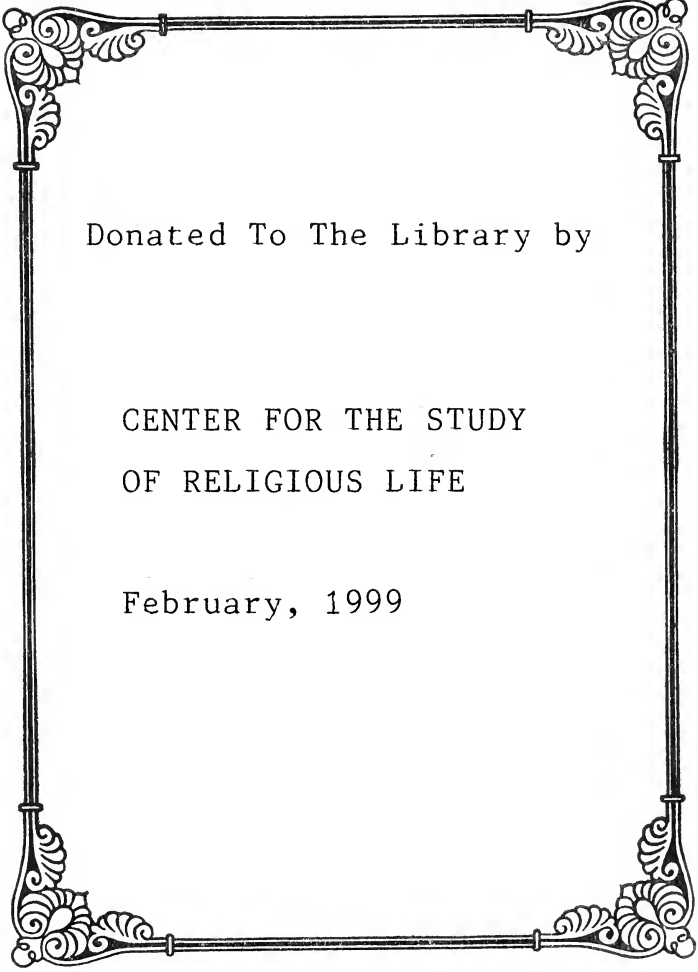


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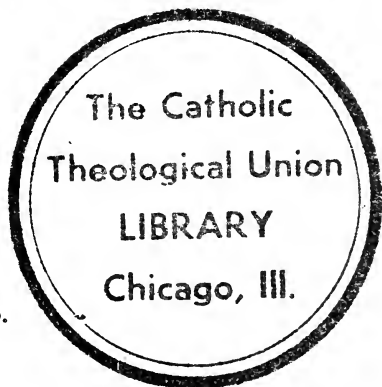
CONSTITUTIONS
OF THE
SISTERS OF CHARITY

OF THE
Blessed Virgin Mary

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CONSTITUTIONS

OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE PERFECTION TO WHICH THE SISTERS
OUGHT TO ASPIRE, OR ON THEIR INTERIOR
SPIRIT AND RELIGIOUS PERFECTION.

The Aim of the Institute, Its Means, Vows and Other Virtues.

1. The object for which God in His goodness has deigned to call and bring together the Sisters of Charity of the B. V. M., is their own perfection and the salvation of their neighbor; to secure this end according to the proper vocation of this Institute, they consecrate themselves by special devotion to the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. To this, therefore, shall they direct their labors, that they imitate more and more the hidden life of this Holy Family.

2. It belongs to our vocation to live in any part of the world, where there is hope of promoting the greater honor of God, and of being serviceable in the salvation of souls.

3. To honor the holy Childhood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sisters shall instruct children,

whose minds they shall store with the principles of the true Faith, and whose hearts especially they shall train to love God by the most diligent practice of all virtues, so that, whilst they sow in their minds the seeds of learning, they shall unite their souls to God by a fervent love.

4. The better to obtain the end of the Constitutions, by which they may acquire abundant merit for themselves and be useful to others, let them take the utmost care not to neglect any point of perfection, which by the grace of God they may obtain.

5. To the more easy attainment of this, an application of themselves with their whole mind to the exercises of the spiritual and interior life helps very much, and they should strive as much as possible to let these animate all their actions.

6. Therefore, first of all, let the Sisters seek their own perfection and the salvation of their souls; and giving this the first place, let them spare no endeavor to obtain it.

7. Let all thoroughly understand how much it helps and conduces to the attainment of this perfection to apply themselves with all their souls to the study of the virtues of Charity, Simplicity and Humility which especially are the characteristic virtues of their Institute. Thus each member and the whole congregation shall be animated by these three virtues, as the body is by the soul.

8. Let all have always a right intention, especially when they rise in the morning, and

as much as possible let them recall it before every action.

9. Let all who have joined this congregation earnestly apply themselves to the study of solid virtues, and of spiritual things, and be persuaded that these are of greater value than any natural gifts, for they are, as it were, the soul, from which all our life should receive force and strength.

10. Let them be ever mindful that they are Sisters of Charity of the B. V. M., a title by which God has deigned to honor them. Let them endeavor, therefore to show themselves worthy of that title, and accordingly, not only to feel honor and love for one another in their hearts, but, moreover, to express it in their actions, especially by sweet address, by humbly yielding, so that every one may be such as the Apostle desires "having become all to all," etc.

11. And as it is necessary that Charity be the principal bond of the Sisters, let all carefully shun as most opposed to true charity, all particular friendships, by which in a short time, the whole Community would be destroyed.

12. If then, they desire to obtain true perfection, let each one endeavor to divest herself of every inordinate affection, especially in regard to places, offices and persons; and let her be ready to leave everything as soon as Obedience shall desire it, following that counsel of Christ: "He who shall leave," etc.

13. Moreover, it will help very much therunto to place themselves and all they have with great confidence in the Hands of Divine Providence, for thus having been divested of all

things created, they shall the more easily live for God alone.

14. Loving with a pure love God alone and their neighbor for the love of God, inasmuch as they can, let them cheerfully and promptly accept, and aided by the grace of God, love and ardently desire privations, insults and injuries, all of which may befall them without their having given occasion thereunto, yea, even though they have acted well; and thus let them endeavor to be likened in some manner to our Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered greater things for us, and so left us an example for our imitation.

15. All who desire to live in this congregation, should ardently love holy poverty, which Jesus Christ, our Lord, and His holy Mother so diligently practiced; therefore let them be satisfied with the things that are merely necessary according to the spirit and customs of the Community.

16. The more easily to obtain this, no Sister shall have anything as her own; but all things shall be possessed in common. Therefore, no one is allowed to have or use anything as her own; to lend or borrow or dispose of anything that is in the house, without the consent of the Superior.

17. Should they perceive that they need anything, let them with great simplicity make it known to the Sister to whom it belongs to provide for all in the Lord.

18. The Sister whose duty it is to provide, should diligently inquire as to what may be necessary for the Sisters, and let her supply

this with great charity; in such a manner, however, that due regard be had both to the spirit of Poverty and to the means of the Community.

19. As regards clothing and all other things given for their use, let them not put aside nor alter them as they may think fit, without the special consent of the Superior.

20. Any money confided to their care should be used most discreetly, and let them understand that they sin against their vow of Poverty whenever they use even the smallest things without the special permission of the Superior, at least reasonably presumed.

