and the food shall be varied as much as possible.

115. The table utensils, table cloths, and all belonging to the table, shall be simple and kept in greatness.

116. The Sisters shall not fail to repair to the refectory to take their meals, except with the permission of the Superior. They shall observe the rules of temperance, especially in drink.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Dress.

117. The Habit of the Sisters shall be poor, simple, and uniform in regard to the color and quality of the material, which shall be of black wool.

118. The Habit shall be an inch and a half from the neck and descend to about an inch from the ground; the waist shall be of suitable

size, and the sleeves from nineteen to twenty-two inches, in width, including the seams.

119. The neckerchief shall be of white muslin from forty-seven and one-half to forty-nine and one-half inches square.

120. Every Sister shall wear suspended from her neck a crucifix of white bone, two and three-fourths inches in length; the Superior General, one of three inches.

121. They shall all wear at the right side a chaplet of large beads, to which shall be attached a cross four inches in length, and two medals.

122. Their cap shall be of white muslin trimmed with finer muslin; the front shall measure seven and seven-eighths inches in width, including a hem of five-eighths of an inch.

123. They shall wear a black veil falling over the shoulders, its length in proportion to the person. The longest shall not exceed thirty-three and one-half inches, and the shortest shall not be less than twenty-three and three-fourths inches.

124. The linen worn by the Sisters shall be of moderate quality. The stockings shall be of black wool or dark cotton. The petticoat, of black material.

125. When they go abroad in winter, they shall wear black cloaks or black shawls of moderate quality.

126. They shall wear aprons of blue cotton at home, but take them off when they go abroad.

127. All the clothes shall be in common; only contagious diseases can justify a dispensation in this case. However, each Sister shall have her own underwear, and, with the permission of the Superior General, her handkerchiefs.

128. The habit of the Coadjutrix Sisters shall differ in some manner from that of the Sisters.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Furniture.

129. The furniture of the Sisters shall be neat but simple and conformable to poverty. Their rooms shall not be papered nor adorned in a manner that savors of vanity. They shall not have costly pictures nor gilded frames, but only a crucifix, some pious pictures, a stand, a wardrobe, a straw bed and mattress, a pillow, curtains, etc., and two or three common chairs.

130. The reception room also shall be furnished with simplicity, yet, in a manner suitable and in accordance with the destination of the house.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

*Sickness.**

131. During sickness, the Sisters shall endeavor to be models of resignation and patience, and to edify those who take care of them and those who visit them.

They shall follow with docility the prescription of the physician, whom they are to respect and obey; yet, they should place their chief

confidence in God, who disposes of us as He pleases; and they should show on all occasions an absolute submission to His holy will.

They shall look upon infirmities and the sufferings caused by disease as the most efficacious means to purify them, to detach them from the present life, and to prepare them for the judgment which shall decide their lot for eternity. In sickness, they shall preserve the habit of recollection and practice the other virtues of the religious. They shall not omit the exercises of the Constitutions that are compatible with their sufferings, but they shall have no uneasiness on account of those they cannot perform.

132. They shall go to Confession frequently during their illness in order the better to preserve tranquility of mind and not to lose any of the merit they may acquire.

CHAPTER XXIX.

*Death.**

133. When a Sister is dangerously ill, she shall be prepared in good time, and with that prudence which charity suggests, to receive the last Sacraments. As her last moments approach, care shall be redoubled, without, however, fatiguing her, to induce her to preserve or to enter into the dispositions which render death precious in the sight of God.

134. Care should be taken to call the Priest in time to recite the ‘Recommendation of the

Departing Soul," to say the prayers for "The Agonizing," and to speak to the dying Sister words proper to sustain her confidence during the last conflict.

135. When she will have expired, the Sisters shall say at her bedside the "*Miserere*" and the "*De profundis*" with the "Recommendation of the Soul;" and, as soon after as possible, they shall assemble in the chapel, if there be one in the house, to recite the "Office of the Dead" or perform the "Way of the Cross" for the repose of her soul.

136. At her burial the obsequies shall be duly performed. All the Sisters shall go to Holy Communion, if it be possible, and shall assist at the burial carrying lighted tapers.

137. In every house of the Congregation, one low Mass shall be offered for the departed Sister, and all the Sisters shall say for eight days, after the morning and night prayers, the "*De profundis*." Each sister shall offer three Communions and say three chaplets for the repose of her soul.

138. At the house in which the Sister died, there shall be said, after the morning and night prayers, for the space of nine days, five times the "Our Father" and "Hail Mary" with the "*De profundis*."

139. On the death of the father or mother of a Sister, the house in which the Sister resides shall have a low Mass said for the repose of the soul of the deceased and each Sister of

that house shall offer a Communion for the same intention.

CHAPTER XXX.

Duties of the Superior General.

140. The Sister who is raised to the dignity of Superior General, should have a low opinion of herself, distrust her own prudence and, when necessary, consult those given her as Councilors, having regard for their opinion.

141. The authority with which she has been invested has been given her, not for herself, but for the common good; she should make use of it with discretion, for the glory of God and the good of those under her charge. Henceforward, her life should be, more than ever before, a life of abnegation, of self-sacrifice, and of vigilance. She should be willing, at every moment, to sacrifice her own wishes, her time and her rest, to make herself all to all, that she may gain souls to God.

142. She bears the title of Mother and she should have the feelings of a Mother for all the Sisters, regarding them as her beloved daughters, allowing them free access to her, listening to their troubles, their difficulties, their excuses, without, however, deviating from the firmness necessary to maintain religious discipline in the Congregation. She should unite, in an equal degree, mildness and firmness.

143. She should manifest toward all the Sisters the same interest, taking care not to give any one reason to accuse her of being an exceptor of persons.

144. If a Sister complain of another Sister, she should suspend her judgment, make no decision before having heard both sides, and use prudence and charity to conciliate minds and restore peace and concord.

145. She shall see that each Sister has what is necessary in regard to food and clothing. She shall evince a tender charity for the sick and infirm, taking care that they want nothing which they can reasonably desire, either for soul or body.

146. Obligated by her office to have the Constitutions observed throughout the entire Congregation, she ought to have a perfect knowledge of their spirit and endeavor to be herself a model of regularity. She should carefully avoid singularity in regard to food and clothing. She shall take her meals in the refectory with the Community and assist at the common exercises. Should anything occur to prevent her doing so, she shall be replaced by one of the Assistants.

147. The Superior retiring from office with honor, can make choice of any house wherein to rest after the fatigue of her administration; and she shall retain the title of Mother, which was given to her while in authority.

CHAPTER XXXI.

*Duties of the Sisters toward the Superior General.**

148. The Sisters shall regard the Superior General as their mother, and invested with the Authority of God. They shall render her love, respect, and obedience, and never allow themselves the least reflection calculated to diminish the confidence she should possess.

149. On her entrance they shall rise and bow to her, and the Sister whom she addresses or reprehends shall listen to her humbly without interrupting her.

150. The Sisters shall not inquire curiously among themselves what the Superior General and her Council are about to do or ought to do, in what concerns the government of the house. They shall make no conjectures on the subject, but shall attend to their own employment, waiting in peace for what may be decided.

151. They shall deposit neither money nor anything else with anyone except the Superior General. She can enter their rooms whenever she thinks proper, and all things shall be open to her inspection.

152. They can not apply to any one but the Superior General for what has been refused them, either by a Local Superior, if they be in one of the houses, or by one of the Officers, if they be at the Mother House, without first of all making known the refusal they received.

