

The Original Constitutions of



St. Gaspar Bertoni

The Founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata

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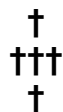
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COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW

1-8

1. [The Objective of this Community is to be] Apostolic Missionaries for the service of Bishops.
2. The Manner of Achieving this Goal: [the Apostolic Missionaries are] *to work under the direction of, and dependent on the Ordinaries of those places in which the Missions may be offered. The Missionaries are to be totally submissive to these Bishops, concerning all that pertains to the exercise of their Apostolic Endeavor. The Missionaries are to receive their permission beforehand from them, along with the necessary faculties, always observing the guidelines set down by these Ordinaries concerning the places and the time in the exercise of their apostolate.* [From **the Decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation**, December 20, 1817].
3. With total gratuity, [the Apostolic Missionaries will] serve God and the Church.
4. [The Missionaries are to remain] immune from all dignities, residences, benefices, and the perpetual and particular care of souls and nuns.
5. [The Missionaries are] to be ready to go anywhere in the diocese and the world.
6. The Means [to be employed]:
 The spiritual perfection of each one;
 Perfection in ecclesiastical doctrines;
 Common Life;
 The perpetual exercise of obedience, chastity and poverty
 The program of living regarding food, clothing and lodging, will be in harmony with the more observant clergy among whom the Missionaries live, for the edification of the faithful, both regarding Christian parsimony and evangelical poverty.
7. The promotion from one Grade to another differs according to the qualities of those received. For some, whose talent and piety are equal to the task, they are to be promoted to the perfect priestly task, assuming the Apostolic Mission. Others, however, whose strength and faculties of mind and body do suffice, are to be promoted to the perfect service and assistance of the Missionaries.
8. The Program of Government is as follows, that there be one Superior for life over all, whom the Sodality will elect for itself. Then, every individual house is to have its own Director whom the Superior of the entire Sodality will name for a three-year term, or confirm him for a second similar term. To this Director will be added assistants and administrators, as the Economus, the Procurator, and two Masters - one for spiritual matters, and the other to manage the external conducting of the community.



FIRST PART**THOSE MATTERS WHICH PRECEDE ADMISSION****9-26****Chapter I****Those to be admitted, or received**

9. In order that a candidate be received, he should have reached the age of 14, or that of puberty.
10. There are, however, some impediments that are natural, with which no one is admitted, such as the defect of good judgment and intellect.
11. Likewise, the state of a marriage that has been consummated is an impediment to this reception.
12. It is similarly an impediment for anyone who has been vested in the habit of any approved religious community whatsoever, whether within any such community, or outside of it.
13. Those who are responsible for other people's money, or who must render any accounting of funds, and are obliged to respond to any civil, or natural obligation, in similar manner, are impeded from entering.
14. If there are defects for family reasons, or for those lacking a good reputation.
15. A man is rendered irregular, especially because of homicide, mutilation, and also for heresy and schism, as well as anyone under other similar canonical penalties. This also holds true for one who is already under a major excommunication, or accused of being a notorious striker of a Cleric.
16. One who is born of a Jewish father is impeded.
17. Any illness, or physical weakness which would render one unable to perform his tasks, or carry out the religious duties, are also impediments for admittance.
18. Candidates manifesting moral defects that only with difficulty are corrected, or those exhibiting obstinacy of will, or dullness of understanding, which are an obstacle to receiving discipline, or learning, are not to be admitted.
19. Ineptitude, or the inability to maintain regular observance, particularly in the area of chastity and obedience, are impediments to being received.

†††**Chapter 2****Those Defects which render a Person less suited for this Community**

20. Such defects for being received are noted in those with a slow capacity for learning, the lack of judgment, or of memory, dullness, in the proper sense, when these are marked.

21. Further defects for entering are found in applicants with a nature that struggles unduly with virtue, or those weighed down with a habit of sins, or who practice indiscreet devotions, or are lacking actually in the proper dispositions.

22. There are also physical defects that render one less suited for entrance: physical weakness, illness, notable deformity, the lack of bodily integrity, or legitimate age, whether because one is too immature, or too advanced in years.

23. There are some defects pertaining to exterior matters: as one who is indebted or who has civil obligations.

24. In all these situations, the community is to proceed with discretion, in order for any person with any of these defects to be admitted. This should not come to be without humbly seeking the counsel of divine wisdom.

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Chapter 3

Characteristics of those who are to be admitted

25. Those who are to serve in temporal matters: in these candidates, it is required that they be content with their Grade; that they who offer themselves in this particular life, be endowed with the proper age, strength of body for those labors that they are to carry out; and that they not be men who find excessive difficulty in understanding. Furthermore, the number of admissions of those dedicated to temporal matters is defined by the need of the work at hand, so that they may not be without commitment.

26. The required characteristics in those who are admitted for the spiritual ministries: a certain capacity for learning, traits of good judgment and a sufficient tenacity of memory; that they be willing to seek for all virtue and spiritual perfection; they are to be peaceful, constant and committed in all that pertains to the divine service. They should be endowed with zeal for the salvation of their neighbors, and furthermore, have an affection for this Congregation.

They should also have reached the proper age, in that they should have already passed their 14th birthday; they need good health; they should be endowed with the strength needed for the work proper to this life; and they should have a good appearance, suited for the edification of their neighbors; it is highly desirable that they also have a graceful manner in dealing with their neighbors, which is so necessary.

A pleasing manner of speech, so necessary for communication with one's neighbors, is desirable. It is not necessary that there be other external gifts of nature: if they are lacking, these are not necessary; if they are present, they should not be overlooked, provided they are joined to the other qualifications.

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SECOND PART**CONCERNING ADMISSION****27-39**

Chapter I
The Manner of Admitting Candidates into the Community

- 27.** In the first place, it is necessary to establish whether whoever is received is fit for the religious life; whether he is called by God; and whether he is suited for our Institute.
- 28.** No one is to be admitted without a two-fold scrutiny:
- one, in which the Institute inquires from others regarding the man to be admitted, and concerning his qualities and whether he is suited for this Institute;
 - the other, in which inquiry is made of the candidate to be admitted regarding any hidden impediments as well as his dispositions, for embracing this kind of life.
- 29.** This first formation is to take place for some longer or shorter period of time in lay clothing, so that the candidates to be received may become known, especially in accord with the Bull of Pope Sixtus V.

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Chapter 2
The Manner of Receiving Candidates into our House

- 30.** When nothing to the contrary appears, but rather there is present every indication of a divine vocation, then the first area of formation is the spiritual life of the candidates. Moreover, this early formation will take place in a house, in which the candidate will be received as a guest according to the ancient custom of the religious orders. For ten or fifteen days, he will reside in a dwelling separate from the common life.
- 31.** During these days, use will be made of three kinds of probation:
- 1st.] the Rules, the Constitutions and the Statutes will be shown to each, through which he might come know all that he is to observe.
 - 2nd.] the candidate is to be exercised in the spiritual activities of meditation and penance. He is to make a general confession, and receive the Eucharist.
 - 3rd.] each will offer an indication of his education and ability, or trade, and also of his good health.
- 32.** Furthermore, the Novitiate will begin in religious garb, in a place, or dwelling separated from the members of the community, under a Master of Novices, and in the traditional discipline and exercise of prescribed activities.

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Chapter 3

The Manner in which the Novice is formed

33. Every six months, the Novice is to read at least the principal legislation of the general and particular law of the Church, pertaining to both the regular and diocesan Clergy. Moreover, the Master of Novices will read and explain to those who are not going to be promoted to the Priesthood all that is the more necessary for conducting their way of life. Hence, the Novice will read the general and particular rules, and decisions already made pertaining to this Institute - or, at least those which are the more useful, that will either be drawn up in a kind of *Compendium*, or which the Master of Novices will explain to those for whom it may be necessary.

34. In like manner, every six months there will be a scrutiny of the Novices so that both their perseverance and also their progress in the virtues and interior discipline might be the more apparent.

35. They will all give their full effort to make the entire course of the Spiritual Exercises.

36. It is fitting that the Novice be assigned to the more humble tasks in the house for a period of time.

37. Each one of the Novices will be exercised in teaching Christian Doctrine to the young and to the unlettered, adapted to their level of learning, in accord with the opportunity presented by the times and places.

With this end in view, each one from the very outset of his entrance into the Novitiate, will commit himself to the learning of Christian Doctrine, unless previously he would have been well instructed in this.

38. Lastly, anyone who would have already offered good example in all these experiments, and after having completed the required studies, had already been initiated into the Priesthood, will be applied for a time to the ministries of preaching and hearing confessions.

39. The locality, or the dwelling where the Novices are formed, as far as possible, should be separated from the community living and the conversation of the rest of the members of the Institute.

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Chapter I The Time after Novitiate

40. Those who are still to apply themselves to the required studies, must first become well versed in the Humanities and in the study of languages for at least two years.

Then, they will learn the philosophical disciplines over a three-year course.

Afterwards, Scholastic Theology will be taught to them for four years.

Lastly, two or three more years are granted to them for the private study of the Fathers and for reviewing the more serious areas of study.

41. Those who entered already endowed with the necessary doctrine, upon having completed their Novitiate, will be perfected in it. They will also be formed in applying this through their ministry toward their neighbor.

42. In this time, through varied and new experiments and testing, each will show himself to be formed, so that his piety, humility and prudence will be evident to all, especially to the Superiors.

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Chapter 2 The Manner of Penance

43. There is no general rule regarding penance other than this one: that all the Confreres will take only from the common food, clothing and all else for use in the religious life, that which will be appointed, or granted by the Superior. All of this will at one and the same time suffice for the exercise of temperance, fairness, decency, poverty as well as fulfilling each one's need.

44. Each one, however, will accept those penances which the Confessor, or the Superior, will impose on him in the Lord. Furthermore, everyone will desire and ask for even greater penances, in so far as his physical strength and reception of grace will dictate. These will be determined and moderated for each.

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Chapter 3

The Divine Office and the Celebration of Masses

45. All the clerics and also lay brothers who have good voices, will learn ecclesiastical music, but not *figured* chant. However, the Deacons and Priests will abstain altogether from such study, so that they might be the more committed to the deepening of their knowledge, and the exercise of the ministry of preaching.