21. In order that that Poverty which belongs to the Institute may be most scrupulously observed, no one, not even the Mother, nor the Superior, shall be allowed to depart in any way from that simplicity and that spirit of poverty which belong to them, as regards clothing, food and furniture.

22. By the Vow of Poverty the Sisters are by no means deprived of the ownership of their property, if they have any, but only of the administration, usufruct or use of it.

23. Hence it is necessary that before taking their vows, they give up the whole administration, usufruct or use of their property.

24. Nevertheless, they can reserve to themselves the power of revoking this concession, but they cannot make use of this power whilst bound by their Vows, unless previously permitted by the S. Cong. of the Propagation of the Faith. The same is to be observed of what-

soever the Sisters may receive by will or gift, after having taken their vows.

25. The Sisters, however, can whenever they wish, dispose of the said goods by will or donation, having previously obtained the permission of the Superior General. Moreover, the Sisters, with the consent of the same Superior General, are not forbidden to use proprietary rights, in accordance with the civil law.

26. As regards Chastity, let them understand how earnestly they must strive to cultivate this angelic virtue; hence they must carefully avoid everything opposed to its spirit, such as the desire of seeing and hearing all things, long conversations with seculars, and the wish to attract the notice of others, whether interns or externs.

27. They will more easily observe this, if such modesty of the eyes and of the whole person shine forth in them, that they may be like models and never fall into the slightest suspicion of anything contrary to this angelic virtue.

28. To preserve this virtue let them be persuaded that, although exterior mortification helps very much thereunto, yet, unless this be accompanied by that of the interior, by which the intellect and the will and all desires of flesh and blood are kept in continual subjection, under the guidance of obedience, it will neither last long nor profit much.

29. Such is the obedience desired from all the Sisters, that everywhere and always they entirely and with profound humility subject

themselves to the will of their Superior, so that in all things in which sin does not manifestly appear, they give to the Superior, whoever she is whether of rough, or gentle disposition, that obedience of which Our Lord gave so bright an example, since they ought to know clearly that they give themselves and their obedience not to man but to God himself in the person of the Superior.

30. To promote more and more the welfare and the end of this Institution, it is very necessary that all the Sisters should give themselves to perfect obedience, and therefore, they shall give it to the Ordinary of the Diocese in which they reside, to the Confessor, to the Mother Superior, or in her place to the Sister Assistant, in all things that appertain to their office.

31. Those who teach in the schools should, with great humility obey the Sister Directress and whilst traveling the one named by the Superior.

32. At the Superior's voice and at the sound of the bell, all should be most prompt in obeying, leaving everything else.

33. Every one must fulfill whatsoever penances may be enjoined for her defects, negligences or anything else. And let every one endeavor to receive and perform her penances promptly, with a true desire of amendment and spiritual progress, though they should be enjoined for some defect not blameworthy.

34. Besides the ordinary exercises of piety and religion, let the Sisters go to Confession every eight days, and according to the advice

of their Confessor, receive the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Let there be one Confessor for all, appointed by the Bishop, and to him all must lay their consciences entirely open. Moreover, four times a year the Bishop will appoint an extraordinary Confessor, to whom all the Sisters shall go; yet they are not obliged to Sacramental Confession.

35. Every one who desires to live in this Congregation must, in the beginning, make a general confession of her whole life, and after, receive the most sacred Body of Christ, Our Lord; and all shall, whenever the renovation of Vows takes place, as explained in the common rules, make a general confession, beginning from the last.

36. For their greater progress in spirit, and for their greater submission and humility, and for their mutual correction, as also for their safer direction, each one should make it her duty that all the errors, defects and dangers which the Sisters may have noticed, should be manifested to the Superior; for it is impossible for the Superior herself to see and hear everything, and therefore, should any one know any grievous temptation of another, let her, with charity inform the Superior.

37. To guard against temptations the Sisters should practice those virtues which are especially opposed to their evil inclinations.

38. They must conceal no temptation which they ought to manifest to their Confessor, nay, they should have their whole soul entirely unfolded before him, in order that they may be better and more safely guided in the Lord.

39. All should take a moderate care of their health, and therefore, if they perceive that anything is hurtful to them, or is needed, whether in diet, clothing, lodging, or office, let them inform the Superior or the Sister who has care of these things, that she may provide what is most expedient in the Lord.

40. In time of sickness let them show humility and patience, and confide themselves, their health and its treatment entirely to the Superior and to the physician.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE DISCIPLINE TO BE OBSERVED BOTH
WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE HOUSES OF
THE CONGREGATION.

**The Constitutions or Common Rules Which
Chiefly Regulate Their Duties To-
wards Themselves, Towards Others,
Towards Superiors, Towards
Strangers, Etc.**

1. Every day all must be present at Mass, and, during the week, no one shall recite long prayers privately, with the omission, or to the notable injury of their special duties.

2. No one may undertake any labor which seems to be above her strength. If such should be enjoined, let her inform the Superior, and be ready to do what the Superior, having understood the matter, shall think best in the Lord.

3. They must carefully shun idleness as the

parent of all vices, and should they have finished the duties of their offices, and time be left, they must employ it in other occupations suitable to the condition of each. But if they have no such occupation, let them go to the Mother or Superior to learn what should be done.

4. They shall never be allowed to keep in the house birds or other animals, in the feeding and care of which, much time is lost.

5. Cleanliness, without affectation, should be observed in their dress, as well as in all things, and they should avoid all childish levity, immoderate laughter, frivolous talk and gestures, or whatever may, in the least, seem to be opposed to religious modesty.

6. No one shall eat anything out of the accustomed times, nor out of the house; at home, nothing may be taken except in the refectory, during the time of meals.

7. As moderation in eating greatly promotes the health of the body and purity of the soul, let all, even those who live in mission houses, endeavor as much as possible to observe modesty and mortification, and let all conform themselves, as regards the quality and quantity of food, to the customs of the Mother House. Besides, they must keep with great fervor, the fasts and vigils prescribed by the church. And, in order that they may be distinguished by greater mortification than other Christians, let them fast on the vigil of the feast of the Purification, and of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and let them ab-

stain from meat on the three days preceding the renovation of their Vows.

8. Before a Confessor is appointed by the Bishop, let all earnestly beg of God that in His mercy He may choose the one He knows to be best fitted for this office. But as soon as he is appointed, let all receive him as a guide sent from God, and follow his advice as that of Jesus Christ.

9. Let all carefully prepare themselves to celebrate the feasts of the Purification, Annunciation, Visitation, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and on the feast day of her Immaculate Conception, as also every year at the end of the eight days of retreat (which is most conveniently made during the long vacation) the Vows shall be openly renewed by all the Sisters on a fixed day, namely on the Feast of the Assumption of the B. V. M. But let the Sisters understand that when, according to the formula, they renew their Vows for three years, the time is to be counted, not from any one renovation, but from three to three years since their first taking the Vows.

10. If any Sister, for any grave reason, can not perform these exercises, then she will afterwards make a retreat of at least four or five days.

11. Out of time of recreation silence is to be strictly observed, as is becoming religious persons. Therefore, if through necessity or utility, any one have to speak, it must be done briefly and in a low voice.

12. Let all be careful in their conversation not to praise their own nationality to the seem-

ing contempt of others, but let them show charity in all things, and let them emulate with all their might those whom they know to be more advanced in perfection, no matter to what nation they belong.