153. If the Superior General refuse what they ask for, they shall not apply for the same thing to any inferior Officer or to a Local Superior.

154. If a Sister be prevented, by any cause, from fulfilling the duties of her employment, she shall make the fact known to the Superior, who will adopt means to relieve her or to supply her place.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Duties of the Assistants.

155. The Assistants are assigned to the Superior General to aid in her administration, and to supply her place when necessary. In case of the absence of the Superior General, the First Assistant, in concert with the Privy Council, is charged with the administration of the Institute; and in case of the absence of the First Assistant, the same duty devolves upon the Second Assistant. They should, therefore, be models of piety, zeal, wisdom, prudence, and discretion. They should have a perfect knowledge of the Constitutions, and a devoted love for the Congregation.

156. They are charged, especially the First Assistant, to look after all that concerns the Superior General, as her health, her food, etc.; to see that she has what is proper for her, and to prevent her exceeding the bounds of moderation in work, mortification, or in anything else. In this, however, they shall avoid impertinence or minuteness.

157. They shall be closely united by the bonds of charity and confidence, having nothing hidden from the Superior, always speaking

to her with respect, but, at the same time with candor, having with her but one heart and one soul, as they participate in the same authority.

158. When the Assistants are consulted confidentially by any of the Sisters, who confide to them their troubles and difficulties, they shall reply with charity, prudence, and discretion, neither flattering nor discouraging them, and without giving them any intimation of the intentions of the Superior General, so as neither to compromise nor impede her designs. They shall observe an inviolable secrecy upon what has been confided to them.

159. Neither the Assistants nor any other member of the Council shall hold correspondence with the Sisters upon any of the affairs of the Congregation.

When commissioned by the Superior General to write in her name, they shall subscribe thus: Sister N. for our Mother.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Duties of the Mistress of Novices.

160. The welfare of the Congregation and the good it is designed to accomplish depend in great measure upon the manner in which the subjects are formed; therefore, it is essential that the Mistress of Novices be endowed with wisdom, tact, piety, and zeal, and that she have a thorough knowledge of the Constitutions. Furthermore, she ought to be remark-

able for regularity, modesty, and recollection, in order to teach the practice of these virtues by her example.

At least two years prior to her appointment, she must have taken the perpetual vows in the Institute.

161. By gentleness and amiability she must strive to gain the confidence of the Novices, and use great discretion in her replies.

162. She shall excite in them a great esteem for their vocation, an ardent desire to reform their lives, to acquire their perfection, and to qualify themselves to promote the glory of God.

163. She shall teach them the practice of meditation, the preparation they ought to bring to it, and the method to follow in making it, in order to draw fruit therefrom; also, the method of making well the particular and the general examinations of conscience and the best manner of preparing for the Sacrament of Penance and the Holy Eucharist.

164. She shall try to give them correct ideas of devotion, to banish from their minds scruples, narrow-mindedness, and false ideas of piety.

165. She shall observe their disposition, their inclinations, and their predominant passion, teach them how to combat it and sustain their courage and excite their fervor in the efforts they make to enter seriously upon the path of perfection.

166. She shall accustom them to practice modesty in their looks, their manner of walk-

ing, their deportment, and their conversation; she shall instill into them a love for silence, regularity, and obedience. She shall apply herself to form and discipline their will, especially in the choice of employments, assigning them by turns to the lowest and most common occupations, such as sweeping, washing dishes, etc.

167. She should be careful not to allow the Novices to form particular friendships, and to see that they have no private communication with the Sisters.

168. She shall read and explain to them the Constitutions, in order that they may be well informed as to what they bind themselves to by their profession.

169. She shall take care that the Novices labor to acquire knowledge, and she shall exercise them in the manner of teaching, of giving explanations, and in the method of maintaining discipline in the schools.

170. She shall also labor courageously and incessantly to form them to virtue, and to fit them to perform well their mission, either in teaching, taking care of the sick, or in other duties.

171. The Mistress of Novices shall be aided by a sufficient number of Sisters, who ought to be sedate, pious, regular, and well informed, and who shall cooperate with her in holy union for the good education of the Novices.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Novices.

172. Young persons leaving the world to consecrate themselves to God in this Congregation, shall look upon the Novitiate as a school in which they will be taught how to perfect themselves. They should enter it with an earnest desire to correct their faults, and to acquire great purity of conscience and the virtues belonging to the religious state.

173. In order to commence well, they shall make a General Confession at the beginning of their Novitiate.

174. They shall exert themselves courageously to practice Christian virtues, especially obedience, which is the fundamental virtue of a perfect life.

175. They shall strive to acquire the spirit of prayer and of piety; and, as in a Community nothing is more essential than a unity of views and means, the devotion to which they shall apply themselves is to perform with exactness and care the spiritual exercises prescribed by the Constitutions. As to the particular practices they had in the world, they shall lay them aside if their Mistress think proper.

176. When the Mistress enters the Novitiate they shall rise and bow to her.

177. They shall be very submissive and respectful to their Mistress, and speak to her with confidence and frankness. The Mistress shall respond to their confidence by her chari-

table counsels, and by a discretion that will stand any test.

178. They shall go to Confession at least every week, and they shall endeavor to merit being allowed to go to Communion on Sundays, Thursdays, and Feasts of Rule.

179. They shall have a low opinion of themselves, believing themselves to be beneath others. They shall accept with humility and even with joy, the reprimands, mortifications, penances, and humiliations that come to them from any source whatever, showing that they have no other desire than to reform their lives and to become perfect.

180. They shall love one another with cordiality and kindness and live together in a truly sisterly union; but they shall avoid particular friendships which are a source of preferences, jealousies, antipathies, complaints, murmurs, divisions, and the ruin of true charity in Communities. Therefore, as soon as they feel an affection too tender for one of their companions, they shall make it known to their Mistress and follow her advice, that this fault may be suppressed in its very beginning.

181. If a Novice waver in her vocation, she shall speak of it only to her Mistress and her Confessor.

182. Those who believe that they have cause of complaint against their Mistress, may speak of it only to the Superior General.

183. They shall apply themselves to learn what they will have to teach, so as to be able

to fulfill the duties afterwards entrusted to them.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The Second Novitiate.

184. As provided for in Constitution XI, before taking the final and perpetual vows, all the Sisters shall return to the Mother House for a second Noviceship, separately, however, from the Novices properly so called.

They should look upon it as a great favor and apply themselves earnestly to derive profit from this school of spirituality. They should strive to perfect themselves in self knowledge and to correct the defects which they, themselves, have noticed or which others have pointed out to them; and for this purpose they should be exercised in the various probations proper to Novices. Above all, they should acquire a great love and appreciation for spiritual things and renew themselves in piety and in the spirit of their holy vocation. To this end, they shall perform a retreat of thirty days or four weeks, allowing a day of relaxation at the end of each week.

This year of second Noviceship should correspond with the last year of the temporary vows, that is the eighth year of profession; and it is to be a preparation for the profession of perpetual vows. No Sister can be dispensed from its obligation. Should a Sister's health or any other urgent reason render it necessary

to defer the second Noviceship beyond the usual time, the Sister whose final vows are thus delayed, shall be allowed at the end of this eighth year to renew her vows from that time until the date of her final profession of perpetual vows.

The time for beginning the long retreat shall be determined by the Superior General, with the advice of her Council; generally speaking it should take place in Advent.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Duties of the Procuratrix.

185. The Procuratrix is charged, under the Superior General, with the care of the temporalities, the cultivation of the land, the supervision of the domestics and workmen, the repairs to be made, and the buying of provisions.