46. When at the end of one's life, a Confrere has received the last Sacraments, all the priests in the house will offer the sacrifice of Mass for him as long as the danger of death lasts. He will be remembered in a Holy Communion, or a third part of the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Following the death of a Confrere, each Priest will apply Mass for the deceased. The rest of the confreres will offer Holy Communion, or an entire Rosary.

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Chapter I Spiritual Development

47. The first means of achieving Spiritual Progress is Prayer.

In addition to the daily, common prayers and those that are obligatory, which are most especially the Divine Office and Mass, to be celebrated by divine grace, attentively and devoutly - whenever possible the following prayers are offered:

Every morning meditation before Mass for one half hour. Then, Spiritual Reading after lunch, for twenty minutes.

The three-fold examination of conscience, namely, in the morning as soon as one awakens; at noon; and before retiring at night.

One should listen to sermons which are publicly delivered in our churches, as well as at home, for the purpose of exciting devotion.

Everyone should make the Spiritual Exercises for eight or ten days each year. Each shall go to Sacramental Confession to the regular Confessor once a week.

The manifestation of one's own conscience is to be made to the Superior, either in Sacramental Confession, or outside it, whenever he sees fit.

The manifestation of the faults of another, or of any of his serious temptations that are known outside of Confession, is to be made out of charity.

48. A further means of Spiritual Progress is the zealous exercise of the following:

Eliminating vices and defects, and developing the contrary virtues;

Increasing and perfecting the infused theological and moral virtues;

Fulfilling the religious virtues, namely obedience, chastity, poverty;

Denying the inclinations of the flesh, of the senses, of self-love, and of this world;

The perfect observance of all the precepts, which are divine and civil, as well as those duties which pertain to the priestly state - and what the religious life adds to these, pertaining to the rule, as well as what flows from all the responsibilities of one's own Institute;

Flight from idleness and the assiduous commitment to all that seems to be a part of the ministry of the Church, to one's religious duties, or to the observance of discipline and to that obedience which is due to Superiors.

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Chapter 2 Progress in Ecclesiastical Doctrines

49. In this religious, clerical Institute, the purpose of which is not only to contemplate, but to hand on to others what has been contemplated, there is required not simply ordinary knowledge, but rather one that is perfect in those matters which pertain to faith and morals. And as a result, it is also necessary that the religious clerics commit themselves in this religious state to the acquiring of the knowledge of this kind.

50. It will be necessary that each confrere be sufficiently instructed so that the minds of others who might be living in darkness may be illumined, or be able to resist encroaching heresies, or give explanation for the faith which is in us, or resolve moral difficulties that might come up, and satisfy everyone in both areas of theology, positive and scholastic, speculative and moral.

†††

Chapter 3 The Series of Disciplines to be studied

51. Since the Apostle says: *I determined that while I was with you I would speak of nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified [1 Co 2:2]* - and since Christ has said of Himself: *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End*, therefore, all should begin learning Christian Doctrine, even by memory, whenever this can be accomplished, as this has been presented for the level of all by Cardinal Bellarmine. Those, then, who will undertake their studies will afterwards return to Christian Doctrine that they might learn and profit from the Roman Catechism.

52. They will study the Sacred Scriptures in their entirety, first textually, and then afterwards with the Catholic commentaries.

53. They will also study the following: the Holy Greek and Latin Fathers of the Church, especially the Holy Doctors.

Sacred Liturgy with its commentators.

The General and Particular Councils of the Church, especially those of the diocese in which they will be serving.

The universal and particular Decrees of the Holy Pontiffs and Bishops especially those of the diocese in which they are living.

Ecclesiastical Jurisprudence, both universal and special - and also in some way, Civil Jurisprudence.

Dogmatic Theology, especially that of Petavius; the ancient and new Controversies, especially those compiled by Cardinal Bellarmine.

Moral theology, especially that of St. Alphonsus Liguori; Cases of Conscience; Mystical Theology, both theoretical and practical.

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Chapter 4 Those Studies which can assist or embellish Theology

54. The confreres will also diligently study Church History and Civil History, as well as building up some erudition in the knowledge of the places principally where they are serving;

They will likewise apply themselves to the study of Metaphysical Philosophy, to physics and to mathematics;

They need to study natural history, as well as the Humanities;

They should acquire some knowledge of Medicine, and the rest of the liberal arts, as well as mechanics, agriculture, graphics, architecture, calligraphy, orthography, and other similar matters;

It is necessary for them to know the Humanities, and also the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages, as well as the local language.

55. Lastly, they should become proficient in the art of sacred eloquence and Catechetics.

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Chapter 5 The Distribution of Studies

56. All this concerning studies has been stated regarding the whole community, or in a general way, regarding its members. For, absolutely speaking, we can say that perfection is necessary for the Institute in the above-mentioned disciplines and languages. It would be difficult, if not morally impossible for any one individual Confrere to be able to join all these together with the required theological knowledge. Nonetheless, in the whole body of the community, there can be excellence, and there should be in all these matters.

57. Therefore, in each area of these disciplines, someone, or a few confreres, should be committed to it diligently by a particular study and for a longer time, as this would be most useful for the various services to be rendered to the Church depending upon the diversity of times and occasions.

58. Moreover, these studies in the Community refer principally to Theology and also aim for the understanding of Sacred Scripture. The Confreres will tend more frequently and with greater commitment toward such studies. Nevertheless, at times some confreres for a longer period are to occupy themselves in these preparatory studies, so that they might excel in them in an outstanding manner, in order to achieve our above-mentioned purposes.

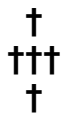
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Chapter 6 The Means by which Studies are to be promoted

59. A special and careful program is to be set up for those who are dedicated to studies, both so that their health may experience no harm, and also so that their necessary comfort might not be lacking. As a result, the Superior should be vigilant so that they might have decent food and clothing, as well as the necessary recreation. He is to see to it that the students might be free from all concern and solicitude about these matters, so that they might the more easily bear the burden of their studies, and be content in religious moderation.

60. In each house there is to be a common library, well equipped as far as the needs and the quality of the studies require.

- 61.** Every student is to have those books which are necessary.
- 62.** It will be incumbent upon the Superior to see to it that the Scholastics do not study in those times harmful to their physical health. They will be provided with that amount of time that will be necessary for their sleep, so that they might be able to maintain a certain balance in their mental endeavors so that they might persevere longer in acquiring and exercising the necessary learning for the service of the Church.
- 63.** Every care should be exercised so that the impediments of external occupations and endeavors be removed from the Scholastics, both regarding domestic duties, as well as in the other ministries so that more time might be given over to their studies.
- 64.** For this reason the brothers will be assigned to take care of the necessary temporal matters in each house, so that the students might be relieved of these tasks.
- 65.** All the members will protect their upright way of life and the proper intention for the glory of God and the benefit of souls. For no one, without a pure mind and the imitation of the Saints, will ever grasp the words of the Saints, says St. Athanasias [*De Incarn.* near the end]. All should pray often to God, Who is the Lord of all knowledge [1 S 2:3] that He might grant to them the necessary knowledge.
- 66.** It will be up to the Superiors to see to it that neither the love for piety will be cooled through the fervor of studies, nor that through any excess of piety, will the necessary studies be impeded.
- 67.** With the express permission of the Superior, Chairs of Theology might be accepted and also, at times, those of Philosophy, if they are offered, especially in Seminaries. This must always be without contradiction, or controversy, or opposition. This service is gratuitous.
- 68.** University degrees might be accepted, as long as this takes place without any harm being done either to religious poverty, or humility.



FIFTH PART**THE PROMOTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE
INSTITUTE****69-82****Chapter 1****Those to be promoted to the Priestly Office**

- 69.** They will not wear any clerical garb until after high school has been completed.
- 70.** They will attend class until their twenty-fifth year, and only then receiving Minor Orders.
- 71.** They will apply themselves to the study of those doctrines and liberal arts which are cultivated among us, and in which their own native talent is the most inclined, until their thirtieth year. In this time, they will be initiated into Sacred Orders and into the Priesthood.
- 72.** While not omitting any study of those matters in which they are the more proficient and which are the more necessary, gradually they will be exercised in preaching in our own churches, in teaching catechism to children and to the unlettered, in hearing confessions of children and adolescents.
- 73.** Then, they will be assigned to the hearing of confessions of men of all walks of life, and to giving sermons also in the churches of the city where they dwell, in giving retreats and the like.
- 74.** Sometimes they will be given to the Missionaries as their helpers, and at times they will hear the confessions of women.
- 75.** Then they will more often hear the confessions of women, and serve ordinarily in the work of the Missions.
- 76.** Finally, they will accept the task of directing the Missions, and will give themselves over totally to the salvation of souls.

†††

Chapter 2**The Promotion of the Other Members**

- 77.** There are two groups of these members.
- Some would have already been initiated into the clerical life, when an impediment occurred. This would be something that does not disturb the discipline of the house, as for example, an illness, or something like that. Furthermore, it would not be a hindrance to the edification of one's neighbor, either those in the house, or those outside. And this impediment would not inhibit the confreres from spiritual development, as for example, a loss of talent or memory that has become weakened. Nonetheless, this impediment would be such that it would render these confreres incapable of any further learning, or achieving

a superior Grade. They will remain in the order, task and grade they have already received, which will be according to the superior's judgment. Men of this situation will, however, be useful and suited for such duties, and they will serve the Lord in them, and will assist the other confreres in attaining the common scope.

78. The other group, then, is made up of those who do not receive clerical orders, but who assist the house and the Priests in temporal matters. Having all been imbued with Christian Doctrine, some will develop their trade, or be committed to their work, serving the Lord in simplicity of heart, and edifying their neighbor in virtues.

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Chapter 3

The Grade, or the Duties of those serving in Temporal Matters

79. Their offices are the following:

Sacristan, Porter, Gardener, Cook, Wardrobe-keeper, Launderer, in charge of Maintenance, Wine keeper, Brick-layer, Dispenser, Secretary, Cobbler, and other such offices.

80. Priests will supervise all of these constituted in a lower grade, as the Liturgist will oversee the Sacristan; the Prefect of the grounds and the garden will be in charge of the Gardener; the Economist will supervise the Porter, the Cook, the Launderer, the Cobbler, the Dispenser, and the Wine-keeper; the Procurator will be responsible for the Secretary.

81. In these offices, all may have assigned administrative assistants, who will obey these minor officials in all that pertains to their tasks, as though to the Superior.