13. As becomes the Sisters of Charity of the B. V. M. let each one be ready to forego her own convenience whenever there is question of either the good of the community or even of another Sister.

14. They are allowed to embrace each other with charity, as religious affection requires, especially when any one has taken her Vows, or returns home after a long absence, or for reconciliation; but care must be taken that it be done in a becoming manner and modestly, and never in the public streets, especially if it should attract attention.

15. Never, even for the smallest space of time, shall any one be alone with men, unless the door remain open; and on no condition shall any man, even a priest, spend a night in the house.

16. Although there should always appear in the Sisters an angelic modesty, they should show this especially in the presence of men, and never should they allow the least familiarity.

17. No one shall consult a physician, nor take any medicine without the permission of the Superior.

18. No one, except when traveling, shall be allowed to pass the night, lodge or take her meals in the houses of relatives or others.

19. No one, when going from one place to

another, shall take anything along with her without leave of the Superior, who shall, with great charity, provide everything necessary; and when each Sister arrives at the other house she must give the Superior an account of all the things she brought with her.

20. To avoid many inconveniences, and to take away the cause of much trouble to the community, no one shall disclose her temptations or difficulties to any one except the Superior or Confessor; and whatever is said in such conversations, as also in the chapter of faults, and whatever else is told them by the Superiors, should be kept secret.

21. Those who are sick for a long time should endeavor to receive Holy Communion every eight days.

22. As the manner of living, in exterior things, ought to be common, no one shall undertake any penance without the consent of the Confessor or Superior, whose duty it is to decide what penances are best suited to further the spiritual progress of each.

23. The Sisters in the Mission must write to the Mother whenever anything of consequence shall have happened; with great simplicity, however, lest charity or the religious spirit might suffer from it.

24. Those who live in the houses of the Missions should, as much as they can, take care to conform themselves to the same rules which are observed in the Mother House; and they shall not introduce anything new though it might appear to be much better.

25. That due order may be kept, the Su-

perior shall occupy the first place, the Assistant the second, and let the other Sisters be arranged according to the order of their profession. But when the Mother or her Assistant comes to the house the first place shall be given to her. The Superior of another house, or the Sister Visitor, shall occupy the second place.

26. Every one is bound to answer with simplicity and modesty all the questions which are asked by the Sister Visitor, and which tend to the greater glory of God, the welfare of the community, or her private good; and each one must keep secret whatever is said by her and by the Visitor; should any reprimand or advice be given, it must be received in all religious humility as coming from God.

27. Letters which are sent by a Sister to the Mother, or by the Mother to a Sister, shall enjoy perfect freedom, so that the immediate Superior is not allowed to open, to read, or to inquire to which Sister a letter has come, or who wrote to the Mother; and if this letter contain anything which has reference to the immediate Superior, let it be communicated orally or in writing, without showing the letter.

28. No one shall write to any other without obtaining leave, and showing the letter to the Superior; and should letters be sent to the Sisters, they must first be given to the Superior, who, after having read them, may give them or keep them, as, in the Lord, she may judge expedient.

29. No one shall curiously inquire about the actions and sayings of any one else, or seek

to know why, for instance, one Sister is sent hither or goes to another house, or what qualities others have, and the like; for all these things give rise to complaints; yet should any one notice anything which she thinks should be communicated to the Superior, let her tell the Superior only.

30. Let no one ever presume to blame the actions or commands of Superiors; nay, let all avoid as much as possible even talking about these matters; and, fulfilling their offices faithfully, let them receive, as from God Himself, whatever may be determined about themselves and others by Superiors.

31. If time and duties allow, the Sisters may visit the sick, especially the poor, but only with the permission of the Superior, and never without a companion. They must not leave the house before daylight, and should be home before dark.

32. No one may stop in the streets to talk, especially with strangers; should necessity or politeness, however, require it, let them answer briefly, and avoid all vain and useless talk.

33. No one shall go out of the house without leave of the Superior, whom all must inform about what they are going to do; and when they return, they shall again tell the Superior whether anything contrary to rule has occurred, and this must be observed by the Superior herself towards her Assistant. Let them know, moreover, that only necessary visits are allowed.

34. Before they leave the house they shall go to the chapel and there pray to God, offer

Him the actions which they are going to perform, and, on their return, let them again repair to the chapel to give thanks to God.

35. Never shall any Sister obtain permission to go out without a companion, whom the Superior shall appoint.

36. When strangers come to the house to visit any one, they must always be received in the parlor. The sisters shall not come to them, nor hold any conversation with them without first obtaining leave from the Superior.

37. In the parlor every Sister must have a companion, and the conversation must not be prolonged beyond half an hour without leave of the Superior.

38. It shall never be allowed any one of the Sisters, under any condition whatever, to take care of the sacristy, to direct the choir, or to play the organ in any church or public oratory; the articles, however, that belong to divine worship may be made or repaired at home.

39. No Sister is allowed to invite any one, even a relative, to dinner, much less to a lodging, without the special permission of the Superior, who shall very rarely grant it, and never to men.

40. Secular rumors and the defects of others are never to be related; if anything new has happened which may afford edification, let it be related with humility.

41. Should it happen that any priest, even their Confessor, should wish to grant them privileges contrary to their rule or the spirit of the Institute, as, for example, leave to travel or to incur expense, and the like, let

them answer with humility and firmness, that these things are not allowed, as being far removed from the spirit by which the Sisters of Charity of the B. V. M. should be animated.

42. Finally, let all hold their rules in great esteem, and let them be persuaded that they are the means by which Almighty God in His mercy and goodness wishes them to arrive at the highest perfection, and lead many other souls to Heaven; and should anything seem hard, let them remember that "the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." To observe them more easily, let all recall them to memory once a month, by reading or hearing them read.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE SPECIAL ACTS OF PIETY AND RELIGION
TO BE PERFORMED DAILY AND WEEKLY.

1. Every day, in summer, they shall rise at half past four, and in winter at five o'clock. After twenty minutes they shall all assemble in the chapel and there pray to God, offering Him the actions of the day, and let them recite the Pater, Ave, Credo, Confiteor, and the Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity. On every second day they shall recite the Litanies; all these are followed by meditation or mental prayer for half an hour; then let them be present at Mass.

2. On communion days they shall make their thanksgiving for not less than twenty-five

minutes; after which they breakfast, and then they must immediately go to work.

3. Let them make an examination of conscience for ten minutes before dinner, during which there shall be spiritual reading. Let grace be said before and after dinner, and then let them visit the Blessed Sacrament and say the Angelus.

4. After this, let them have recreation for one hour, and at a given signal let all religiously observe silence until recreation time after supper.

5. In the afternoon, at an appointed time, they shall make another visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and recite the beads. In the evening after supper, there shall be recreation, and then spiritual reading for half an hour.

6. After this they shall recite the Pater, Ave, Credo, Confiteor, and the Act of Consecration to St. Joseph, and the seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Let them make an examination of conscience for ten minutes and the points for the next day's meditation having been read, they shall silently retire to rest.

7. On Sundays and feast days they shall recite in a distinct voice the Little Office of the B. V. M. in their chapel or oratory.

8. They shall approach the Holy Table on those days and with that intention specified in the Catalogue of Communions.

9. When any of the Sisters die they shall offer to God for the repose of her soul the first three communions which they receive, and nine Rosaries, which they shall recite after her death. And it is the Superior's duty to see

that one High Mass be sung, and three Low Masses be said at the Mother house, and one Mass in each of the other houses.