She ought to possess wisdom, prudence, and sedateness, be of sound judgment, moderate in her conduct, and of an humble and submissive disposition. She must have a well balanced mind and ability for business. She must know how to keep accounts and she shall keep her register with great exactness. She shall make out and sign all the receipts, either giving or requiring a receipt for every amount exceeding two dollars. She shall likewise pay all the ordinary expenses, receiving in advance from the money chest the necessary amount. She

shall have an accurate knowledge of current prices, be just and reasonable in her bargains and lay in provisions of a moderate price.

186. She shall keep the provisions locked, shall visit them often from garret to cellar, to see that nothing is lost or spoiled.

187. She shall do nothing out of the common order without the permission of the Superior, whose orders she shall never refuse to execute.

188. Being obliged by her duties to have frequent intercourse with seculars, she shall be polite, affable, modest, and prudent.

189. She shall be mild and affable toward all the Sisters, show no partiality, foresee their wants, supply all that is necessary and vigilantly guard against any abuse.

190. She must be careful not to let the care of temporal things make her forget the virtues belonging to her vocation and her own perfection.

191. She shall never omit, without necessity, the common exercises, the examinations of conscience and the spiritual reading. She shall observe silence as much as possible, preserve tranquility of mind, and, by these means, avoid the dissipation attending a multiplicity of affairs.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Duties of the Secretary.

192. The Secretary is, as it were, the hand and the memory of the Council and of the

Superior General. Her principle qualifications must be discretion and exactness, neatness and order in her records and other documents entrusted to her care.

193. She will keep in a safe place and under lock: 1. The important rescripts of Rome concerning the Congregation; 2. Other documents concerning the Institute; 3. A catalogue of all the Sisters of the Congregation; 4. A catalogue of all Coadjutrix-Sisters; 5. Of the Sisters who have left the Congregation; 6. Of all the houses of the Congregation; 7. The annual catalogue of the houses; 8. The necrology of the Sisters who have died in the Congregation; 9. Copies of circulars written to the houses, and important letters; 10. Papers relative to the Elections; 11. Documents concerning donations made to the houses and to the Congregation.

194. She shall not destroy any important letter or other document, unless by the order of the Superior, who shall in this case, be guided by her council.

195. She shall be provided with a little memorandum book, in which she shall write the orders given her by the Superior, so that all may be done with exactness.

196. She shall have the Seal of the Congregation, wherewith to seal the letters written by her in the name of the Superior General.

197. Her letters should be perspicuous, neat, precise, and conformable to the usages of politeness, breathing a spirit of piety, which

should be the distinguishing characteristic of the Congregation.

198 The more diverse and distracting are her duties, the greater should be her efforts to preserve the spirit of recollection.

199. If she notices the Superior has forgotten anything relative to letters to be written, or to be answered, she shall respectfully call her attention to it.

200. If she has an under Secretary to assist her in her office, she shall treat her kindly, employ her discreetly, and allow her sufficient relaxation.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Duties of the Treasurer.

201. The qualifications necessary for the Treasurer are:

- (1) A correct idea of the value of things.
- (2) Exactness and promptness in recording all payments, receipts, donations, etc.
- (3) Neatness and order in her records.

202. She will have charge of the money-safe, and will deposit therein all sums of money confided to her care, keeping out but a small amount to meet the actual daily demand for change.

203. All revenue coming to the Congregation through the Boarding School attached to the Mother House, establishments, and other resources will be handed to her. These she will enter into registers kept for the purpose.

204. Disbursements, except those that fall under the control of the Procuratrix, Chapter XXXVI, shall be made by her. She will be careful to receive a receipt for every amount paid, and to place all such acknowledgments on proper file in the vault.

205. All orders for text-books, stationery, and other school supplies should be made through her.

206. She will keep a register of the pupils at the Institute, marking the parent's or guardian's name and address, date of entrance, particular branches to be pursued, and special terms if any. These points will be systematically arranged for easy reference.

207. At the end of each session she will make out a full statement of each pupil's account, transmit the same to the parent or guardian, and enter an exact copy of it in a register kept for that purpose. Upon remittance for the same, she will politely acknowledge it, send a receipt without delay and promptly balance the account in the register.

208. After the close of each scholastic year she will receive an account of the disbursements made by the Procuratrix, collect all the other accounts of the Congregation, transfer them to the Register Proper, make out a "Balance Sheet" and present it to the Superior General.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Duties of the Visitor.

209. In order to discharge this duty properly, the Sister commissioned by the Superior General to visit the various houses should have a right idea and a perfect knowledge of the Constitutions.

210. She must be discreet, and have a certain experience in spiritual matters, so as to be able to give proper advice when consulted by the Sisters.

211. She must give edification by her regularity and piety, so that her actions, more than her words, may revive in the Sisters the love of discipline and the desire of perfection.

212. In carrying out the duties of her office, she must know how to unite courage with mildness, and prudence with goodness.

213. She is to enforce the performance of duty, the maintenance or the re-establishment of order, and the observance of regularity, but without offending anyone by harshness of tone or manner. In her recommendations, she must attend to the circumstances of each house, and in those respecting persons, she must regard each one's strength, turn of mind, and capacity.

214. She must show kindness toward all the Sisters, so that, seeing her interest in them, they may speak frankly to her of their troubles, their difficulties, and the present state of their mind.

215. If a Sister complain of another Sister, she shall examine and weigh the matter well before coming to a decision.

She shall endeavor to make peace and charity prevail, recommending to the Superior mildness toward the Sisters, and to the latter respect and submission to the Superior.

216. She must give to the Superior General a faithful account of all that she has remarked in the various houses.

CHAPTER XL.

Duties of the Infirmarian.

217. The duty of Infirmarian calls for the exercise of great charity. The Sister charged with this employment must excel in mildness, patience, exactitude, vigilance, and compassion.

218. She shall attend to the wants of the sick, and render with alacrity the most repugnant services, seeing Christ Himself in the persons of her suffering Sisters.

219. She shall accompany the physician in his visits to the sick, receive his prescriptions, and comply with them exactly in regard to the remedies to be given and the regimen to be followed.

220. The beds of the sick shall be made at least once a day, the linen changed as often as required for cleanliness, and the soiled linen shall never be left in the Infirmary.

221. She shall say the morning and night prayers with the sick, and from time to time provide them with a short spiritual reading.

222. When the Sisters go to see the sick, the Infirmarian shall not permit them to speak in a loud voice nor to remain long.

She shall also be careful to prevent the convalescents from making noise that would disturb the sick.

223. When it is necessary to sit up with a sick Sister or when she needs help for anything else, the Infirmarian shall inform the Superior.

CHAPTER XLI.

Duties of the Local Superior.

224. The Sister who is placed at the head of an establishment is, by that very fact, invested with the necessary authority to govern it with due dependence upon the Superior General.

She assigns to the Sisters the secondary employments necessary for the order of the house, such as that of Sacristan, Refectorian, of Excitator, Visitor of the Evening, etc.

225. She should be for all her Sisters a model of modesty, regularity, and piety, treat them with mildness, affability, and kindness, and give freely to each one according to her needs, in sickness or in health.

She ought, nevertheless, to unite mildness with firmness in establishing in the house, regularity, obedience, silence, and the spirit of

piety, and in prohibiting any practice not approved by the Congregation.