82. Also, several offices might be entrusted to these minor officials in accord with the nature and the necessity of the situation.

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SIXTH PART**THE VOWS WHICH ARE PRONOUNCED IN THE
INSTITUTE****83-89****Chapter 1****The Vows made privately during the Time of Formation**

83. Vows that are privately made during the time of probation are not admitted. As a result, such vows do not oblige the Institute, but it can freely dismiss a Novice who has made them. In which case, such vows will cease, unless the intention of the one making the vows was otherwise.

84. Since the young more easily make such vows out of indiscreet fervor, they will not be allowed to make them unless with great consideration and consultation, and the proper form being observed as well as subordination to the Superior. Vows of this nature are temporary, rather than being without limitation of time.

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Chapter 2**The Vows of the Institute**

85. No one pronounces solemn vows unless he merits the Grade of Apostolic Missionary in this Institute, and in accord with its scope.

86. The remaining Collaborators pronounce only simple vows in the Community before the Superior, after a suitable formation period, that would be based on the common law of the Church and the particular rule of this Institute.

87. These simple vows are perpetual, in so far as the intention and obligation of the person making the vows is concerned. However, for a legitimate reason, the Institute is free to render these vows null and void because it has only conditionally received them.

88. In like manner, by these vows the ownership of temporal goods is not taken away, nor is every acquisition of other goods, either through inheritance, gift, bequest, or something similar. It is only the use and the administration of these goods which are subordinated to the will of the Superior.

89. Those who are assigned to studies pronounce their simple vows publicly after Novitiate. They also promise the Divine Majesty, and they do this publicly, to receive that more perfect and more stable Grade of membership in the Institute, which had been imposed on them by the Superiors after carrying out the experiences and a sufficient formation.

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**SEVENTH
PART****ON THE OBSERVANCE OF THESE VOWS****90-151****FIRST SECTION****ON THE MANNER OF POVERTY****90-104****Chapter 1****On the Manner of Poverty with respect to the Community**

- 90.** Although those who pronounce simple vows in this Institute may retain the ownership of their goods, nevertheless, they cannot do so unless their Superior knows and approves of it. They are to be prepared to make a renunciation and abdication of everything, at the command of the Superior. Furthermore, it is not licit for them to acquire any new dominion, unless the authority, or the will of the Superior agrees.
- 91.** Their food and clothing and lodging, as well as all their religious furnishings, must be such that nothing superfluous be admitted, even though nothing should be lacking which is naturally necessary.
- 92.** In our Churches, there will not be held funeral rituals, nor funeral stipends, nor chaplaincies, nor anniversary celebrations, or anything similar.
- 93.** There will not be any safe, or box, or basket for receiving alms in our Churches.
- 94.** All will have in common whatever pertains to food, clothing, furnishings to one's room and books. What is granted for personal use, the confreres will have as not possessing, and they will be prepared to return everything whatsoever they may be using, for common use at the slightest indication on the part of the Superior.
- 95.** To no one is granted the perpetual use of books, or those which he might take away with him wherever he may be transferred.

†††**Chapter 2****On the Manner of Poverty with respect to Individuals**

- 96.** No one will use anything as though it were his own.
- 97.** No one will keep privately in his own room, or have under his own care, and for his own free use, whatever pertains to the sustenance of the body, as food and drink.
- 98.** If anything of this nature should be sent to any religious, this is not for his own use or possession, but must all be received and distributed in common use.

99. No one will keep the door of his room or chest locked, without the permission of the Superior.

100. Regarding clothing and personal laundry, and all that pertains to the furnishings of his room, no one should retain anything beyond what is actually necessary for the use of the body, but all else should be kept in the common wardrobe.

101. No one should have any books without the permission of the Superior, nor should he write, or note anything in them.

102. No one is to receive anything in compensation for his spiritual ministry, or pious offices, which the Institute offers to its neighbors gratuitously.

103. No one can give, receive or dispense whatever belongs to the house, without the Superior's consent.

104. In order that each one be content with whatever is distributed to him from the common supply, he should be ready to accept the more menial and abject goods for his greater abnegation.

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SECOND SECTION

ON THE MANNER OF CHASTITY

105-119

Chapter 1

On the Manner and Purpose of Chastity in Common

105. There is to be a cloister regarding women.

106. No one should leave the house unless with the permission of the Superior, and with a companion assigned by him.

107. On returning home, if there had been anything of note which his companion did, or which had happened, both confreres will refer the matter to the Superior. Furthermore, if anything important might have been heard from other externs, or which had been seen along the way, they will also make it known.

108. No one will speak with a woman, or hear her confession, unless with the door opened and before those present, who will be able to keep them in view, even though it is not licit to listen.

109. Each one moreover will tend to that perfection of chastity, which befits men whose office is angelic, or who are espoused to Christ our Lord, for their soul is given in marriage to Christ, as the Apostle says, as a chaste virgin, or holy in mind and body [cf. **2 Co 11:2**].

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Chapter 2**The Means for preserving Chastity in Particular**

110. For this, there is to be the frequent exercise of prayer and meditation, which either the common rule, or the order of Superiors will assign to each one.

111. In order that the confreres might be effectively and gently assisted by their Superiors in overcoming all the difficulties and dangers which in the keeping of chastity customarily occur, each one will conceal nothing of this matter from the Superior, or the Confessor, or to someone else to whom the spiritual care of the religious is entrusted. Rather, each will manifest all temptations, and dangers. Likewise whoever might know of a danger for any confrere outside of confession, will be held to manifest this secretly to the Superior.

112. Each one will assume that mortification of the flesh through abstinence from food and drink, which is fitting for him in the judgment of the Superiors or the Confessor.

113. Idleness will be totally and perpetually avoided by each and everyone. Manual labor, or some external exercise of the body which seems to be the most proper and expedient, will be assigned to each by the Superior.

114. Conversations with women and visits, as well as communications, whether verbally with those present, or by letters with those who are absent, are to be avoided. However, in necessity, or when there is real hope of great fruit, these will be conceded by the Superior only to well proven and prudent men.

115. Likewise any excessive familiarity and singular friendship especially among the young, are to be avoided.

116. Moreover, no one without permission of the Superior will enter the room of another. When one has entered, with the permission of the Superior, the door will be left open while they are talking.

117. No one will touch another, even in jest.

118. Great care also will be exercised by all that with due frequency, and the right disposition, each will approach the Sacraments of Confession and the Eucharist.

119. Likewise, modesty which is chiefly noted in the observance and custody of the ears and tongue and the other senses, and which is manifest in the remaining gestures of the body, is especially necessary for all, both for the sake of conserving purity of morals, and for promoting the edification of others.

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THIRD SECTION

ON FOUR-FOLD MODESTY, AS AN AID, OR
EMBELLISHMENT OF CHASTITY

120-137

Chapter 1
On Humility

120. Thus, all will practice modesty in all matters, so that it might appear to all who are in the house, or outside, for the praise of God. And first of all, they will moderate through humility every motion of the mind which tends toward one's own excellence.

121. In the acquisition of this virtue, the confreres are to exercise it through those twelve degrees which the divine Benedict has placed in his Rule, c. 7.

1. To be humble not only of heart, but also to show it in one's very person, one's eyes fixed to the ground.
2. To speak few and sensible words, and not to be loud of voice.
3. Not to be easily moved and disposed to laughter.
4. To maintain silence until one is asked.
5. To do nothing but what one is exhorted by the common rule of the monastery.
6. To believe and to acknowledge oneself more lowly than all others.
7. To think oneself worthless and unprofitable for all purposes.
8. To confess one's sin.
9. To embrace patience by obeying under difficult and contrary circumstances.
10. To subject oneself to a superior.
11. Not to delight in fulfilling one's own desires.
12. To fear God and to be always mindful of everything that God has commanded.

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Chapter 2
On Studiousness

122. All will moderate the desire of whatever pertains to knowledge. This is done through studiousness, which is contrary to the vice of curiosity.

123. Each one will refrain the appetite of knowing, in accord with this Apostolic saying: ***'Do not know more than it is necessary to know, but know unto sobriety.'*** [Rm 12:3]. What pertains to your office, Basil states, learn studiously and pursue, but do not inquire further out of curiosity. [Rule 235] [*Regulae brevius tractatae*, t. 2, 494 E].

124. First, the confreres should avoid those studies that are harmful; then, those that are useless, or impertinent, which greatly impede knowledge, according to these words of the same Apostle: ***'Whoever wishes to be wise among you, let him become a fool.'*** [1 Co 3:18].

125. In those studies which are to be learned of necessity, or which would be useful, for the glory of God and for the greater service of the Church, all will struggle with alacrity and constancy, against all fatigue, negligence or boredom in deepening their knowledge of these matters.

126. In their studies, they will also observe the prescribed schedule, so that they will not study, or read, or write, or meditate, before, nor after the time established. They will also keep to the place and the manner and the other circumstances required in studying, in accord with the norm of obedience.

127. They will also keep that order so that they do not prefer knowledge over the spiritual exercises of prayer and meditation, spiritual reading and the required examinations of conscience, and other similar exercises. Neither should they place studies ahead of religious discipline or the orders of Superiors. They should always be prepared to interrupt them immediately, even totally, at the hint of the Superiors, they should be willing to give up studies altogether already undertaken, according to that line in the Psalm: ***Teach me wisdom and knowledge.*** [cf. **Ps 118:66**].

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Chapter 3 On the Moderation of the Senses and Bodily Acts

128. In the third place, the confreres will moderate all that pertains to the movements and actions of the body, and this so that they will be performed decently and uprightly, both in what is done seriously, as well as what is done for the sake of recreation.

129. That gait is worthy of approval, states Ambrose [1 *De Officiis*, 18, 75. t. 2,21 c] in which there are apparent the weight of gravity, and the mark of tranquility, provided, though, that there is not present any affectation, but that every movement is to be pure and simple.

130. In like manner, Ambrose [ibi, 19, 84,p. 24 A] does not approve of an excessively sweet sounding voice, or affected gestures - nor, should anyone act too informally, or in an excessively rustic manner.