10. Let all be present at the chapter of faults on Friday, and at the instructions which are to be given on Sundays.

11. Once a week, on Friday, or on the day most convenient, the Superior shall call the Sisters together for the chapter of faults. All being arranged in order, let them recite "Veni Creator" with the prayer, "O God, who instructest the hearts of the faithful," etc. Then let some one read a part of the constitutions; after which, each one kneeling, shall accuse herself and be accused of her faults, ask pardon and humbly receive the reprimands or penances which the Superior shall enjoin.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ELECTION OF SUPERIORS.

1. St. Joseph's Convent, in the County and Diocese of Dubuque, will continue to be the Mother house and Novitiate of the whole community; neither can be removed therefrom without the permission of the Bishop of Dubuque; and no foundation can be made without the permission of the Mother Superior, nor without the previous petition, or at least the full consent of the Bishop of the place in which it may seem advisable to establish new houses.

2. The congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the B. V. M. shall be governed by a Sister who shall bear the title of Mother during the time of her office.

3. The office of Superior General, or Mother, of the four consultors and of the Superiors of the different houses of the congregation lasts for three years only. The Mother, however, and the four consultors can be elected for another term of three years immediately following, if it should seem expedient. And the local Superiors, some or all, if advisable, can be confirmed in office for another term of three years by the Mother and consultors newly elected.

4. The election should be made, not by the convocation of a chapter, but by ballot in the following manner:

5. A month before her three years of office expires, the Mother should notify the Bishop of Dubuque; and at the same time, she should acquaint, by suitable letters, the Superiors of the different houses, of the renewal and election of Superiors, that they may prepare all things for it, and pray to God that a worthy choice may be made. Then let her advise with her Sister consultors concerning the Sisters to be proposed as candidates; she can invite also to this council other Sisters of approved wisdom and experience, especially any who may have held the office of Superior General before. The Sisters concerning whose election the council is to be held, should never be admitted to it. After these arrangements, let her write, in appropriate letters, the names of three

Sisters, one of whom may be chosen to the office of Mother; and also the names of six other Sisters, four of whom may be chosen to the office of Consultors. Any of the foresaid three Sisters can furthermore be elected to this office; nor does anything hinder other Sisters not named in these letters, from being chosen to the office of Mother or Consultors. Let her send these letters to the Superiors of the different houses; and let these write secretly in a list the name of the Sister whom they select for the office of Mother, and likewise the names of the Sisters for the office of Consultors; afterwards let them seal it. If there should be in a house more than three Sisters five years professed (for they have not a vote before that time), let the local Superior call them in chapter, and make known to them the names of the Sisters proposed as above, and let her tell them that they may select these or others. She shall merely preside, since she must give her vote independently of this local chapter; and she shall appoint two tellers to collect the votes given by ballot in an enclosed list, or secretly communicated to them orally by any unable to write. Then let the votes be counted publicly and in a clear voice, by the tellers, and afterwards let the names of those who received votes be published, but in no way should the names of these electing be made known, nor should the votes of those who are absent be supplied. Then let the lists be burned, and let the local Superior send the result of the voting, written and sealed, together with her own vote, to the Bishop of

Dubuque, who, with the two persons selected by him, after having collected all the lists, shall secretly receive or hear the votes; and that Sister shall be considered elected who will have received the greater part of the legitimate votes, although the excess above half the number be only one or half a vote, according to the general terms of law. If, however, no Sister shall have obtained more than half the votes, the half will suffice, provided that a difficulty do not arise from the fact that another Sister has received the other half. Now, should such a difficulty arise, or should the number of any Sister's votes not reach the half, then let the Bishop refer the matter to the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, to which it shall belong to provide in the Lord.

6. To be eligible as Superior General, a Sister ought to be forty years of age, and eight years professed, but if one cannot be found with these and the other necessary qualities, let her be at least thirty-five years of age and five years professed.

7. The Consultors to be eligible should have held for three years the office of local Superior in some house of the congregation.

8. The Bishop shall declare the name of the Mother elect, likewise the names of the four Sister Consultors elect, and if no grave defect occur in the act of election, he will confirm it. Then the Mother elect, together with the four Consultors assembled shall, by secret ballot, elect anew, or confirm the Superiors of the different houses and the Sister Assistant. Af-

terwards the Mother and the Consultors shall elect, not by ballot, but orally, the Sister Visitor, the Mistress of Novices, the Procurator, and the Directress of Schools. The other offices can be distributed by the Superiors of the different houses.

9. A house of the Congregation shall always be immediately subject to the Bishop of the Diocese in which it is situated.

10. If the Mother Superior should die during the time of her office, the first Sister Consultor shall succeed her and take her place during the remainder of the three years.

11. But if the Mother Superior should become unfit to discharge the duties of her office by reason of grave defects of body or mind, the Sister Assistant, after having seriously, as is becoming, considered the matter before God, can of her own authority assemble the four Consultors and, after consultation, lay the whole case before the Bishop, who, in his prudence and justice may suspend the Superior General from the administration of her office, and refer the case to the S. Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith. In the mean time, the Sister Assistant, or one of the Consultors designated by the Bishop, shall take the place of the Mother Superior. If the Sister Assistant should refuse to call the council, or, in accordance with the plurality of votes, to refer the matter to the Bishop, then the Consultors can do both, if three of them judge it necessary in the Lord.

12. If the suspension or deposition of the Superior General be approved of by the S.

Congregation, then, according to its decision of the case, they shall proceed to a new election, either immediately or at the end of the three years' term.

13. But if any of the Superiors of houses should act improperly, or become unfit for office, she shall be removed therefrom by the Superior General, with the consent of the four Consultors, expressed by secret ballot.

CHAPTER V.

ON PARTICULAR OFFICES.

SECTION I.

On the Mother Superior.

1. Let the Mother Superior, mindful that authority amongst religious brings with it duty and responsibility rather than honor, be persuaded how great and manifold are the obligations imposed upon her by her office. Hence let her strenuously labor, that the Sisters may progress in solid virtue.

2. Before any one is admitted into our congregation, the Mother should use every care to discover whether the person who demands admission possess the requisite qualities.

3. It is the duty of the Mother Superior to preserve all accounts, letters, contracts and other documents, which should be registered in a book, so that they may be easily found, if required; and these things must be kept in a safe, with three keys, one of which should remain in her own possession, the second in

that of the Assistant, and the third in that of the Procurator.

4. In the same safe should be kept all the money and valuables of the house.

5. It belongs to the Mother to see that all the Sisters, Superiors as well as inferiors, make use of the same dress and furniture; and she shall never allow any change in this regard.

SECTION II.

On the Sister Assistant.

1. The Assistant should be mindful that it belongs to her to help the Mother in all her duties; moreover, she shall act as Superior of the Community in the house in which the Mother resides, and shall provide for everything.

2. It belongs to the Assistant to see that all the rules be most carefully observed in the Mother House, and therefore she shall examine diligently whether all perform their duty faithfully and well.

3. That this may be done more accurately and easily, let her arrange every morning what is to be done by each and every one, so as to inform them in due time.

4. Once a month she shall inspect the whole house, and every single room, that she may better know what is to be corrected, and whether anything be needed.

5. If any one be sick, she shall, with the greatest solicitude and charity, provide what is necessary, as well for the body as for the soul.