226. She shall watch over the intercourse of the Sisters with people of the world; she shall never allow them to go abroad without permission, nor without a companion. She shall not allow them to write or to receive letters without her knowledge; yet, the letters written to the Ordinary, the Confessor of the Mother House, the Superior General, or to any member of the Privy Council, shall be given to her sealed; and she shall deliver to them unopened the letters addressed to them by the above mentioned authorities.

227. If the Sisters do not approach the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist as the Constitutions prescribe, she shall admonish and exhort them; shall insist on their going to Confession, and urge them to follow the advice of their Confessor with respect to Holy Communion.

228. She shall shun all singularity in food, clothing, or furniture, and shall attend to all the Community exercises, unless prevented by sickness or duty.

229. She shall not invite anyone to take meals with the Community, nor shall she eat out of the house, except when traveling, unless with permission of the Superior General.

230. As she is obliged to render to God and the Congregation an account of the funds of the house, she shall use them with a prudent economy, following, as far as possible, the direc-

tions given her by the Superior General. She shall keep an exact account of the receipts and expenditures, not omitting to inscribe any amount under the pretext that it is small. Every year she shall close the accounts, which the Visitor shall examine, and which shall be signed at the Annual Retreat.

231. She shall not use the revenue of the Congregation for any repairs of the house, unless authorized by the Superior General.

Before making a final settlement of any importance with the Founders, Benefactors, or Administrators, she must first obtain or lawfully presume the consent of the Superior General, without whose sanction no obligation can be assumed.

232. She shall not permit the Sisters to work for seculars, the Church, the Priests, nor even for their relatives without the permission of the Superior General.

233. She shall not permit the Sisters to receive for themselves personally any presents as marks of gratitude or as tokens of friendship.

234. She shall attend carefully to the training of the children and shall see that they are well taught; for this end, she shall visit the several schools every month; but she must never compromise the authority of the Teachers in presence of the children, either by word or manner. On the contrary, she shall conciliate for them the love, confidence, and respect of the children, by honoring them and by show-

ing them esteem and deference. As much as possible, she shall allow the Sisters sufficient time to prepare their lessons and to instruct themselves.

235. She shall preside at the annual examination of the boarders and day-scholars, and, in concert with the Teachers, shall award the prizes according to merit.

236. Her vigilance must extend also to the health, food, and apparel of the children; but the sick children shall be the special objects of her tenderness. She shall have for them a maternal care, and provide them with all the comforts in her power.

If a pupil be seriously ill and her residence not too far, either she shall go to see her or have her visited by another Sister.

237. In her intercourse with the parents of the pupils, she shall be kind, polite, affable, and as condescending as possible, but she shall be firm against frivolous pretensions and whatever could lead to abuse.

CHAPTER XLII.

*Duties of the Sisters towards the Local Superior.**

238. The Sisters shall be polite, obliging, and respectful in their conduct towards their Superior. They shall obey her promptly and affectionately, on account of the authority from God with whom she is invested.

239. They shall never take upon themselves to criticise her conduct or her government; and

they shall consider as a serious fault, whatever could tend to diminish in the minds of their companions the confidence she should possess.

240. They shall keep her informed of all that concerns the pupils, their dispositions, their conduct, their application, their success, and they shall receive with deference any advice she may give.

They shall consult her respecting the rewards to be given to the pupils, and they must never act contrary to her advice.

241. They shall deliver to her unsealed all the letters which they will write or receive, except those written to, or received from the Ordinary of the place, the Confessor of the Mother House, the Superior General, and any member of her Council.

CHAPTER XLIII.

*Duties of the Teachers.**

242. The principal end of the Congregation, as regards our neighbor, is the education of young girls and their training in virtue.

Those who have charge of instructing youth, should be well convinced that the future career of the children depends, in a great measure, upon the way they are brought up. If the truths of our holy Faith be engraven on their minds and hearts, if they be taught to fear sin, to love virtue, and to relish piety, there is reason to hope that they will be good Christians. On the contrary, if they be deprived of a

Christian education, it is to be feared that they will follow their evil propensities, become a disgrace to their family, a plague to society, and a subject of grief to the Church.

Being well convinced of these truths, the Teachers should have at heart the advancement of God's glory and the salvation of souls, to procure which they shall give their pupils a thoroughly Christian education. In order to succeed in this holy enterprise they should attend to the following points:

(a) They shall courageously labor at their own advancement in perfection; for the more they love God, the more zealous they will be to make the children love Him; and the more they are united with God, the more unction there will be in their advice and instruction. If the pupils see in them models of meekness, modesty, piety, and charity, they will be excited to the imitation of their virtues. "To lead to virtue, the way of precept is long, but that of example is short."

(b) They shall endeavor by prayer to draw the blessing of God upon their labors, bearing in mind that all they can do by their counsels, their lessons and their care, is to plant and to water; God alone can give the increase.

(c) They shall try to gain the hearts of their pupils; for a Teacher who has the tact of gaining the hearts of her pupils, can do with them as she pleases. Her counsels, her admonitions, even her reprimands are well received; on the contrary, a Teacher who is not loved can do

but little good; from her, everything is taken in bad part and all that she does or says is criticised and censured.

243. To gain their hearts, the Sisters should love the children, and prove it by speaking kindly to them, and by being attentive to their wants, both spiritual and temporal.

244. They must, however, be careful not to imitate those weak and foolish mothers, who, making idols of their children, consult their pleasure, yield to their caprices, and allow them to grow up with all their defects. They should unite firmness with mildness, and reprove when necessary, but they should avoid hastiness of temper and cross, peevish tones, which irritate and vex but never correct. They should also avoid partiality, and guard against unjust preference.

245. To maintain order, silence, and all that is requisite for school discipline, the Sisters shall be in their school rooms punctually at the appointed time. They shall speak little, and in a moderate tone of voice. They shall so regulate the hours that each duty, each lesson, and each grade shall have but the time allotted. They must endeavor to give their explanations in a clear, concise, and interesting manner, and they shall encourage the children by pointing out to them the utility of their studies, and by giving them, from time to time, some rewards.

246. They shall exert themselves to teach Catechism well, especially to make the children understand it; they shall teach them how

to examine their conscience, to make their Confession, and to combat their evil inclinations.

They shall instill into their minds respect for religion, love for prayer, love of modesty, submission to their parents, horror of duplicity, lying, etc.

247. They shall endeavor to make the children learn well, spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic. In addition to these, they shall teach them the various kinds of needlework suitable to their condition; in a word, they shall neglect nothing that can be useful to them.

They shall train them to habits of order, neatness, and love for work, thus preparing them for their duties in after life.

It is not by long discourses that they will succeed in engraving these principles on the minds of their pupils; some suitable reflections, some advice, given either in public or in private, will be more efficacious.

248. They shall watch carefully over their pupils during the time of recreation and attend to their plays and conversations, so that all may be in accordance with the rules of modesty and good breeding.

249. They shall exhaust all persuasive measures before having recourse to punishment. When severity must be employed, they shall preserve calmness and never use offensive expressions nor strike the children. They shall endeavor to act fairly, proportioning the punishment to the fault, so that the guilty, as well

as the innocent, shall be forced to acknowledge their justice and moderation.

250. They must be careful not to require too much from an indocile child, lest they compromise their authority.

251. When there is question of some extraordinary punishment, of reforming abuses or of introducing changes, they must consult the Superior before they act.

For the direction of their schools, they shall follow the method of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, established by Blessed de la Salle, unless the Superior General decides otherwise.

252. The Sisters shall act in concert and support one another in all the orders they give. In a word, they must so comport themselves that the children shall not be able to detect any difference or opposition among them.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Duties of the Sisters who have Charge of Visiting the Sick.