131. The proper orientation of exterior movements is expected not only in accord with the convenience of the acting person, but should also be in harmony with the decency inherent in external realities, other persons, activities, and places, in line with that praise offered by Sacred Scripture in which the Saints are lauded by the Holy Spirit as ***having a care for beauty*** [cf. **Si 44:6**]. To have such concern to maintain beauty implies the rendering to each one what is fitting for him. Thus, St. Augustine says in his Rule: 'In all your gestures, let there be nothing which would offend the notice of another: but let everything be what is proper to the holiness of your state.' [Ep. 109, t. 2 - also, Ep 211, 10. t. 1, 784 F].

132. Each one should take part in the usual and proper common recreations. In these, no one should manifest inopportune harshness and excessive severity and a morose visage. This would inhibit the proper recreation and rest of others. So, through religious modesty,

there is avoided both in words and deeds in jest, every worldly impertinence, so that in no manner would the harmony of good works and virtues be broken.

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Chapter 4 On the Moderation of Exterior Apparel necessary for Life

133. Finally, in the fourth place, they will moderate all that pertains to external apparel, as in clothing and everything in this category, so that in all that concerns the religious man there are evident the poverty of the rule, and all that modesty would regulate for what is proper and in good taste for the glory of God and the edification of one's neighbor.

134. This decor should not be affected, but rather should be natural, simple, and even somewhat informal rather than excessively careful, but more in the common manner. It needs to be a decor that bespeaks religious poverty, whether with regard to one's clothing, or that each one's external appearance be such that nothing be lacking to both what is fitting and what is needed, nothing added or removed, that would indicate affectivity, as Ambrose says [cf. 1 *De Officiis*, 19, 83. t. 2, 23 E].

135. So, this exterior care of oneself should be humble, in that it will exclude the intention of self-glory, nor should it be extravagant or indicate excessive preparation. It should be sufficient, while excluding all intention of drawing attention. In the last analysis, the superfluous care of anything of this nature, is to be avoided.

136. Nevertheless, there should be avoided that slovenliness, which indicates a lack of any care, or effort that is needed to present an external appearance of what is proper. There should be totally avoided that ostentation, as St. Augustine says, of any sloppiness that one might present as a sign of being unkempt. This is all the more dangerous in that it presents itself under the name of the service of God [cf. 2 *De Serm. Domini*, 12, 41. t. 3.2, 216 E].

137. Clothing should be simple and proper, which would bespeak of poverty and at the same time, be suitable both for the ministries to be offered, as well as in accord with those among whom one works. It should be clean and not torn.

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FOURTH SECTION**ON THE MANNER OF OBEDIENCE****138-151****Chapter 1
On Obedience in General**

138. All the Rules and prescriptions in this Institute do not oblige under any sin, either mortal, or venial. In like manner, the simple command of the Superior is not considered to include any obligation under sin, unless he should add 'in virtue of obedience', or something similar.

139. All will obey even the subordinate Superior, or anyone who may have been placed over an office, and anyone who has the faculty of commanding, as one would obey Christ Himself.

140. All will take care that when they indeed do obey, they will also further conform their will and mind itself to the order of the Superior.

141. The obedience that is to be shown in everything that is ordered which does not go against the precepts of God, or the Church, or the rules of this Institute, is to be integral, prompt, strong and humble with the perfect abnegation of one's own will and judgment.

†††**Chapter 2
On the Degrees of Obedience in Particular**

142. In the first place, all will take care that in its execution, or in the act of obedience, that this be shown integrally, and not only in a partial manner. This holds true not only in obligatory matters, as this is simply required, but also with a view to the height of perfection in all other proper areas. For that obedience is perfect, when it is universal and makes no exception, unless in what would displease God. Obedience will be all the more prompt when it anticipates the expressed precept of the Superior, once his will has come to be understood.

143. Promptness also will especially appear in the act of obedience, so that no one will slowly or hesitatingly accede to carrying out what has been ordained. Rather, the confreres will rival the heavenly spirits on earth, putting aside all delay, leaving behind all their own projects, they will hasten and even fly to do the will of their Lord, just as soon as each one comes to know of the wishes of the superior, or perceive a sign from him. Such perfect obedience leaves unfinished one's own business.

144. The act of obedience will also be humble when no excuse is brought forward before carrying it out. However, should a real impediment arise, or at least one considers that there is one, or that he entertains some probable doubt concerning it, this will be humbly pointed out to the Superior, and the solution will be left up to him.

145. Lastly, the act of obedience is to be strong, that is, constant, and with due perseverance, so that it not be held back in anything, or at any time, no matter how difficult and repugnant to nature it may be.

146. In the second place, then, as to all that pertains to the exercise of the will in obeying, it should primarily be pure. And the formal intention of obedience is toward the observance of the precept, and toward the fulfillment of the will of the Superior; or, more sublimely, it is all carried out on account of the will of God.

147. Obedience must also be voluntary, so that very freely and very diligently the confrere will defer, as Jerome [cf. *Ep.* 125 ad Rusticum, c. 15. t. 1, 937 A] states, to the ‘Superior of the monastery, fearing him as the Lord, and loving him as the Father’.

148. Lastly, obedience should be carried out with rejoicing and with spiritual joy and that it be observed with a constant and persevering mind, and with all humility of spirit.

149. In the third place, in so far as the intellect is concerned, all will strive and take every care that obedience be entirely simple, so that it will not look upon the Superior as a man, but as God, and that he consider his command not as human, but as divine.

150. The confreres will not inquire about the reasons of the order, nor discuss it, nor analyze it provided that all that is ordained is beyond sin. No one should pass judgment on the decision of the Superior, as the role of the conferee is to obey and to carry out what is ordered, in harmony with the statement of Moses: ***Listen Israel, and be silent!*** [Exodus, Dt] This is wisdom, precisely that of not having any, as the Apostle [cf. **1 Co 3:18**] states: **Whoever wishes to be wise, should be the fool!**

151. Each one will make every effort to be ruled by that counsel and judgment, according to the saying of the Fathers, found in Cassian [*Coll.* 2, c. 11], to be carefully retained: that by no other vice does the Devil up-end the monk, and lead him toward death, than when he persuades one to trust in his own judgment, rejecting the counsels of his Seniors.

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EIGHTH PART**ON THE PROMOTION OF THE STUDENTS****152-157****Chapter 1
On the Final Formation after the Completion of Studies**

152. Once their studies have been completed so that should any of their fervor for virtue grown tepid it might be rekindled, the students will be proven still for another year, both in the exercises of devotion and humility, as well as in the ministries of the Congregation.

153. This formation might be conducted either in the same place as the Novices, if their number is small, or in a separate house, removed from the customary contacts of their friends and relatives, either personally, or by letter.

154. If their number should warrant it, these confreres will gather in the same house under one Instructor, who will be suited for this office due to his own authority and experience in governing.

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**Chapter 2
On the Nature of this Formation**

155. This Instructor will take care to form all the students spiritually, and will explain the universal nature of our Institute, on a few assigned days of each week, as well as making clear to them the practical matters of helping out their neighbors work out their salvation.

156. The Instructor might also privately impose penances and mortifications, which he may judge would lead to their perfection. However, whatever pertains to the external discipline, he will do all only after having consulted the Superior of the House of which perhaps only a certain part is for their dwelling.

157. Should it happen that any one of the candidates prove to be less than satisfactory in this period of formation, he would be sent away and this put off until another time.

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NINTH PART CONCERNING THE GRADE OF THE 'PROFESSED' 158-186**Chapter I
Concerning the 'Profession'**

158. Only Priests are admitted to the 'Profession', because the principal government of the Congregation, as well as its more important ministries require the Priesthood.

159. For this promotion, there are required an outstanding basic intellectual formation, as well as each one having given proof of a life-style and good example, providing every indication of moderation of human affectivity.

160. The decision as to who will be promoted, and when this 'Profession' will be made, is solely up to the Superior of the Congregation.

†††**Chapter 2
The Means by which this Institute promotes the Salvation of Others**

161. There are required the assumption of the clerical state, and the manifestation of every disposition to living this with perfection.

162. The 'Professed' are to be assigned to the administration of the Sacraments, especially of Penance and the Eucharist. They are to be committed to begging from God, even through the offering of the sacrifices of the Mass, in order to obtain from God the fruits of the Missions and the preaching and the Confessions.

163. The 'Professed' are to be dedicated to any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever, such as:

1. Public preaching, or instructing God's people with catechetical teaching, either through public classes, or by private tutoring;
2. Through a pious sharing of views and conversations on sacred matters, sometimes offering fraternal correction, and at other times offering encouragement for virtuous living and a greater frequency of the reception of the Sacraments.
3. This fraternal exchange will at times involve teaching others the path of perfection, and then offering the exhortation to live it.
4. The 'Professed' are to be engaged in giving Retreats.
5. They shall also promote Church organizations.
6. They will exercise a devoted dedication to the Sick, and especially to the dying.

164. The 'Professed' will be dedicated to contributing to the formation and discipline of Seminarians, whether these are living in Seminaries, or are extern students, assigned to parishes or living at home. The 'Professed' will accomplish this either through public courses, or private conversations, by promoting the Seminarians' life of study and spirituality.

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Chapter 3**Concerning the Instruction of Children and the Youth**

165. Our confreres will promote in every possible manner the Christian formation of children and the youth, and also of those who are uneducated in the faith. Our men will accomplish this either through the Oratories, Catechism Lessons, even through private instructions.

166. Wherever it is possible, it is fitting that our men also assist in the education of the youth. In this ministry, there is to be observed that principle taken from the Shorter Rules of St. Basil: 'Since the Apostle has said: ***And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but rear them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord [Ep 6:4]*** - then, any of our men who teach the young, may they lead them with this mentality. May those who do instruct the youth be fully confident that they indeed can form these students, educating them in the discipline and the correction of the Lord. May our men observe the Lord's own precept: ***Let the little children be, and do not hinder them from coming to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven [Mt 19:14]***. If any such ideal and hope are not present, then I think that this endeavor would not be pleasing to God, nor would it be proper, or advantageous for us.

167. Even though children might be accepted in our ministry for the purpose of educating them, nevertheless the main goal to be sought and intended in any such instruction is their being directed toward their moral life.

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Chapter 4**Concerning the Means to be employed in preserving and developing
Morality in the Life of the Young**

168. Since a pure conscience is the seat of wisdom, the students should avail themselves of the sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a month.

169. They should participate in the celebration of the Eucharist every day.

170. The greatest care should be taken so that the students might be well instructed in all that pertains to Christian Doctrine. At least once a week, they should receive instructions in Christian Doctrine, which they are to learn and be able to express what they have learned.