SECTION III.

On Local Superiors.

1. The Superior of a house should thoroughly understand that the observance of the rules depends upon her, and therefore, she should take the utmost care that they are observed.

2. Although excessive severity and harshness do harm, yet, too much indulgence has the same effect; therefore, the Superior should govern with a certain maternal kindness, and with due moderation.

3. Let her understand that she cannot grant leave to any Sister to travel for more than a day, and she must require of her to return on the same day; nor can she allow any one to receive valuable donations; to make use of extraordinary remedies; to lodge or take meals in the houses of strangers.

4. Although she has power, according to the direction and counsel of the spiritual Father, to allow the Sisters to receive Holy Communion, or to forbid it, yet, since this denial is rather hard, she should not refuse such permission but for very grave reasons, and with the consent of the spiritual Father.

5. Let her take special care that none of the Sisters acquire the habit of indulging in long conversations with worldly-minded and young persons, as this is very much opposed to the religious spirit.

6. And though at all times she should treat inferiors with great charity and kindness, yet, when any Sister is sick, she should provide for

her with greater care, as for a beloved daughter of the same Heavenly Father, whatsoever may seem necessary or useful.

7. In those of our houses to which schools are attached, no arrangement or change shall be made without her consent; for this reason let her have the same care of the school as the Sister who has the immediate charge thereof.

8. When the Sister Visitor shall come to a house, let the Superior inform her of all that is done in the house, or of anything that is necessary for it, with simplicity and religious modesty; and let her consult the Visitor as to what is to be done in the future.

9. One month, at least, before the time of her office expires, the Superior must let the Mother know, that she may provide whatever may seem best in our Lord. In the mean time, let the Superior fulfill her office very carefully, and if she should leave the house, she shall not take anything with her, more than the other Sisters, without leave of the Superior appointed by the Mother.

SECTION IV.

On the Visitor.

1. Our houses should be visited in order that the religious spirit should be renewed in them, and that any obstacles or difficulties which may exist, be removed; therefore, that these visitations may be productive of greater fruit, it is necessary that both the Visitor and the Sisters visited should be animated with the true spirit of religion and humility; to obtain this, the

Visitor should see that the hymn "Come, O Holy Ghost," be recited when she begins the visitation of the house.

2. And let her first care be to inquire diligently concerning the spirit of fervor and religion by which the Sisters should be animated; and should they be found wanting in anything, let her correct the defect with maternal kindness and authority, encouraging them to make greater progress in the way of perfection.

3. She shall visit each one of the Sisters, and inquire into the practice of her spiritual exercises, and the duties of her office; should any difficulties or aversions, or anything else have occurred in the Community, she must investigate the cause thereof, and carefully endeavor to remove all obstacles.

4. The Visitor should be endowed with great prudence and discretion, and she must keep secret whatever has been communicated to her by the Sisters.

5. The children of our schools must be examined with the same care, that she may discover whether they are thoroughly instructed in whatever belongs properly to them, especially in the principles of our religion.

6. Whatever belongs to the house must be examined by her—clothing, furniture, etc. She must, moreover, examine carefully the book of accounts, that she may fully understand the state of the house.

7. The Visitor must have two books at hand, in one of which she shall write down whatever relates to the schools; in the other, whatever else relates to the house so visited. And, at

her return, she should give an exact account of everything to the Mother.

8. The traveling expenses must be paid by the Sisters of the house which she visited.

9. When the Bishop visits a house it will be the duty of all the members to make known to him any negligence in the observance of the rules, or any departure from the spirit of the Institute they may have noticed, or, whatever else they may conscientiously deem advisable to communicate; and the book of receipts and expenses must be laid open to his inspection.

SECTION V.

On the Secretary.

1. The Secretary should be convinced that her office is of great importance, and therefore, she should fulfill it with the greatest diligence, and, at the same time, observe all the Constitutions and Rules, and thus endeavor to give good example to the rest.

2. It will be her duty to transcribe all letters of importance, which either the Mother herself, or some other Sister appointed for that purpose, may have written, also, to inscribe in a register the names of the Sisters who have died; and to make a memorandum of all matters and events of importance to the community.

3. To do this the more easily, let her have a diary.

4. Let it be her study that her letters be very clear, and breathe the spirit of piety. Besides, she shall not presume to write or com-

mand anything without the approval of the Mother Superior.

SECTION VI.

On the Procurator.

1. It belongs to the Procurator to help our Community in temporal matters, and, therefore, let her diligently attend to these, so that the Mother may, with greater liberty, apply herself to spiritual things, and to the government of the house. She shall, however, undertake no business without first consulting the Mother.

2. Let her beware lest the love of temporal things be a hindrance to her religious spirit, and for that reason let her always have in view God, and the good of the Community.

3. It is her duty to keep account of the receipts and expenses, and note them in a book, so that, at stated times, when it will appear necessary, it can be seen what the pecuniary condition of the house is.

4. She must have a list on which she must note whatever provisions and supplies are needed for the use of the Community, and what is to be bought, and when; so that nothing may ever be wanting or be spoiled.

5. Every three months she must give to the Mother and her Consultors an exact account of all expenses and receipts since the last account.

6. Should it be impossible for her to attend to all the buying, let her have a Sister to help her, and she must put to that Sister's name all the expenses made by the same.

7. Whatever is brought to the house by postulants must be registered in a book, and signed by them, and none of these things must be used until the postulants shall have taken the Vows.

SECTION VII.

On the Sister Consultors.

1. It is the duty of the Consultors to help the Mother in everything that belongs to the government of our Congregation; and, therefore, let each Consultor endeavor to understand thoroughly our Constitutions and the spirit of our Congregation, that her advice may always be given according to this same spirit.

2. Should they notice anything that is at variance with our manner of living, let them make it known to the Mother, that the defect may be corrected. Let them be mindful, however, not to make observations of this kind without due deliberation, lest they seem to act through passion.

3. Let them ever keep in view the good of our Congregation, especially when any one asks admission; let them examine whether she be fit or not.

4. When called upon to consult together, especially concerning matters of importance, let them first pray; for thus they shall be better enabled to advise what seems best in our Lord, and in accordance with the spirit of our vocation.

SECTION VIII.

On the Mistress of Novices.

1. It is the duty of the Mistress of Novices

to form the Novices according to the proper spirit of our Institute, and to ground them in solid virtue, that they may be fit instruments in the hands of God to promote His glory.

2. To obtain this end let her explain to them, and carefully instruct them in all the Constitutions, with the spirit, of which they should be animated.

3. Let her take care that the rule of the Constitutions which says,—“let no point of perfection be omitted,” be diligently observed; for thus, being led by the love of perfection, they will be animated with the spirit which is peculiar to our Institute.

4. Let her carefully endeavor to understand, as well the natural dispositions as the habits and talents of each one, that she may be better able to direct them.

5. Let her most carefully avoid anything like impatience or excessive warmth, a thing very much opposed to the direction of souls; but, on the contrary, let her always show herself affable and kind in all things.

6. As it is plain to all how greatly mental prayer helps to obtain perfection, she should carefully teach them the method of meditation, that, being animated with the spirit of prayer, they may the more easily learn to live united to God.

7. Should any of the Novices be tempted, she must proceed with great charity and prudence, by speaking kindly, by encouraging her, and by suggesting the proper remedies, especially prayer.