253. The Sisters who are named to visit the sick shall never go alone; they shall go promptly, behave with modesty and recollection, and perform their duties with a charity that is inspired by faith.

254. They shall not stay with the sick during the night nor remain longer than is required to render their services, to give the necessary directions to the nurses, to instruct the sick

prudently, to exhort them to prepare for the last Sacraments, and, when necessary, to prepare them for their reception.

255. They shall be cautious in prescribing while waiting the arrival of a physician; and they shall not fail to have one sent for unless they understand the disease and apprehend no danger.

256. They shall appeal to the charity of those who are blessed with means, in behalf of the destitute sick, asking for them what is needed, such as broth, wine, fuel, clothing, linen, etc.

257. If it be necessary to render services contrary to propriety, especially to men, they shall decline; the sanctity of their state not allowing it; but they shall have the duties performed by others.

258. They shall never take leave of the sick without having said to them some words to console, to encourage, or to excite them to patience and resignation to the holy will of God.

259. When called to visit the sick, they, before leaving the house, shall notify the Superior or the Sister who replaces her, that it may be known where they are.

CHAPTER XLV.

Duties of the Sisters Who Have Charge of Hospitals and Orphan Asylums.

260. The Congregation may take Charge of Hospitals of every kind and govern them under the superintendence of the Administrators of

the various localities. The Sisters shall have superintendence over all the inmates of the Hospital, the sick, the orphans, the aged, the infirm, the domestics and subaltern employees about the house.

261. All the overseers, domestics, porters, and others employed in the Hospital, shall be chosen by the Superior and accepted by the Administrators upon her representation. If they be not suitable, their dismissal shall be decided by said Administrators at the request of the Superior.

262. The Sisters who are appointed to take charge of the sick in the Hospitals should abound in faith, mildness, patience, charity, courage, and firmness, that they may perform their duty from supernatural motives and not be overcome by any natural repugnance. They should remember that our Lord considers as done to Himself whatsoever is done to the poor and the sick in His name, and He has pledged His word to recompense it.

263. They shall treat the sick with mildness, kindness, and charity; but also with the firmness necessary to maintain order and the observance of the regulations of the house.

264. They shall not shrink from rendering to the sick the most disgusting services, surmounting all repugnance by their love for our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, they shall observe with care the rules of decency and propriety, avoiding all that could tarnish the modesty of a Christian virgin. This precaution should be

taken especially in regard to men: for this reason, they shall try to have nurses, male and female of mature age and worthy of confidence, upon whom they can depend for services of this kind.

265. They shall follow and see that others scrupulously follow the prescriptions of the physician, without deviating in the least particular.

266. They shall maintain order and cleanliness everywhere and in everything, in the food, remedies, rooms, clothing, and bedding; and they shall make use of every precaution to prevent the spread of contagious diseases.

267. They shall, without importunity, exhort the sick to go to Confession and instruct and prepare them for it, when necessary.

268. They shall treat the Chaplain with the respect due to his sacred character; they shall avoid whatever could have the appearance of levity or familiarity with him or the other clergymen who visit the Hospital, that neither the censorious nor the malicious may be able to find anything to blame in their conduct.

269. They shall observe the same conduct towards the Administrators, Physicians, and Surgeons, treating them with respect and politeness, but with great reserve.

270. To preserve the old and infirm from idleness and its consequent evils, they shall be kept employed as much as possible; and when it can be done, the children shall learn some trade, so that upon leaving the Hospital they

may be in a condition to gain their livelihood. For the rest, the Sisters shall have an understanding with the Administrators and act in concert with them.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Duties of the Sisters Who Have Charge of Prisons.

271. The Sisters who have charge of Prisons shall join kindness and firmness to a well regulated exterior. They shall treat the prisoners with kindness, never speaking to them in a harsh, imperious, or contemptuous manner, calculated to make them feel the humiliation of their condition; but with firmness, they shall require the maintenance of order, the observance of regulations, and the respect due to their authority.

For the preservation of morals, they shall not permit the men and women to be together during recreation, or at any other time.

272. They shall not allow the prisoners to enter the Sisters' rooms. They shall give at the door, or cause to be given at the place assigned, what the prisoners ask for and what they have a right to receive. When they visit the sick, either in the Infirmary or elsewhere, there must always be two Sisters, accompanied by a turnkey.

273. They shall adroitly seize an occasion to instruct the prisoners and to lead them to virtue; but they must distrust hypocrites who behave well in order to be better treated; they

shall give them only the same as they give to the others.

274. If a prisoner acknowledge to them his crime and the cause of his imprisonment, they shall exhort him to tell it in Confession, and they shall be careful never to betray his confidence.

275. They shall see that the sick are well attended, that the orders of the physicians are observed and that cleanliness prevails everywhere. They shall likewise see to the food, clothing, bedding, furniture, etc., and watch that nothing belonging to the place be broken, spoiled, or carried off.

276. Attending equally to the interests of the laborers and the employers, they shall require the prisoners to work, conformably to the regulations established or adopted by the Administrators.

277. They shall not prepare food for prisoners who are able to pay for it; neither shall they sell tobacco, drink, or provisions of any kind, because their services must be entirely gratuitous.

278. Prudently and discreetly they shall distribute the alms entrusted to them, giving to each one according to his actual need, without partiality or respect of persons.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Duties of the Clothes Keeper.

279. The qualifications for the Sister charged with the duty of taking care of the clothing are, neatness, order, a charitable attention and foresight and a desire to maintain all according to the rules prescribed by religious Poverty.

She is to have care of the household linen, the clothing, and all connected therewith, the bedding, curtains, etc.

280. She shall carefully register all articles of value entrusted to her, also those newly made and those coming from any source whatever.

She shall keep an account with date, of all that has been rejected or given to the various houses, so that she may be in readiness to give a report of them to the Superior.

281. For the necessary expenses, she shall apply to the Procuratrix, and, in case of necessity to the Superior.

282. The clothes and other articles shall be arranged in good order in the clothes-press, the new separated from the old. She shall have the articles mended that need it and shall consult the Superior as to what may be done with such as are no longer of use.

283. She shall register and keep apart what belongs to the Postulants and Novices, that all may be returned to them if they leave; but, from the time they take the perpetual vows, all that is theirs belongs to the Community.

284. She shall have the direction of all the work connected with the clothes-room and attend to the mending as well as to the making.

285. She shall be careful to mark the linen and clothes worn by those who have contagious diseases; and after their death she shall have these articles burned, if the Superior thinks proper.

286. She shall count the linen before giving it to the kitchen, refectory, and infirmary and do the same when it is returned.

287. She shall give sheets for the beds once every two weeks and change of linen and napkins for the refectory every Saturday.

If some Sisters need changes more frequently, she shall give what is necessary with the permission of the Superior.

288. She shall send to the laundry the soiled clothes counted and receive them in the same way, being careful to see that all is returned.

289. She shall often inspect the things belonging to her charge, so that nothing may be out of place or lost. Should she need help, she shall ask it of the Superior.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

*Duties of the Sacristan.**

290. The Sister Sacristan shall consider it a great favor to serve our Lord in His own house; and she shall endeavor to keep her heart the more pure, as she approaches nearer to the Altar.

291. It is she who shall prepare all for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and for religious ceremonies, attend to the ornaments of the Altar, to the care of the vestments, the Altar linen, the Communion cloths, and to the arrangements of the seats in the Chapel.

She shall clean and adorn the Altar with care and reverence, approaching with fear and trembling the holy place where Jesus resides in Person.