171. Furthermore, each week an exhortation should be given, through which all would be inspired to an increase in virtue.

172. Even during their classes, should the occasion present itself, the teachers should strive to inspire their students to the service and love of God and of virtue.

173. The beginning of school and the individual classes should be introduced by a public prayer. The young people are to be taught that this brief prayer has two purposes: one is that they offer up to God all their school-work, and in particular their time and activity. The

second goal is that the students accustom themselves to beg from God the grace to profit by these studies. This practice can prove to be very useful for the other activities of life.

174. All the books for the students use should bespeak piety and chastity, or be carefully edited. The students are not to be permitted to have or read other books.

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Chapter 5

Those Means to be employed for the Academic Progress of the Youth

175. Competence and diligence are first to be sought in the teachers. It is important that they not only be learned, but that they should also be assiduous and studious to assist in the progress of the youth in all their school-work.

176. Good order, or methodology, are to be carefully observed, both in all the scholastic exercises, as well as in reviewing the work done. Every effort needs to be brought to bear so that the students might study privately, either in assignments of composition, or reviewing what has been learned, as well as their being able to refer back to what has already been covered.

177. Text books are to be carefully chosen, so that not only will they not present any danger to faith or morals, but also so that they might be the more suited for the benefit of the students.

178. Sufficient discipline should not be lacking, in accord with the quality and the capacity of the students. If, however, corporal punishment is to be meted out, due to the respect to be given to the religious state, this should not be administered by the teachers themselves. This should be the responsibility of the parents of the boy, or the student should be sent to a disciplinarian assigned for this task.

179. If correction does not help, and there is some danger that this student would be harmful to others, since he does not make much progress, should he prove to be incorrigible, he is to be expelled from study.

180. It is very useful to propose and to bestow rewards or honors to the extern students for the sake of encouraging fervor in their studies. In all these matters, propriety and a religious sense are to be observed.

181. Since 'honor promotes the arts', and material rewards may not always be at hand, the teachers should also make use of the type of rewards that are commensurate to the accomplishments and the individuals achieving them. This may be realized by assigning certain places or signs of honor, through which the emulation and greater diligence among the other students might be stimulated.

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Chapter 6 Concerning the Duties of the 'Professed' Fathers

182. Their duty is to teach not only in sermons, retreats, lectures, which are both necessary and useful for eternal life - but also to explain the rudiments of faith and morals to the uneducated and to children, in the Oratories, in public catechism lessons, as well as by private instructions. For this is of great use to the Church, and therefore this ministry is highly recommended to them.

183. They will hear the confessions of all who approach them, especially those of the poor and children, and encourage all to a frequent reception of the Sacraments.

184. When the 'Professed' are sent anywhere, or assigned to reside in some place, no one will expect any provision for the journey, or for their residence, from the Bishop, or from the Pastors, but they will freely offer themselves and totally commit themselves to the task.

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Chapter 7 The Principal Purpose of the 'Professed' Fathers

185. Although the purpose of this Congregation is to offer assistance to the Church under the direction of the Bishops, through the various and proper duties of its vocation; and since this seems at times to be an arduous and difficult undertaking, and, if it be measured against human weakness, one that is exposed to dangers - nonetheless, this proposal of our vocation, therefore, is not one that is imprudent and rash. This is so, firstly, because it is not based on human resources, but is to be carried out with the grace of the Holy Spirit, ***for He Who has begun a good work in you will bring it to perfection... [Ph 1:6]***, if He is not hindered in this by us. For this is the special grace of this vocation, which is more powerful than all dangers and difficulties. Furthermore, through this plan, we do not propose to expose ourselves to dangers, nor to go to this, or that place, or to undertake one activity over another, but to follow the direction of the orthodox Bishop whom the Holy Spirit has placed to rule the Church of God [cf. **Ac 20:28**]. This means is sufficiently safe in not erring in the way of the Lord. Finally, the concern of the Congregation is to be both in disciplining and in forming its men, as well as in selecting them, and in sustaining and strengthening them.

186. Furthermore, no one will contrive to be sent in one place rather than in another, but each will allow himself to be transferred, although it is not wrong to show oneself prepared for some undertaking. For, **Isaiah [6:6, ff.]** offered himself and **Jeremiah [1: 6]** excused himself. However, Jeremiah did not resist God sending him, nor did Isaiah presume to go before being purified by the coal of the altar. As Gregory has said, no one should dare to undertake the sacred ministries without first being purified, nor should anyone chosen by a superior grace, proudly refuse to go, under the pretext of humility.

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	TENTH PART THE UNITY, OR THE UNION OF THE CONGREGATION	187-266
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PREFACE	Harmony among the Members	187-190
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187. All will have as the scope and countersign of the spirit of their vocation that saying of Christ the Lord: ***By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*** [Jn 13:35]

188. If the love of charity is to be exercised toward all, this is particularly so regarding ***those who are of the household of the faith*** [Ga 6:10], in accord with what the Apostle has said: ***But if any man have not the care of his own, and especially those of his house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel*** [1 Tm 5:8].

189. Moreover, each one will keep before his eyes as the norm of this harmony, that which may be read in the Acts of the Apostles [Ac 3 & 4], from which every religious community has found its inspiration and form: ***...of the multitude of believers, they had but one heart and soul...all things were in common unto them*** [Ac 4:32]. ***...And they divided their goods to all, according as every one had need...and they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart; praising God and having favor with all the people...[Ac 2:32, ff.]... and great grace was in them all...*** [Ac 4:33].

190. The individual members will pursue this union and harmony, and will hold in abhorrence and studiously avoid all that is contrary to it, such as dissension, discords, keeping in mind that saying: ***Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity*** [Ps 132:1].

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FIRST SECTION	THE NEGATIVE MEANS	191-220
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Chapter 1
On not harming the Confreres

191. As the Apostle says: ***Let not the sun go down upon your anger*** [Ep 4:26] - and as the Lord has said: ***If therefore you offer your gift at the altar, and there you remember that your brother has anything against you; leave your offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to your brother: and then coming you shall offer your gift*** [Mt 5: 23, f.] - immediately every care should be taken that anger be put aside and all disturbance removed, if by chance out of human weakness these might have arisen among confreres. They should be cordially reconciled to one

another, and after satisfaction has been made, they might return to the good graces of one another.

192. Should anyone be the sower of dissension or division among the Confreres, or with the Superiors, he should be immediately transferred from the house - or, should he prove to be incorrigible, he should even be dismissed from the Congregation.

193. No one should sadden, or offend his confrere concerning any defect of his nationality, or country, or his party, neither publicly, nor privately, even in jest. So, let everyone be very careful so that no conversation be had, or remark made concerning these matters, but let each one not even entertain unkind thoughts or sentiments.

194. Above all, the evil of grumbling should not be brought forward by anyone for any reason whatsoever, whether in word or gesture. St. Basil [in Reg. Fus., c. 34]¹ states that should anyone be found guilty of this, he should be subjected to very severe discipline.

195. Since it pertains principally to religious charity to anticipate the mutual rendering of service, benefit and honor: and since every spirit of dominating, or commanding and every hint of it is already reprehensible and of itself greatly alienates people - so, every manner and affectation of assuming command, is to be avoided, especially by those who are not Superiors, because this savors of pride and does not favor charity. However, if by chance someone is placed in charge of a certain business, he should give the impression of not commanding, but rather of showing how it should be accomplished, and let all, following the example of the Apostle, serve one another [cf. **Ga 5:13**], so that there might take place as St. John Chrysostom [Hom. 58 ad pop. ²] has elegantly put it regarding the ancient monks: 'Not one of them could be heard either inflicting or undergoing reproach, not the one commanding, nor the one obeying, but all are of the number of those serving.'

196. Let no one correct, upbraid, or reprehend another, unless he is endowed with the authority to do so, either by the power of his office, or that having been received from the Superior. However, each one ought to be disposed in due charity to cooperate in the correction of others [cf. **Mt 18:15**]. Therefore, each one can only admonish out of charity, gently and with kindness. One can only request by proposing alternative behavior, showing another way, rather by petitioning than by exasperating the other.

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Chapter 2

Contrary Opinions to be avoided as much as possible

197. Although nothing would prohibit that certain confreres, while maintaining mutual charity, could disagree in certain opinions, and this is not repugnant to peace - nevertheless, this practice and experience itself shows that the diversity of opinions and frequent contradiction contribute not a little to obstructing the union of charity, and often

¹ Cf. *Reg. Brev.* 39, t. 2, 427 E.

² cf. alias 73m 3. T. 7, 433 D.

open the way for dissension, or at the very least, lessen its fervor and diminishes its perfection. This is so, either:

because, even though opinions pertain to the intellect, yet they often depend greatly on one's subjective inclination and pious choice of one's will;

or, because the contradiction of opinion is often grasped as a certain lessening of one's own self-image and reputation, which affords the occasion that one's affection for the other is much diminished;

or, finally, because this contrary mind-set often proceeds from a certain sense of competition concerning the estimation one's learning is held in, and the honor extended to him, and other certain creature comforts that proceed from this. Thus, the Abbot Joseph, as quoted by Cassian [Coll.16, 8] stated: as the enemy himself divides carnal and weak brothers over lowly and earthly values: in like manner, among spiritual brothers he brings about discord from the diversity of opinions.

As a result, differences of opinion, disagreement and disputes are much to be feared, and, in so far as this is possible, are to be avoided by all.

198. Therefore, as far as solid doctrine is concerned, especially regarding that approved by the Church, there can be absolutely no diversity admitted among our members, since new opinions repugnant to such doctrine are not to be admitted.

However, in those opinions in which the Catholic doctors have varying, or contrary views among themselves, every care is to be taken so that even here there be conformity among our men, in so far as this is possible.

It is particularly necessary that this diversity should there be any, be not regarding the entire body of doctrine, so that there would seem to be among our confreres divergent schools of thought: for this most often brings about the division of souls.

199. Above all, every care must be taken so that any diversity of doctrine which proceeds from our affective nature and a will of choice, in no way be permitted: because to oppose the view of another, if this is by set purpose, is a very strong indication that the dissent is more by choice than by any reasoning process. Such a state could not help but damage the very core of charity.