8. Finally, let her be mindful that the good

of the whole Congregation and the spirit which ought to exist in it, greatly depend on her; and, therefore, it is most necessary that the Mistress of Novices fulfill her office with the greatest diligence.

SECTION IX.

On the Directress of the Schools.

1. It belongs to this Sister to direct, with prudence in the Lord, whatever appertains to the schools; to help the Sisters in teaching, and to endeavor strenuously, that the children sent to our schools make continual progress, both in virtue and learning.

2. The more easily to do this, she should earnestly strive to give good example, as well to the Sisters as to the children.

3. She must be careful lest the Sisters employed in teaching be burdened with too much labor, which would be an obstacle to their spiritual exercises, as well as to their health of body.

4. She should see that all the Sisters make use of those books, and of that manner of teaching, which are approved by our Institute.

5. Let her take the greatest care that the children never read any book or anything else, in the least contrary to virtue or good morals.

6. At stated times she should give notes of approbation to the children, and when necessity or utility requires it, she should visit their parents, having obtained permission from the Superior, and with a companion appointed for her; she must appoint the time of examination, and of distribution of premiums, and carefully

examine whatever is to be spoken in public; and nothing shall be done in the schools without her approbation.

7. If any girl wish to enter our schools, she must be examined by the Directress, who will send her to the class for which she is judged to be fit.

8. Every month let her call together the teachers to speak about the schools, whether everything has succeeded, and whether there is anything to be corrected or changed; and let her also see that the Sisters are each day better instructed in the duty of teaching.

SECTION X.

On the Sisters Who Teach in the Schools.

1. Those who are sent to take charge of a school, should, as soon as they arrive at the parish or mission, go to the Rector, ask and receive his blessing, and during the whole time that they are in that place, they must give him respect and obedience, provided that nothing contrary to the rule be enjoined.

2. As the office of instructing little girls belongs especially to our vocation, let all esteem it very highly, and prepare themselves for it by prayer and study, that thus they may become useful to the young.

3. Let them always remember that example is better than words; therefore, they must not only teach the girls to love God, but they themselves should, by their religious life and their holy manner of acting, sweetly draw the girls to perfection.

4. Let it be their principal care to so form

the hearts of the girls to virtue, that they may always detest sin.

5. They must carefully prepare the lessons and recitations to be taught in the schools, for thus they will be able to explain them more clearly and with greater fruit.

6. They shall not apply themselves to any study without the consent of the presiding Sister.

7. Should it happen that two Sisters teach in the one room at the same time, they must take care not to speak too loudly, lest they cause confusion to the girls.

8. They shall exact perfect order in the schools, and neglect nothing that may seem necessary for or useful to the advancement of the girls; and, finally, they must religiously obey the Directress.

SECTION XI.

On the Sacristan.

1. In our houses a Sister shall be appointed who must take care of everything that belongs to divine worship. In the morning she shall open, and at night, lock the chapel; ring the bell at the time appointed for spiritual exercises, ornament the Altar according to the feasts, and keep the Altar linen very clean.

2. She should endeavor to have everything for Mass, or any other divine service, prepared in due time.

3. The most strict silence should be observed both in the chapel and in the sacristy, and this rule must be kept by all, even by the Superior.

4. Let her have everything in the sacristy

and chapel neatly arranged, and be very attentive never to allow the light before the Blessed Sacrament to be extinguished, or holy water to be wanting.

SECTION XII.

On the Infirmarian.

1. Although all the Sisters should acquit themselves of their respective charges with diligence and care, yet, the Sister Infirmarian must exercise the greatest charity towards the sick; and, therefore, let her show, in the performance of her duties, great mildness and patience, care and unceasing watchfulness, and also tender compassion.

2. When any Sister is sick, let the Infirmarian inquire of the Superior whether the physician who usually visits the house, or another, is to be called in.

3. She should always accompany the physician in his visit to the sick Sisters, so as to receive his orders and diligently fulfill them.

4. She shall always be most attentive to the wants of the sick, and cheerfully render them any service, even the lowest.

5. The beds of the sick shall be made, at least, once a day, and the linen changed as often as is necessary; and the soiled linen must never be left in the Infirmary.

6. When any of the Sisters come to the Infirmary to visit the sick, she must see that they do not speak in a loud tone, or remain too long.

7. The Infirmarian shall also carefully see

that the convalescent do not disturb the sick in any way.

8. If it be necessary to watch with a sick Sister, or should the Infirmarian be in need of help, or of anything else, she shall make it known to the Superior, that the latter may provide.

9. Every day she shall recite, for the sick, the morning and evening prayers, and, from time to time, read for them something short and pious, by which the sick may be entertained, and reap some fruit for their advancement in spirit.

10. When the disease grows worse, let her tell the Superior, who shall more particularly recommend the sick Sister to the prayers of the whole Community; and should there be danger of death, let her see that as many of the Sisters as can do so, be present to encourage and assist, by their prayers, the dying Sister.

SECTION XIII.

On the Portress.

1. Let the Portress take care that the door be always closed, and she shall give the keys to no one, without leave of the Superior. At night, after having locked all the doors, she must place the keys in the Superior's room, and, if it be necessary to open the door at night, she must have a companion appointed by the Superior.

2. Should any strangers come to the house they must be led into the parlor; the Portress shall immediately inform the Superior; and

she shall not call any of the Sisters, or deliver any letters or messages without leave of the Superior.

3. When the Confessor, physician, or any other officer comes to the house to perform what appertains to his office, he must be conducted to the parlor, where he shall wait for the Superior or some other Sister to show him the place of duty.

4. Should any one come to the house to see the Portress, she must inform the Superior, who shall appoint another Sister to perform the office of Portress in the meantime.

5. At the first tap of the bell let the Portress go promptly to open the door, as if she were going to open it for our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

SECTION XIV.

On the Postulants.

1. No one shall be admitted into our Congregation who has not completed her twelfth year; and since the consent by ballot, of the Mother and of the Sisters of the Novitiate is required for this admission, they shall, with great prudence and discretion, examine the postulant as to the requisite qualities, and especially about the motives which have induced her to ask admission into religion.

2. No one is to be admitted unless she enjoys good health and strength, is of good disposition, and has a good moral standing, from which we can prudently judge that the postulant is fit to undergo the duties of our calling. Therefore, any one who seems much inclined

to pride, or to the vanities of the world, or given to inconstancy, should not be admitted.

3. No one who is in debt, or who is needed for the support of her parents, shall be admitted.

4. Those who are admitted must wear their secular dress during the time of probation; they must, however, be present at all the exercises of the Community, excepting the chapter of faults.

5. After they shall have been sufficiently tried and found to be fit, they shall be allowed to take the religious habit; if they are not found suitable, they should be sent from the house as soon as possible.

6. Before taking the religious habit they must enter on a retreat for some days, the better to begin their new life for God.

7. As soon as they shall have received the habit, they must sign the Act of Reception in a book, which must also be done by the Priest who performed the ceremony, by the Superior, and by two Sisters.

SECTION XV.

On Novices.

1. The Novices before they are allowed to take their vows, must spend at least two years of novitiate, after they have taken the religious habit; and this time may be prolonged for grave reasons, but never shortened.

2. While they are in the novitiate they must live apart from the other Sisters, and should not be with them except in the chapel and refectory.