She shall keep the Chapel, Sacristy, and everything relating to the Divine Service, in great neatness. Twice a week or oftener, if necessary, the Chapel should be swept.

She shall keep the lamp burning night and day before the Blessed Sacrament, shall see that there is always a supply of holy water, and shall take it to the rooms on the days appointed by the Superior.

292. Everything must be suitably prepared before the arrival of the Priest to say Mass.

The Sisters who have charge of adorning the Church and the Altars, shall avoid being in the Sacristy with the Priests; and no Sister shall ever be there alone for any length of time when there is only one Priest present.

293. If an unknown Priest present himself to say Mass, she shall inform the Chaplain or the Superior, that the customary precautions may be taken.

294. If repairs be necessary, she shall comply with the orders of the Superior.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Duties of the Evening Visitor.

295. The Visitor shall announce the time for going to bed. At the signal, the lights shall be extinguished, and all in the house, if not already in bed, must retire at once.

Immediately after, the Visitor, carrying a lantern, shall visit all the rooms, except that of the Superior; she shall see that all is according to order and pay special attention to the fire.

If there be a light in any of the rooms, she shall have it extinguished, and no consideration will stop her in a matter so important.

Her duty does not authorize her to keep a light longer than is necessary for her to retire.

CHAPTER XL.

Duties of the Sisters Coadjutrix.

296. The Sisters Coadjutrix shall think of themselves as being in the service of the Holy Family, and shall have the intention of honoring God with zeal and simplicity.

They shall exercise themselves in the duties proper to their state and be distinguished for piety, humility, love of virtue, and docility; they shall edify the community by their modesty, recollection, mildness, exactitude, and activity in their employments; also, by their goodwill and unlimited devotion.

For their spiritual advancement they shall keep themselves mindful of their lowliness, honor the Sisters as belonging to an order above them, and serve them with love, as the well beloved spouses of Jesus Christ.

They shall live together in great union, bearing with and mutually aiding one another.

Should they have time after their employment is finished they shall apply, in a spirit of obedience, to the one who is charged to occupy them; and they will do what she may desire.

In recreation they shall not affect to remain together, but associate with the other Sisters and seek to profit by the words of edification they may hear.

They shall not read any book without the permission of the Superior, who will give them those she deems most suitable to their state, and they cannot apply themselves to learn anything without her permission.

They shall regard as a dangerous temptation the thought of raising themselves any higher, or of changing their employment. In no way shall they mingle in the affairs of the Congregation, of the Superior; or of any one else.

CHAPTER LI.

Duties of the Cook.

297. The employment of the cook is of no little importance to the Community, and the Sister who is charged with it shall perform her

duty with zeal and devotedness, in union with Martha preparing in her house a suitable reception for our Lord.

She shall keep all the vessels and utensils of the kitchen in great cleanness, and observe cleanliness in the preparation of the food. In serving the meat, she shall use a knife and fork.

She shall be punctual and have everything in readiness to be put on the table five minutes before the bell rings.

She shall carefully keep what is returned from the refectory, either for the use of the house or to be given to the poor, according to the decision of the Superior.

298. Through a spirit of poverty she shall be saving of the wood, coal, and everything belonging to the kitchen.

She shall not let anything be prepared in the kitchen for any one whomsoever, without the permission of the Superior.

299. If a Sister come to the kitchen to ask for what she has a right to receive, the cook shall give it promptly, avoiding conversation and even unnecessary words.

300. She shall be very kind to her assistants and the Novices placed under her, never speaking to them in a harsh, imperious way, nor acting towards them in a rude, offensive manner. She shall do her best to train for the work of the kitchen those sent to her for that purpose.

301. That she may perform her duty with more peace of mind, she shall follow the direc-

tions of the Procuratrix, applying to her on the preceding evening for the daily provisions.

302. In all that regards the sick, she shall be subordinate to the Infirmarian, whose orders she shall observe without doing more.

303. If the duties of her employment interfere with the common exercises of piety, she shall perform the latter at another time.

304. The assistant cook, if there be one, shall be under her direction and be submissive to her. The chief duties of the assistant shall be to wash the dishes, to sweep the kitchen, clean the vegetables, and carry wood and water; she shall perform these services with a good will, in a spirit of faith, remembering that the more humbling her employment is, the more she will merit, provided she discharge it well.

CHAPTER LII.

Duties of the Refectorian.

305. The Refectorian shall have charge of keeping the Refectory clean and in order; also, of changing the towels, of providing water for the washing of the hands, etc. She shall receive from the clothes-room the table linen counted, and return it in the same way. She shall change the napkins every week.

306. She shall have the tables prepared a quarter of an hour before the meals, and have them cleared in good time; she shall also look to the sweeping of the refectory and to the putting away of things in perfect order.

CHAPTER LIII.

*Duties of the Caller.**

307. A Sister appointed by the Superior shall ring the bell in the morning to awaken the Community. That she may more surely rise in time, she shall have in her room an alarm clock.

308. At the appointed hour, she shall ring the bell. At the first signal the "Benedicamus Domino" shall be said, to which the Sisters shall respond, "Deo Gratias."

CHAPTER LIV.

Duties of the Buyer.

309. When circumstances require it, there shall be a Sister appointed as buyer. This Sister should be docile, grave, recollected, of an edifying exterior, and a fidelity that will stand any test.

310. Every day she shall learn from the Superior what she has to purchase and receive from her the necessary sum of money. She shall buy articles of good quality, and at a reasonable price; to do which, she shall go to more than one place, if necessary.

311. Only the Superior and Procuratrix may give commissions; the Sister shall refuse those given by other persons not authorized.

312. She shall perform her duty promptly and faithfully, losing no time in useless conversations or in going without necessity from place to place. She shall be modest and re-

served in speaking so as to edify all with whom she has dealings.

313. Upon her return she shall, with uprightness and simplicity, render an account of the business with which she was charged.

314. She shall not make known what she saw and did, while absent, except to those who have a right to know it.

315. In regard to the spiritual exercises, she shall follow as far as possible the order of the day.

CHAPTER LV.

Duties of the Portress.

316. The Portress must be vigilant, upright, firm, and deserving of confidence.

317. At the first sound of the bell she shall go to the door.

318. She shall answer the visitors mildly, modestly, and briefly, avoiding all harsh or offensive expressions, so that every one may leave the house satisfied.

319. After the visitor has been ushered into the parlor, she shall inform the Superior or the one who takes her place.

320. On the days appointed for Confession, she shall give notice to the Sisters, by a special signal, as soon as the Confessor arrives.

321. She shall hand to the Superior all the letters and packages she receives either for the Sisters or the boarders. The letters and packages for the Novices she shall give to the Mistress of Novices.

322. She shall freely distribute the alms assigned by the Superior.

323. Every morning, after the signal for rising, she shall receive the keys from the Superior, to whom she shall return them in the evening, a little before bedtime.

324. To avoid dissipation of mind, and to preserve recollection in an employment so distracting, whenever the bell calls her, she shall imagine that it is God Who calls her, and then propose to herself to do His holy will.

CONCLUSION.

*Obligation of the Constitutions.**

325. These Constitutions do not of themselves bind under pain of sin. Nevertheless, it would be a sin to violate them through contempt of authority, or if the thing forbidden were sinful in itself.