200. In this matter it is of utmost importance that the doctrine of another should not be opposed in public lectures, preaching, or written books: because this would not only offend the spirit of the other person, but further, very often brings real scandal, especially when this is done harshly and contentiously. As a result, it is very important to have before one's eyes the saying of St. Gregory Nazianzen [Or. 26, *De moderatione in disputationibus*³]: 'It is disgusting that in disputations on divine matters that anyone would ever assert for himself a certain tyranny, or vindication, or would never give in on any point to another, but rather to shut his eyes regarding all the Doctors of the law, where humility not only holds sway, but also security.'

201. Furthermore, diversity in practical matters of judgments is likewise to be avoided. For this occasion of dissension is more frequent and general, and is exposed to even greater disturbances. The reason is that this is found not only among the learned, but also among those who are not - it crops up between the great and the small alike. In fact it can

³ cf. 27, t. 1, 400 C.

be discovered in almost every matter that is undertaken and in all activities. Therefore, it can be the seed-bed of even greater dissension, and this is all the more the case when we pour more of ourselves into these human and exterior activities, the more we are attached to them. Pope Boniface addressed these matters: 'Dissensions and scandals prepare the avenue for depravities, and arouse rancor and hatred, and provide the opportunity for illicit morals.' [*In Clementinis*, Book 3, tit. 7, *Dudum... De Sepulturis*].

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Chapter 3 The Contradiction in Conversations to be eliminated

202. Discord and bitterness of spirit are very often much intensified through contention in conversation. For the diversity of judgments is so human, that if proposed with gentleness and moderation of expressions and modesty of spirit, it offends no one. However, contention, rash contradiction, the stubborn defense of one's own position, are very offensive. And therefore, all this should be totally avoided by us.

203. St. Gregory Nazianzen states [*Oratione Superiori*⁴]: 'We must take care when we undertake any aspect in the early moral and intellectual instruction of children that they might avoid all impropriety in their later conduct. For this reason, we must not afford giving the impression of impudence and levity in any inconsequential disputations of minor importance, so that we, through a long acquired practice, fall into these in matters of greater weight.' St. Augustine also states: that adolescents need to be trained that once they say something, they should not then stubbornly defend it.

204. St. Basil in his Rule states [c. 34, from his *Longer Rule*⁵]: 'Whenever confreres are in disagreement about a matter, disputing and arguing, they should never so violently contend with each other, but they should reserve the decision of the controversy to the Superiors.'

205. Moreover, St. Augustine states in his Rule [c. 34⁶]: 'You should not have any arguments, or, end them as quickly as possible, so that anger does not grow into hatred, and you make a beam out of a straw.'

206. St. John Climacus states [Gr. 4 of *obed.*, just after the middle]: 'Whoever wants to have confirmation of what he says, needs to know that he is afflicted with a diabolical disease.' The Saint is not speaking here of confirmation by oath, the spirit of which should be far from religious, but of that obstinate confirmation which usually arises from pride, which he calls the Devil's Disease.

207. The Saint adds: 'However, if anyone in conversing with his equals does this, perhaps he will be cured at times by the correction of his elders. But, should one remain

⁴ cf. 50, p. 405 D.

⁵ cf. t. 2, 394 D.

⁶ Otherwise, 10 - t. 1, 793 E.

stubborn in his opinion against the view of his elders and those more wise than himself, such a person can never be healed by any human art.'

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Chapter 4 On avoiding Particular Friendships

208. St. Basil says [Const. 30⁷]: 'The confreres must have mutual charity among themselves, not however, that two or three would go apart from the rest of their brothers by themselves. Should this ever take place, this is not charity, but division and sedition, and furthermore, it is an indication of impropriety. For if such individuals did hold dear the décor of common discipline, beyond any doubt they would maintain that common and equal charity toward all. However, should such as these, by their own choice, cut themselves off and separate themselves from the rest of the community, and form a community within the community, the bond of friendship of this type is truly evil, and any matter of this kind must be thought to be contrary to the common legislation which should conciliate all to one another. Indeed, this is nothing other than an innovation which runs counter to the stability and constancy of regular discipline.'

209. The same Saint [Rule 34 of the Longer] calls such particular friendship pernicious and 'a vice which is most abhorrent, through which a mutual and agreed upon harmony, generally springing from charity, is torn apart, and in its place, base suspicions and rivalries, as well as disparaging remarks, very quietly take hold.'

210. The same Saint further urgently commends this concern also for the protection and the guarding of purity and virtue, and concludes [Serm. On the abdic. of things, towards the middle]: 'Believe me, because I speak to you fraternally and from the bottom of my heart.'

211. And again [1 Serm. On the Mon. Inst., toward the end]: 'The law of charity does not suffer those friendships, or bonds, that would go apart by themselves: this simply cannot be, without such affections, which tend to one side rather than to another, and greatly upset the common harmony of all.'

212. And whoever is delinquent in this matter, the Saint adds below, is to be punished as harmful to public charity: indeed by the very fact that a confrere would favor another more, easily indicates that he holds the rest of the confreres as inferior in his affection.

213. Lastly [Const. 36⁸]: 'Whoever labors under this vice, and should he not change his ways following correction, something like a lamb that has contracted a plague, he is to be separated from the rest of the flock, so that he does not also spread the contagion of this malady to the rest of the community.'

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⁷ Translator's Note: Fr. Bertoni's writing '36' here does not agree with Suarez' text, which has '30'. Fr. Benaglia notes in his MssB 9952: alias 29, t. 2, 577 D.

⁸ Translator's Note cf. above, the notes above for CF # 208 - Suarez notes 'Const. 30', not 36.

Chapter 5 Moderation and Discretion in loving One's Confreres

214. And again, St. Basil [Serm. 2, *On the Mon. Inst.*] remarks: 'Although an equal and like charity must be maintained toward all, nevertheless, honor needs to be extended to each one in accord with his dignity.'

215. And just as in the natural body we love all its members with a certain equality and we take care that they all are free of pain - yet, this is all the more true regarding those members that are the more noble and useful: 'So, too', he continues, 'in the whole community, even though we are moved by the ills that afflict each member, and likewise we are inclined toward all with charity; nevertheless, we extend a greater honor toward those who are the more useful, as is but proper.'

216. Therefore, the breadth and equality of this charity does not exclude a due order and a just distribution. Rather, the perfection and conservation of charity depends no less from this deformity, if I may speak thus, as from that uniformity. For, just as from disordered particular friendships, there arise suspicions, envy, disparaging remarks and similar vices which injure charity. As a result, good order is upset with any excessive leveling, and virtue is deprived of due honor and reward. And for the same reason, in the opinion of all the sages, a just distribution is no less necessary for fomenting charity, as is common benevolence.

217. Since Paul says [**1 Tm 5:17**]: **...Let the priests that rule well, be esteemed worthy of double honor: especially those who labor in word and doctrine...** St. Basil then concludes [In his *Shorter Rule*, 170]: 'I think it is only right that this be observed in all who are of this dignity.' Cassian, too, teaches this profusely [Coll. 14, c. 16] from the example of Christ the Lord, Who loved John in a special manner. Therefore, not every love which toward some is greater than that extended toward others is to be reprehended, but only that love which exceeds good measure, which is most properly called singular, or particular friendship.

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Chapter 6 Discerning Particular, or Disorderly Friendships

218. The signs of such love are the following: First, the underlying reason for such love which is discerned in such a person, has to be one of the following: either it is for God's greater honor and glory; or, for the greater usefulness of the community or souls; or, is an expression of greater virtue and holiness. Whatever is not included among these motives, is simply foreign to the order of religious charity. And so, as St. Basil points out [Serm 2, *On the Mon. Inst.*] that even the very close tie of blood is not to be considered in religious charity, and is to hold no motivating sway in this matter.

219. Secondly, if such affection toward a certain individual, in some manner turns another's spirit from the love of the others, so that this would lessen the bonds and

conversation which community charity requires, or is only grudgingly undertaken, or that he does not willingly come to assist others in their necessities, this is an open sign that such affection is excessive and does not arise from the order of charity, but from particular friendship.

220. Thirdly, disorderly friendship is clearly discerned from other bonds of affection: for the love of charity is most ordered, and is expressed only in the proper time and place, without offense to anyone. If, therefore, such affection inclines one to waste time, or toward anything else which would not be in harmony with the state of perfection, and the rule - this is a particular friendship, and is not that love that is due from charity. As a result, charity is greatly offended, as St. Basil brilliantly proceeds [cf. above], whenever without any manifest motivation this bond attributes to one more than to another - if the distribution of tasks and goods takes place without the proper proportion being maintained. For, even though each and every religious in his own regard, ought to hold in disdain all things, and seek the lower grade - nonetheless, with respect to others, the merits of individuals must be kept in mind, and these must be met with due honor and love. This pertains to superiors to the utmost, by whom charity may be the more gravely offended, when because of their own particular friendships, and not according to the ability and merits of each one, and without keeping in mind the motive of what is of best use to the community, assign the work and merits to certain individuals, as St. Basil observed so well [Rule 303, of the Shorter Rules].

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SECOND SECTION

THE POSITIVE MEANS

221-266

Chapter 1

The Interior Inclination, or Disposition of Soul

221. This depends very much on one's internal spiritual progress, for when genuine charity, or love for God and Christ the Lord increases, that very union between confreres, by which individuals are united to God and our Savior, is increased and perfected.

222. Hence, because this bond of union greatly intensifies through prayer and meditation, as is noted in **Ps 38:4: ...in my meditation a fire shall flame out...** As a result, beyond any doubt, this is the more sure and solid way to obtain this unity.

223. Furthermore, since nothing so connects the love of genuine charity toward another person than when we notice in him the singular qualities of virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit and we contemplate him as the image of God painted in the most excellent colors of grace. If, therefore, all strive to develop in themselves these virtues and gifts, and often reflect on them in others, and consider these others also as superior to themselves, and truly to rejoice in their spiritual goods, give thanks to God for them, indeed mutual charity will grow among them in a marvelous manner.

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Chapter 2

Those External Circumstances which the more serve Unity in a General Manner

224. Union of this kind is produced in great part by the bond of obedience, as St. Ignatius says [CSJ n. 659].

225. Similar are the means of poverty and humility, or the contempt of temporal goods. Among these temporal realities are computed honors and dignities, equally as are riches and creature comforts. There is no less contempt of the former material realities than for these latter goods, which flow from charity toward God. Those who are poor in spirit and humble manifest honor toward all others, and so they are so well loved by everyone.