3. When they shall have finished the time of the novitiate, completed their sixteenth year, and shown themselves fit to be admitted to profession, before taking the vows, they should make a retreat, the better to prepare themselves to make to God the sacrifice of their lives.

4. They are not to be admitted to profession without the approbation of the Mistress of Novices; and they must have the private votes of the majority of the Sisters of that house, who have already taken the vows; then the Mother Superior General can admit them, in the presence of the Bishop, or of a priest appointed by him, to the profession of the three simple vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, for three years, in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the B. V. M.

5. As soon as they have taken their vows, the new Sisters shall sign the act in a book, which is also done by the Priest who has received them, by the Superior, and by two witnesses.

SECTION XVI.

On Dismissal.

1. As in the human body, so in a religious community, it is sometimes necessary to cut off a member, whereby the others may be secure; hence it is very important to point out the rules to be observed in such a case; and, first of all, the causes which lead to dismissal are—

First—A very irregular way of living, so as to give scandal to others, especially after frequent admonitions.

Second—A serious and hidden obstacle not manifested at the time of entering.

Third—Deliberate and grievous insubordination or disobedience.

Fourth—A very serious fault against the Vow of Poverty, by which the house would be exposed to incur great expenses.

Fifth—A grievous fault against the Vow of Chastity.

Sixth—Giving just reasons for displeasure, or offering an insult to any stranger, and not being willing to repair the injury.

2. The Superior General shall propose the matter of dismissal to the Consultors in council, and if it be sanctioned by secret vote, let that resolution be subjected for approbation to the Bishop, who, should he approve of it, will, in the act of dismissal, release the Sister from her temporary Vows.

3. Those who leave our Congregation, of their own accord, or are dismissed from it, shall receive no remuneration for all they have done in the house; but all they brought with them from the world shall be returned, after deducting all expenses for board and clothing.

SECTION XVII.

On the Religious Dress.

The dress of the Sisters of Charity of the B. V. M. shall show forth humility and modesty; therefore, let the custom prevailing in the year 1877 as to the material and make of the dress to be worn, be retained, both in the house and outside it (due allowance being made for the winter and summer seasons).

ADMONITION.

Let them know, in fine, that, with the exception of the vows, these constitutions, in their ordinances concerning the observance of the vows, oblige under pain of venial sin only; the commands of Superiors do not bind under pain of grievous sin, unless they be formal precepts, in virtue of Holy Obedience, which the Superior should impose rarely, and for grave reasons; but as to the offices in detail, and all other regulations, they do not bind under pain of sin, but under a penalty imposed, or to be imposed by a Superior, unless they have acted in contempt of rule or unless the contrary of what is prescribed be, of its own nature or from circumstances, a sin.

FORMULA OF THE VOWS.

Almighty and Eternal God, prostrate at the feet of Thy Divine Majesty, and impelled by the desire of consecrating myself entirely to Thee, in presence of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, and the whole heavenly court, I, Mary, vow to Thee, Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, for three years, in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, according to its Constitutions. O Father of Mercies, let this offering of my heart be acceptable to Thee; receive me into the arms of Thy Infinite Goodness, and grant me the grace to so fulfill these things which my Vows require of me, that one day I may see Thee, praise Thee, and love Thee forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DECRETUM.

Cum Institutum et constitutiones Sororum Charitatis B Mariae Virginis, quarum princeps domus in dioecesi Dubuquensi in Foederatis Americae Septentrionalis Statibus extat, Decreto hujus S Congregationis diei 15 Septembris 1877 ad Sexennium pro experimento approbatæ fuerint. Sorores præfati Instituti mense Septembris anni 1883 labente experimenti constituto tempore huic Sacrae Congregationi supplicem porrexerunt libellum ut earum regulæ et constitutiones in perpetuum approbarentur. Eminentissimi autem Patres S Consilio Christiano Nomine propagando præpositi cum ex exhibitis documentis perspexerint Sorores ipsas omni studio tum ad propriam perfectionem comparandam, tum ad salutem proximorum curandam incumbere, necnon zelo ac studio adlaborare puellarum piæ religiosæque institutioni, attentis præsertim litteris commendatis Antistitum locorum, SSmo supplicandum censuerunt ut præfatum Institutum uti Congregationem votorum simplicium sub regimine Moderatricis Generalis, salva Ordinariorum jurisdictione ad præscriptum Sacrorum Canonum et Apostolicarum Constitutionum, necnon ejusdem Regulas seu Constitutiones, adjectis etiam mutationibus in adnexo folio propositis in perpetuum approbare dignaretur.

DECREE.

Whereas, The Institute and Constitutions of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose Mother house is situated in the Diocese of Dubuque, in the United States of North America, were approved of by a decree of this Sacred Congregation on the 15th day of September, 1877, on trial for six years; the Sisters of the aforesaid Institute, in the month of September, 1883, as the time of trial was about to expire, sent a respectful petition to this Sacred Congregation, that their Rules and Constitutions may be approved without limit of time, And

Whereas, Their Eminences, the Fathers presiding over the Sacred Congregation for the propagation of the Christian Name, having understood from the documents presented to them, that these Sisters apply themselves with the utmost earnestness as well to secure their own perfection as to promote the welfare of their neighbor, and furthermore that they labor with zeal and diligence for the pious and religious training of girls; and having had regard in an especial manner to the commendatory letters of their local Bishops, resolved to supplicate that His Holiness would be pleased to approve forever the aforesaid Institute as a congregation having simple vows under the government of a Moderator

Decretum S. C. de Prop. Fide diei 25 Aprilis 1885.

“Mutationes ut supra.” (in dicto Decreto).

Mutationes regulis seu constitutionibus Sororum Charitatis B. Mariae Virginis inserendae, sequentes approbatae fuerunt.

I. Mutatio Ordinis et numerationis seu accuratior textus dispositio in primo et secundo articulo prout habetur in exemplari typis in ipsa America edito, retentis titulis generalibus duorum capitum Romanae editionis. Cap. I. De Perfectione ad quam Sorores tendere debent seu de interiori spiritu et religiosa perfectione. Cap. II. De disciplina intra et extra domus Instituti servanda, sub quibus recenseri debent alii tituli c. I. de Instituti fine, mediis, votis, aliisque virtutibus et c. II. Constitutiones, seu regulae communes quae maxime ad disciplinam pertinent, erga se, erga alios, erga superiores, erga extraneos etc. prout prostant in Americano exemplari.

II. Admittuntur mutationes quae in ipso Constitutionum textu desiderantur uti habentur in exemplari Americano tribus tamen adjectis modificationibus:

In pag. 14. n. 6. dicatur: Superiorissa eligatur quadraginta annorum aetatis, et octo professionis, vel si his una cum coeteris requisitis non reperiatur, sit saltem aetatis triginta quinque et professionis quinque annorum.

Cap. II. n. 4. p. 7. editionis Americanae verba “consalutari” substituatur “amplexari” et pag. 4. sub fine, verbis ad “majorem humilitatem propriam” addendum est “et ad mutuam correctionem.”

p. 24 n. 6

p. 14 n. 16

p. 10 n. 36

p. 13 n. 9
 III. Approbatur ut vota ab omnibus Sororibus "fixo" die seu festo Assumptionis B. V. M. renoventur.

Concordat cum originali

A. O. Con. Borgia

[L. S.]

Praef. Archivi S. C. de Pr. Fide.