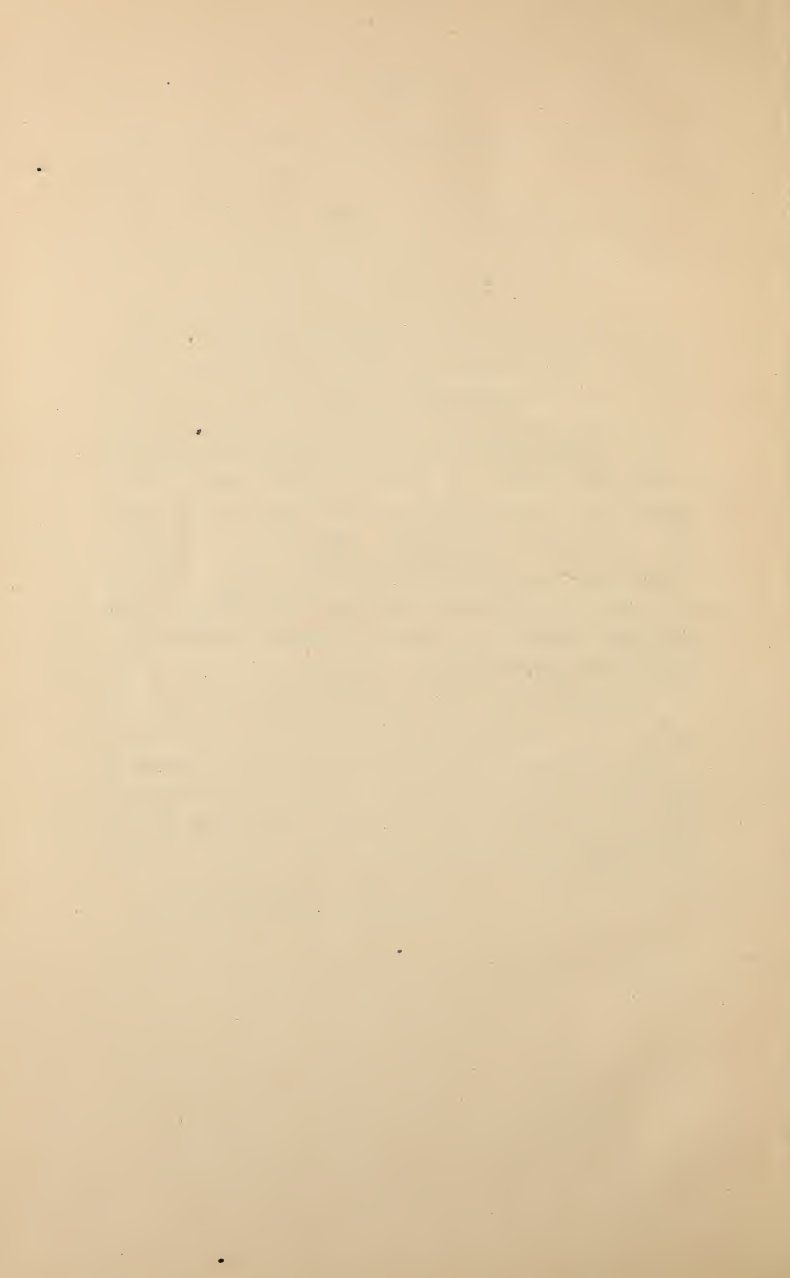
PRAYER OF REUNION.*

Constitution. Art. 65.

We unite with all our Sisters to adore Thee, O Sacred Heart of Jesus, Heart most holy, most pure, most humble, most wise, most amiable, and most merciful. We give, we consecrate, and immolate our hearts to Thee. Deign to receive, possess, purify, enlighten, and sanctify them. O Divine Jesus render our hearts like unto Thine. Amen.

Every Sister of Providence (Professed or Novice) may gain 100 days indulgence every time she recites the above prayer, and a plenary indulgence on the usual conditions, once a month, if she recites it at least once every day.

Pius IX. August 22, 1861.



Appendix.

DECRETUM.

Cum iamdiu Sorores de Providentia ad Nemus nuncupatae in Status Americae Borealis Foederatos se contulerint, ac in varias fuerint diffusae Dioeceses, earumque Institutum Incrementa ceperit, Episcopi harum Dioecesium S. Congregationi de Propaganda Fide supplices preces exhibuerunt, ut praefatum Institutum ac Constitutiones Pontificia sanctione munirentur. Porro cum S. Congregatio de Propaganda Fide perpenderit has Sorores tum in puellarum institutione, tum in infirmorum adsistentia uberes tulisse fructus, ac amplissimis laudibus earum operam ab Episcopis commendatam esse, Sanctissimo Domino N. Leoni XIII supplicandum censuit, ut tum ipsam Congregationem, tum Constitutiones, quibusdam tamen correctionibus, modificationibus-ac emendationibus adiectis ad quinquennium per modum experimenti approbare ac confirmare dignaretur. Hanc vero S. Congregationis sententiam SS^{mo} D. N. Leoni XIII relatam, in audientia diei 28 Maii 1887 Sanctitas Sua approbare dignata est, et super his praesens Decretum expediri iussit,

Datum Romae ex Aedibus S. C. de Propaganda Fide die III. Iunii An. MDCCCLXXXVII.

(L. S.)

IOANNES, Card. SIMEONI, Praefectus.

✠ D. Archiep. Tyren., Secr.

TRANSLATION.

Decree of Approbation.

Inasmuch as the Sisters, known as Sisters of Providence of St. Mary of the Woods, now long since went to the United States of North America, spread through different Dioceses, and their Congregation increased, the Bishops of these various Dioceses petitioned the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda for the Pontifical sanction of the said Institute and Constitutions. Moreover, the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, having considered that these Sisters have yielded rich fruit in the education of children and in the care of the sick, and that their work has also been highly praised by the Bishops, has deemed it fitting to petition our most Holy Father Pope Leo XIII to deign approve for five years, by way of experiment, both the Congregation itself and the Constitutions, some corrections, modifications, and amendments, however, having been added. This judgment of the Sacred Congregation having been referred to our most Holy Father Leo XIII, his Holiness deigned to approve it, in the audience of May 28th, 1887, and ordered the present Decree on this subject to be issued.

Given at Rome, at the Propaganda, June 3, 1887.

[L.S.]

JOHN Card. SIMEONI, Prefect.

✠ D. Archbp. Tyre, Secr.

DECRETUM.

Per Decretum S. huius Congregationis datum die 3, Iunii anno 1887, adprobatae fuerunt ad quinquennium experimenti causa Constitutiones Sororum a Providentia, Sanctae Mariae ad Nemus, quarum domus princeps in Dioecesi Vincennopolitana Statuum Foederatorum Americae Borealis reperitur. Quum vero nuper eiusdem Instituti Moderatrix Generalis preces huic S. Consilio Christiano Nomini Propogando obtulerit pro definitiva memoratarum Constitutionum adprobatione, res de more examinanda tradita est peculiari ad id constitutae Commissioni reb praesidentia Emi ac Rmi D. Card. Camilli Mazella. Haec vero Commissio attentis spiritualibus uberrimis fructibus quos memoratum Institutum Sororum praesertim in instituenda inventute refert, prouti pluvium Ordinariorum litterae ample testantur, censuit adnuendum esse oblatis precibus definitive adprobando exhibitas Constitutiones quibusdam tamen levibus inductis mutationibus, que in adnexo folio habentur.

Id vero quum SSmo D. N. Leoni P.P. XIII ab infrascripto eiusdem Sacrae Congregationes Fidei Propogandae Secretario relatum fuerit in audientia diei 11. vertentis Martii, Sanctitas Sua benigne adnuere dignata est, ac praesens super ea re Decretum confici mandavit.