226. The means of poverty is a most special one, as most proper to religious by reason of the vow, which St. Basil discusses splendidly: In the religious state, all things are shared in common; spirits, and minds, bodies, and whatever we necessarily use for food and worship, God is common, the exercises of piety are together, work is shared, and so on [Const. Mon. c. 19]. Cassian teaches the same, quoting that line from Acts 4:32: *...all things were common unto them...* [Coll. 16, c. 6].

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Chapter 3

Those Special Circumstances in which Uniformity of Life-style stands out.

227. This uniformity and conformity must be in all matters, even including external realities, as in clothing, food, and all manner of living: Similitude is the cause of love. And this uniformity of life and common consent, contributes greatly to the unity of spirits.

228. Thus, St. Augustine writes [Rules, c. 5]: 'All should live uniformly and harmoniously. This is the same as saying: in order for confreres to live harmoniously, they have to live uniformly.' And he adds: 'And honor God in each other, Whose temples you have been created.' Because God alone is He Who enables all to dwell in the same house. As a result, this uniformity contributes greatly in having God recognized in all, and consequently, so that all might be most closely united in God.

229. This is the purpose of the common table, so that no one, no matter how important and revered he may be, whether he be a superior, or the more learned, or of any other condition, be excused from it, other than for the sake of illness. St. John Chrysostom most particularly commends that community of the ancient Monks. 'All things,' he stated, 'are held in common by them, table, dwelling, clothing, and what is all the more marvelous, there is one and the same spirit in all' [Book 3, Against those criticizing the Monastic Life]. He thus makes clear that external unity greatly helps the unity of spirits.

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Chapter 4 Concerning the Common Food and Table

230. The table is said to be 'common' not only regarding its place, and the time for meals, but most particularly in the use of foods. The same fare ought to be placed before all without any singularity. St. John Chrysostom, speaking about religious, states [Hom. 58, to the People]: 'One and the same menu and table service are to be placed before those seated at table and those who serve. All will have the same clothing, the same lodging, the same life. And what surprise would there be that there be one and the same diet, clothing and table, since there is one and the same soul in all?'

231. For this reason, let all singularity regarding the common table be avoided, because this usually greatly disturbs the souls of the weak and, as a result, disturbs charity, as St. Bernard teaches in an excellent manner [Serm. 30, *in Canticles*].

232. However, this legislation should not hinder meeting the needs of all proportionately, according to that saying of **Acts 4:35: ... and distribution was made to everyone, according as he had need.** For charity itself would ask as much.

233. Therefore, St. Benedict says in his Rule [c. 34]: 'We do not say that there be an acceptance of persons [may God forbid!], but simply the consideration of infirmities: wherever one needs less, let Him give thanks to God, and not be sad. And whoever may need more, let him be humbled by his weakness, and not be arrogant because of the pity that may be shown to him. In this manner, all the members will be in peace.'

††† Chapter 5 The Care of the Sick and Infirm

234. St. Basil writes [c. 19, *Constit. Mon.*], speaking of the cenobitic life: 'Whoever is in poor health, has an abundance of individuals who share in his infirmity. And he who is afflicted and sick in spirit, also finds many who are ready to care for him, and by whom every day he is encouraged.' He meant by this that he would include under this care of those who are ailing, all the works of mercy, through which the confreres would come to one another's assistance: at times taking care of the sick; at other times, consoling the afflicted; on other occasions assisting those who are laboring; and on still other occasions, bringing comfort to the struggling, as also by correcting and picking up again those who had lapsed.

235. The same Saint [in *Reg. Mor.* 41, c. 2] powerfully recommends kindness and gentleness towards the sick.

236. And further he states [In *Reg. Brev.* 159] that each should minister unto the infirm 'as brothers of the Lord'. And in an excellent manner, St. Benedict comments [Rule c. 36]: 'The care of the sick is to be extended before all else and above all else, and as though one was indeed serving Christ. In this manner, is each one to serve the sick.'

237. Likewise St. Benedict [within] notes: 'The greatest care of the sick pertains to the Abbot, so that they might not suffer any negligence.' This was confirmed by Innocent III [In

the Chapter, *Cum ad mon. de statu mon*]. St. Pachomius provided for the same matter in his Rule [cc. 20, 22, 23], where these words should be noted: 'They shall give to the sick every abundance, so that in nothing will the ailing confrere be saddened.' This agrees with what St. Jerome relates regarding the Egyptian monks [In the Preface to his Rule]: 'The sick are tended to with the most wonderful care, and with prepared food in all plenty.'

238. St. Bonaventure excellently notes [In his book on the *Six Wings of the Seraph*, c. 4, t. 2, Opusc.] that there should not be denied any assistance to those who might be deceptive, either by their own illusion, or those who might at times do so out of malice, but rather help should be given to all, so that the good men and those really in need might not per chance suffer any want.

239. And therefore also St. Augustine prudently legislates [Rule 28]: 'If the suffering remains hidden in the body of the servant of God who maintains that he is indeed undergoing some *malaise*, he is to be believed beyond any doubt. But, nonetheless whether he is to be healed of that dolor by taking those remedies which please him, it is better that the doctor be consulted.'

240. Lupus, in his Rule for the Monks [from St. Jerome, c. pen.] notes: 'If one feels an illness coming on, let him be moved to a more spacious place that he might be comforted both by the ministrations of the elders, and so that he might not seek for the comforts of the city, nor of his mother.'

241. In addition to the care of the Superior, and the assistance of the Infirmarian, there should be another confrere whose particular office will be caring for the health of the community in each house.

242. Each and every confrere should inform the superiors concerning all that is necessary for their own health, so that they might not suffer from anything out of a lack of communication.

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Chapter 6 On Hospitality towards Confreres

243. If any brothers, or confreres come to our houses from some other location, hospitality is to be shown to them with all signs and actions of benevolence and charity.

244. Not only our own pilgrims, or guests are to be most humanly welcomed, and taken care of for as long as they stay, but also food and clothing are to be given to them, should they need them. And this cannot be contrary to poverty, if it seems necessary for charity.

245. This is to be extended toward all the confreres, without any distinction of race or nationality, without any acceptance of persons, or limitation, whether they may be professed, or novices, whether they are healthy, or ill; whether they are known, or unknown - to all great charity is to be manifested.

246. Moreover, this charity is to be shown in the first place in welcoming them. This ought to be done with external signs of the greatest friendship, as are usually in vogue in the customs of the region, as would be extended by distinguished persons toward close friends or relatives.

247. Hence, not only by external signs are we to show charity, but even much more so through works of mercy and humility, which are to be employed, sparing neither effort nor expense, in so far as religious poverty permits, and the need of our brother requires.

248. St. Basil teaches the same [in *Reg. Fusior.*, c. 20], where, however, he earnestly recommends that in dealing with guests, religious modesty and poverty be not exceeded. He asks: 'What have we to do with sumptuous appurtenances? Let's say that a guest comes to us: If he is our brother and shares the same regimen of life with us, he should recognize our common fare; surely, whatever he has left behind at home, he should find the same among us. Is he exhausted from his journey? Then, he should be treated the more generously and the more liberally, to the point of what is sufficient to alleviating his tiredness.'

249. Finally, the Saint concludes that each one ought to be treated according to his quality and needs. Nevertheless this should be so 'that the food that is served generally to all, be of the type that it might be purchased at a low price, and with little shopping required. Nonetheless, all that is necessary should be offered at table, with cleanliness and even elegance, and yet that we might never overstep our established bounds.'

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Chapter 7

Common Recreation and Dialogue

250. Every day, for an hour after lunch, and another hour after supper, or a half hour, if one abstains from supper, all the confreres will come together in the same place, if this is possible, and converse in a familiar and friendly manner.

251. It is necessary that this be required of all without exception for the preservation of health, but principally for the development of charity. As Aristotle witnesses [VIII Ethic. 5]: friendship grows with communication, and is dissolved by taciturnity. And St. Teresa states: Charity grows by communicating.

252. It is known that this was quite widely the practice in the early Church and St. Jerome [Letter 22, to Eustachius, regarding the Virgin Custodia ⁹] points out that this is similar to the practice of the early Monks. They were accustomed to going to table in groups of ten, and after having offered the hymn, or after their thanksgiving, the Saint continues that 'up until vespers, each one would speak with his brothers, and would say: Did you notice this, or that brother? How much grace there is in him? How modest his bearing? And if they should meet those who were ill, they would be consoled; and when they encountered one fervent in God's love, they would encourage him to zeal.'

⁹ Cf. c. 35, t. 1, 117 A.

253. Cassian quotes the Abbot Abraham and says [*Coll.* 24, c. 20]: ‘That very welcome interval of relaxation and human exchange, which at times was the custom to occur at the arrival of our brothers, even though this might seem to be a bother to us, and to be avoided, nevertheless accept this for the few times it happens and note how useful and healthy it is for both your body and spirit. It often happens, and not only to novices and to the infirm, but also to the veterans and the perfect, that unless their concentration of mind and their commitment to discipline are allowed some pause and relaxation from concerns, they will fall either into a lukewarm spirit, or certainly into a pernicious state of physical health. As a result, that even though such visitation of their brothers becomes frequent, this should not merely be patiently tolerated by prudent and perfect men, but also should be gratefully welcomed.’ All of this marvelously harmonizes with our daily periods of restoration afforded by the conversation of the brothers with one another. For this, too, has the same purposes and provides the same advantages pointed out by the same Abbot, who offers these comments:

254. Firstly, because it motivates us to be even more desirous of the quiet of solitude: for while in some way this hospitality might be seen to interrupt our daily routine, yet it really conserves us as tireless and constant. For if this daily schedule would never be slowed down by some interval, it could not be maintained through to the end with unwavering steadiness. Secondly, the need of restoring the body by extending human courtesy, confers upon us even greater rewards which this provides, which would be acquired with a most pleasant relaxation of the body through this demanding interruption.