20 Jan. 1908.

Ex Audientia SSmi }

Diei 28 Junii 1885. }

SSmus Dominus Noster
 Leo Divina Providentia P.
 P. XIII, referente me in-
 frascripto Archiepiscopo
 Tyren., S. Congnis de Prop-
 aganda Fide Secretario. R.
 P. D. Joanni Episcopo Du-
 buqueusi necessarias et op-
 portunas facultates benigne
 concedere dignatus est. qui
 bus confirmare valeat in
 perpetuum in officio Super-
 iorissae Generalis Sororum
 a charitate actuaalem ear-
 um Superiorissam Sororem
 Mariam Franciscam Clarke,
 attento unanimi Sororum
 Vocalium praefatae Con-
 gregationis consensu.

Datum Romae ex aed,
 dictae Congnis, die et an-
 no ut supra.

Pro R. P. D. Secretario,
 [L. S.]

Zeplynius Zitelli, Off.
 Gratis quocumquetitulo.

[From an audience of His
 Holiness, given on the
 28th day of June, 1885.]

Our Most Holy Father,
 Leo XIII, by Divine Provi-
 dence, Pope (on the repre-
 sentation of the under-
 signed, Archbishop of
 Tyre, Secretary of S.
 Congregation of the Prop-
 agation of the Faith) tak-
 ing into account the unan-
 imous wish of the pro-
 fessed Sisters of Charity
 of the B. V. M., gracious-
 ly deigned to grant to Rt.
 Rev. John Hennessy, Bish-
 op of Dubuque, necessary
 and suitable faculties, by
 which he is empowered to
 confirm for life in the of-
 fice of Superior General,
 Sister Mary Frances Clarke,
 their present Superior.

Given at Rome, from
 the office of the above
 named Congregation, on
 the above date.

For the Most Rev. Sec'y,
 [L. S.]

Zeplynius Zitelli Off.

APPENDIX

FORMULA OF RENOVATION OF VOWS.

Almighty and Eternal God, prostrate at the feet of Thy Divine Majesty, and impelled by the desire of consecrating myself entirely to Thee, in presence of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, and the whole heavenly court, I, Mary, reiterate this day the Vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, which I have made to Thee, in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, according to its Constitutions. O Father of Mercies, let this offering of my heart be acceptable to Thee; receive me into the arms of Thy Infinite Goodness, and grant me the grace to so fulfill these things which my Vows require of me, that one day I may see Thee, praise Thee, and love Thee forever, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THE RELIGIOUS DRESS

OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

1. The habit shall be of black merino, made plain, one yard and three-quarters wide, and should not touch the ground.

The sleeves, which should be twelve inches wide, must extend to the end of the fingers.

The cape, to which a small linen collar must be fastened, should extend two inches and a half below the cincture which confines the waist.

The shoes must be of plain black leather.

The head-dress must be a small muslin cap and hood, a black veil, and a band of muslin to encircle the neck.

A crucifix of brass, on black wood, attached to a rosary, must be suspended from the cincture on the left side.

The outdoor dress consists of a bonnet of black cambric muslin, a black veil, and a shawl of black merino or a cloak of material like the habit.

INDULGENCES

SPECIAL TO THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

From His Holiness, Pope Pius IX, by a Rescript dated March 2, 1847, a Plenary Indulgence once a week on the usual conditions, namely, of receiving the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist, and praying for the intentions of the Holy Father.

From His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII, by a Rescript dated October 27, 1892, to all the members of our Congregation and their relatives to the third degree, the Apostolic Benediction and a Plenary Indulgence at the hour of death.

From His Holiness, Pope Pius X, by a Rescript dated July 28, 1908, a Plenary Indulgence in perpetuum, on the following days, to be gained by the fulfilment of the usual conditions:

Day of Reception of the Religious Habit;
 Day of Profession; Day of Renewal of the
 Vows; at the end of the Annual Retreat; on
 the feasts of the Immaculate Conception of the
 Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Ascension of
 Our Lord.

CATALOGUE

OF COMMUNION DAYS OF THE CONGREGATION,
 WITH THE INTENTIONS.

All Sundays in the year, for the Congregation.
 First Friday of every month, for Rev. Father
 Donaghoe and deceased Sisters.

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

Holy Thursday, for Paschal Communion.

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

Feast of the local Patron, for the local Mission.

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

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

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

Jan. 29, St. Francis de Sales, for the local Con-
 fessor.

Feb. 2, Purification of the B. V. M., for Bene-
 factors.

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

March 25, Annunciation B. V. M., for the Con-
 gregation. Thanksgiving.

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

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

- Ascension Thursday, for the souls in Purgatory.
 Corpus Christi, for all Bishops, Priests and Religious.
- Feast of the Sacred Heart, for the Congregation. Reparation.
- June 24, St. John the Baptist, for the Superiors of the Congregation.
- June 29, St. Peter and St. Paul, for the Pope.
- July 2, Visitation B. V. M., for deceased Parents and Relatives.
- July 16, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, for Missions, Sisters and Children.
- July 19, St. Vincent of Paul, for the Congregation.
- July 31, St. Ignatius, for the conversion of Sinners.
- Aug. 15, Assumption B. V. M., for all in their last agony.
- Sept. 8, Nativity B. V. M., for the Sisters' private intention.
- Sept. 24, Our Lady of Mercy, for all suffering persecution.
- Sept. 29, St. Michael, for Rev. Father Donaghoe.
- Oct. 2, Guardian Angels, for the Congregation.
- Oct. 4, St. Francis Assisium, for Mother.
- Oct. 15, St. Teresa, for the Sisters' private intention.
- Nov. 1, All Saints, for Rev. Father Donaghoe.
- Nov. 2, All Souls, for all the souls of the faithful departed.
- Nov. 21, Presentation B. V. M., for the Congregation.
- Dec. 8, Immaculate Conception, for our Holy Father the Pope.

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

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

One Mass each month for Rev. Father Donaghoe and deceased Sisters.

One Mass each month for the souls in Purgatory.

DECREE

OF THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF BISHOPS AND
REGULARS.

(17 Dec., 1890.)

Just as it is the fate of human things, how praiseworthy and holy soever they may be in themselves, even so it is 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 law-makers had in view; nay, they sometimes even produce quite a contrary result.

Much it is 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 and 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 pre-

scriptions of the Sacred Canons, it was ordered that sacramental Confession in all such communities 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 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 peculiar and 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 members and fostering in communities the union growing out of peace and concord, have not unfrequently resulted in imperilling the salvation of souls, in deeply disturbing consciences, and, moreover, in the disturbance of exterior peace, as it 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 towards 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 in 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. Likewise, he declares whatsoever usages and customs in this matter, even such as are from time out of mind, to be null and void and to be abolished.

II. He, moreover, forbids absolutely 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 manifestations 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 then 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 Curæ*, 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 dates 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.

VII. 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 the 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 into the vernacular, shall be inserted in the Constitutions of the said pious Institutes, and that at least once in a 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 Callinicum,
Secretary.

DISPENSATION.

A dispensation has been received, and we are authorized to teach boys, as explained in our Circular.

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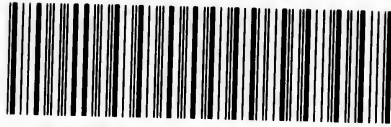
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Sisters of Charity of the
Blessed Virgin Mary

Constitutions of the Sisters
of Charity of the Blessed



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