Datum Romae ex aedibus S. C. de Propag a Fide die XII Martii MDCCCXCIV.

M. CARD LEDOCHOWSKI, Praef.

✠ AUG. ARCHIEP LAVISSEN, Secr.

TRANSLATION.

Decree of Final Approbation.

By decree of this Holy Congregation, given June 3, of the year 1887, the Constitutions of the Sisters of Providence of St. Mary of the Woods, whose Mother House is in the Diocese of Vincennes, in the United States of North America, were approved for five years by way of experiment. But as the Superior General of the said Institute had recently applied to this sacred Congregation, *de Propaganda Fide*, for the definitive approbation of the said Constitutions, the matter was referred to a committee presided over by His Eminence Cardinal Camillus Mazella. This committee reported that the said Institute of Sisters has produced most abundant spiritual fruits, especially in the education of young ladies, as is testified to by the letters of several Bishops, and judged that the petition of the Sisters should be granted, by giving the definitive approbation of the Constitutions, with slight changes as described in the accompanying document.

This decision having been communicated to Our Most Holy Lord, Leo, P. P., XIII, by the undersigned Secretary of the Congregation "*de Propaganda Fide*" at the audience given March XII. His Holiness deigned benevolently to approve it and ordered the present Decree to be given.

Given at Rome from the palace of the Sacred Congregation "*de Propaganda Fide*," March XII, MDCCCXCIV.

M. CARD. LEDOCHOWSKI, Praef.

✠ AUG. ARCHIEP LAVISSEN, Secre.

DECREE.

Just as it is the fate of human things how praiseworthy and holy soever they may be in themselves, even so is it of laws wisely enacted, to be liable to be misused and perverted to purposes opposed and foreign to their nature. Wherefore it sometimes happens that they no longer serve the purpose which the lawmakers had in view; nay, they sometimes even produce quite a contrary result.

It is much to be deplored that such has proved to be the case with the laws of several Congregations, Societies, and Institutes, both of women who emit simple or solemn vows, and of men who by their profession and discipline are merely laymen. For, inasmuch as occasionally their Constitutions permitted the making a manifestation of conscience, in order that thereby the members might the more easily learn, in their doubts, from experienced Superiors, how to walk in the path of perfection, it has happened, on the contrary, that some of the latter have introduced the practice of thoroughly inquiring into the state of their subjects' conscience, which is a thing reserved exclusively to the Sacrament of Penance. In like manner, and in conformity with the prescriptions of the Sacred Canons, it was ordered that Sacramental Confession in all such com-

munities should be made to the respective Ordinary and Extraordinary Confessors; while, on the other hand, the arbitrary conduct of some Superiors has gone so far as to refuse to their subjects an Extraordinary Confessor, even in cases when the conscience of the persons so refused stood greatly in need of such a privilege. These Superiors were given a rule of discretion and prudence for the purpose of enabling them to direct their subjects in a proper and right use of special penitential exercises and other practices of piety; but this very rule, also, was so perverted by abuse that they [the Superiors] took it on themselves to permit, at their pleasure, their subjects to approach the Holy Table, or even sometimes to forbid them Communion altogether. Hence it has happened that such regulations as these, established for the salutary and wise purpose of promoting the spiritual progress of the members and fostering in communities the union growing out of peace and concord, have not unfrequently resulted in imperiling the salvation of souls, in deeply disturbing consciences, and, moreover, in the disturbance of exterior peace,—as is most evidently proved by the appeals and complaints frequently made to the Holy See.

Wherefore our Most Holy Father, Leo XIII., impelled by the peculiar solicitude for which he is distinguished toward this most select portion of his flock, in the audience which he gave me, the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, on the 14th

day of December, 1890, after carefully and diligently considering everything, has willed, determined, and decreed, as follows:

I. His Holiness annuls, abrogates, and declares of no force whatever hereafter all regulations whatsoever in the Constitutions of Pious Societies and Institutes of women who emit either simple or solemn vows as well as in those of men of the purely lay order (even though the said Constitutions should have received from the Holy See approbation in any form soever, even that which is termed most special), in this one point, in which these Constitutions regard the secret manifestation of conscience in whatsoever manner or under what name soever. He therefore seriously enjoins on all the Superiors, Male and Female, of such Institutes, Congregations, and Societies to absolutely cancel and expunge altogether from their respective Constitutions, Directories, and Manuals all the aforesaid regulations.

II. He, moreover, forbids such Superiors, Male and Female, no matter what may be their rank and eminence, from endeavoring, directly or indirectly, by command, counsel, fear, threats, or blandishments, to induce their subjects to make to them any such manifestation of conscience; and he commands these subjects, on their part, to denounce to the higher Superiors such as dare to induce them to make such manifestation; and if the guilty one be the Superior-General, the denunciation should by them be made to this Sacred Congregation.

III. This, however, in nowise hinders subjects from freely and of their own accord opening their hearts to their Superiors, for the purpose of obtaining from their prudence counsel and direction, in doubts and perplexities, in order to aid them in acquiring virtues and advancing in perfection.

IV. Moreover, while the prescriptions of the Holy Council of Trent, *Sess. 25. Cap. 10, de Regul.*, retain their full vigor, as well as the decrees of Benedict XIV. of holy memory, in the Constitution *Pastoralis Curae*, His Holiness admonishes Prelates and Superiors not to deny their subjects an extraordinary Confessor as often as the need of their conscience requires it, and without seeking to find out in any way the reason why their subjects make such a demand, or without showing that they resent it. And, lest so provident a disposition as this should be made illusory, he exhorts the Ordinaries to name, in all localities of their dioceses, in which there are Communities of women, well-qualified Priests with the necessary faculties, to whom such Religious may easily have recourse to receive the Sacrament of Penance.

V. As to what regards either permission or prohibition to receive Holy Communion, His Holiness also decrees that such permission or prohibition belongs solely to the ordinary or extraordinary Confessor, the Superiors having no right whatever to interfere in the matter, save only the case in which any one of their subjects had given scandal to the Community.

since his or her last Confession, or had been guilty of some grievous public fault, and this only until the guilty one had once more received the Sacrament of Penance.

VI. All are hereby admonished to prepare themselves diligently and to approach Holy Communion on the days prescribed in their respective Rules; and when the Confessor may judge conducive to the spiritual advancement of any member to receive more frequently, he may give the needful permission. But whoever receives from the Confessor the permission to receive more frequent or daily Communion is bound to inform the Superior of the same; should the latter think that he has just and serious reasons to oppose such frequent Communion, he is bound to make them known to the Confessor, in whose judgment he must absolutely acquiesce.

VIII. His Holiness, furthermore, commands all Superiors General, Provincial and Local Superiors of the Institutes aforementioned, whether of men or of women, to observe zealously and accurately the regulations prescribed in this Decree under pain of incurring *ipso facto* the penalties decreed against Superiors who violate the mandates of the Holy See.

VIII. He, lastly, commands that copies of this present Decree, translated in the vernacular, shall be inserted in the Constitutions of the said pious Institutes, and that at least once in the twelve-month, at a stated time in each House, either in the public Refectory, or in

Chapter assembled for this special purpose, this decree shall be read in a loud and intelligible voice.

And thus hath His Holiness determined and decreed, notwithstanding all things to the contrary, even such as are worthy of special and individual mention.

Given at Rome from the Secretariate of the said Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, on the 17th of December, 1890.

I. CARDINAL VERGA, *Prefect.*

FR. ALOISIUS, BISHOP OF CALLINICUN,

Secretary.

CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL UNION



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