255. Furthermore, since the principal end for our Congregation is the conversion of souls, this is achieved for the most part by conversing with human beings, and by speaking about divine realities gently and discreetly. For this, moreover, religious confreres can become proficient in this when they are accustomed to having conversations among themselves. These more often ought to be concerning divine matters. And thus, they learn by practice to be silent at the proper times, and also to speak fruitfully and prudently at the proper times. This is the supreme kind of silence, as St. Ambrose pointed out [*In Ps 118*, Oct. 2, and c. 10, Book I, *de Off.*], noting: ‘Pythagoras imposed silence on his own followers, so that by not speaking one would learn how to speak. David, though, noted that we would learn how to speak by talking, for how can one do so without an exercise in the doctrine? Or, how can there be progress, without practice?’ And he concludes: ‘Therefore, so that those who would like to learn caution in speaking, would not neglect those means which are natural; let them make use of those means for safe-guarding the tongue.’

256. That which **St. Thomas Aquinas** counsels [II-II, q.168, a. 2] is to be heeded: ‘be careful so that religious gravity might not be totally destroyed.’ He cites a similar admonition from St. Ambrose [Book I, *Offic.*, c. 20]: ‘Let us take care so that while we might intend to rest the mind, we dissolve all harmony, as a concert of good works.’ To this responds the elegant insight of St. Basil [*Const. Mon.*, c. 13]: ‘In conversation, all base witticisms, and all scurrilous, biting banter, and the like, are to be altogether avoided.’ And further on, he adds: ‘If, at times, we make use of these, for the sake of alleviating somewhat the cause of sadness in speaking, we are brought to joviality, this whole enterprise must be totally such that our speech be full of spiritual pleasantries and seasoned with evangelical salt, which is the more interior. All our conversation must breathe outwardly of the pleasing

odor of wisdom, and might delight the listener in a two-fold manner, both by a relaxation of spirit, and a celebration of intelligence.'

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Chapter 8

Mutual Communication with Distant Members by Letter

257. There should be this communication not only among those confreres which would join the spirits of those dwelling in the same place into one heart and soul, but also that communication of letters should not be lacking for those who are absent, as this serves the same purpose.

258. Therefore, the exchange of letters between superiors and confreres ought to be frequent. Let them often exchange information about one another, and all that they hear, which might be beneficial for edification.

259. St. Basil states [*Reg. Mon.* 70, c. 1]: 'Whoever by the benefit of God has done something good, he should also make this known to the others, so that the glory of God might be the more continuously effected.' And He offers for this **the examples** of the Apostles [**Ac 14:26; Ep 6:21**].

260. Hence, St. Basil teaches the same writing to St. Ambrose [Letter 55]. Among the great gifts of God he numbers 'that for those separated for a very long time on account of the distance of their assigned places, there is given the possibility of coming together through the consolation of letters.' And further on, he encourages each to fulfill this necessary office of charity, and says: 'You have already laid the foundation of love between us, now strive to encourage and build on this structure by the diligence of our mutual encouragement. For by this pact we can be joined in spirit, even though we are separated from one the other by very long distance in our terrestrial dwelling.'

261. This also was the custom in the ancient Church, that there should be Letters of Communication [this is what they called them] among the faithful. It was by means of these that the early Catholics were accustomed to communicate among themselves, and offer witness concerning their faith. Both Optatus and Augustine [Book 2, of the *Donat. Schism*; Letter 163 to Eleus.] mention this.

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Chapter 9

Mutual Concern for the Spiritual Progress of the Confreres

262. Since the end of the Congregation is to work for the salvation of souls, and as a result, this asks for ministries that are accommodated to this purpose, each member should in the very first place work for and desire first and with greater commitment for the salvation of his own brothers, over that of externs, because charity is most ordered. Hence, just as each one is inclined to seeking first his own spiritual salvation before that of others; so too, he would intend first among these others, and would seek, the spiritual salvation of his own brothers, that of the entire Congregation, before that of externs.

263. Therefore, there should arise that care and diligence which the Superiors of the Congregation ought to maintain for the spiritual progress of their sons.

264. From this also there should be manifest that inclination and preparation of soul for receiving the correction from others, as well as assisting in the correction of others, with due charity.

265. Therefore, in like manner, there are needed that mutual care of all through conversations and discourses favoring fraternal charity, and the zeal for encouraging each other to the exercise of virtues and perfection.

266. St. John Chrysostom comments elegantly on that expression in John [cf. 17:11 b, 21, 22], 'that they may be one even as we are'. He states: 'Nothing can be compared to the harmony and mutual union of wills- for by it, one becomes many. For if there are two, or ten, in agreement, an individual will no longer be just one person, but each one of the community will be as ten, and you will find one in the ten, and ten in the one.' And further on: 'This is the excellence of love, in the strength of which one is both indivisible and multiple, and one can be in many places at once, in Persia and also in Rome. And what nature cannot do, love can.' [Hom. 71, in Jn 16].

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ELEVENTH PART

FAMILIAR CONVERSATION WITH OUR
NEIGHBORS TOWARD THEIR SALVATION

267-297

Chapter 1

That Familiarity that is to be avoided

267. St. Basil says [Rules 5 & 13 from his longer rules]: ‘Unless we alienate ourselves from the necessity of family ties and from the familiar exchange with seculars, and shift away from that habit of mind as into another world, in no way will we attain the purpose of our spirit.

268. St. Basil says further [In *Const. Monast.*, c. 7]: ‘The greatest care is to be expended by us when we come to dealing with externs, and only after having made use of diligence and circumspection.’

269. From such familiarity with seculars there often follows that it then becomes necessary often to visit them, and to be visited by them. However, both of these are contrary to the cloister of religious, which all the Fathers commend.

270. As a result, then, it often happens that religious become entangled in secular matters, which run contrary to Paul’s precept: ***No man, being a soldier to God, entangles himself with secular business.*** [2 Tm 2:4].

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Chapter 2

The Proper Manner of Conversing with our Neighbors

271. Let there be proposed to each one **the example of Christ the Lord**, Who has so established his own life that he would converse with men and women, and that He would eat and drink with them. Nevertheless, He not only observed perfection, but He also adhered to the most perfect state of life.

272. Likewise, the example of the **Apostles**, whom, as we have known, have lived the state of religious life and of perfection. And yet, they conversed familiarly with their neighbors, and they made themselves the servants of all, that they might gain all [cf. **1 Co 9:19**].

273. Thus, the Council of Mainz, held under Leo III, decreed: ‘the ministers of the altar, as well as the Monks, should totally abstain from secular matters.’ And adds: ‘However, a proper matter is not to be contradicted, on account of different necessities, because we read that even the **Holy Apostles** had to conduct some business.

So, therefore, we correctly deduce that in the worldly matters of the Apostles conducted for the salvation of souls, conversing with seculars is not contrary to the religious

state. To converse with seculars for this purpose is according to the statutes of the Institute.

274. The ancient Monks, when it was necessary to deal with their neighbors, would leave their solitude, so that they could come among them. So, it is read in the life of the Divine Antony by Athanasias and Surium and in Sozomenus, where he says [Bk 1 *Hist.* c. 13] that Antony, on behalf of his fellow men and women, would come into the city. He says: 'Very often many would come and engage him to plead their case before the magistrates and the principal citizens.'

275. Theodoretus also says of him [Bk 4 of the *Hist.*, c. 24 and 25]: 'Having set aside his solitude, he would go through that city [of Alexandria], where he would instruct all.' And this is related of many others in that source.

276. St. Basil [in *Reg. Brev.* 311] asks whether it is fitting for the monks to go to visit others, and he responds: 'The duty of visiting others is one of those undertakings that is most pleasing to God. However, the one who does exercise this ministry, ought to be wise in understanding, and prudent in responding, and to carry out what has been said: ***Let your speech be always in grace seasoned with salt: that you may know how you ought to answer every man.*** [Col 4:6].

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Chapter 3

How we can attain the Purpose of the Congregation through Friendly Conversation

277. In the first place, in order to conduct the office of Confessor in a perfect manner, it is often necessary to deal in a familiar manner with penitents outside of Confession. The purpose of this is either for their greater instruction, for their spiritual consolation, or to conserve them in the practice of confessing frequently, and in performing good works, which spring from this.

278. Then, because general sermons, or lectures, while they may be necessary for the community, unless they are furthered in a holy manner by the warmth of familiar conversation, and digested, as it were, are very easily forgotten. Furthermore, what is often necessary is to descend from that generality to the manner and measure and particular circumstances accommodated to each one, which ought to be handled most especially in private conversations.

279. Finally, because men and women of the world are more often material rather than spiritual, it is necessary to come down somewhat to their level, and by honest, familiar conversation to win them over, and attract them, so that little by little they might be disposed to spiritual discourses. For although at times conversations on indifferent matters might be mixed in, if these are undertaken with this intention, or even better, just tolerated, they are not a waste of time, but they are useful and religious.

280. And since *God gave to every one of them commandment concerning his neighbor* [Si 17:12], not only the Priests by their counsel and exhortation, but also the Students themselves, and the Novices, whenever this permission may be granted to them, and even the Coadjutor Brothers, each one according to his ability and as the circumstances allow, will give every effort to draw their neighbors to virtue in whatever private conversations that might come up.

281. However, with regard to dealing with women, it has already been stated above how and when with what prudence this would be done, and what had to be carefully observed in this matter.

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Chapter 4

Two Conditions by which this Means is accommodated to the Religious State

282. The first condition is the right intention of charity, or of the state of religion, i.e., that it is conducted either out of necessity, or for a pious reason, because friendship, or conversation with seculars, considered in itself, pertains to the matters of this world, unless it is raised to a higher order. Hence, St. Basil [d. *Rule* 311, of the shorter rules] states: 'That activity of visiting, either solely for the cause of blood relationship, or out of friendship, is alien to our profession.' Here he proposes two motives which from the merely human aspect can be considered most upright. And yet, such an undertaking asks for something more sublime, in order for an action of this nature to be in harmony with the religious state. So, he has not said that that it is 'evil' to visit relatives, or friends, for this reason alone, that they are simply relatives or friends, but he has said that this is 'alien' to the religious state.

283. The second condition is: that it be carried on with great moderation and circumspection. Moreover, the manner and the measure are to be taken from the purpose already mentioned, in which two aspects need to be taken into consideration. One of these pertains to God, or, which comes to the same, for one's own growth in charity: and the other pertains to the good of our neighbors. For, unless some fruit is hoped for our neighbors, all such conversation is a waste of time. Furthermore, St. Bernard states [Letter 8]: 'Right order requires that one first strive to satisfy one's own conscience, and then, that of others. Indeed the first level of piety, about which it is written, is this: *Have pity on your own soul pleasing God* [Si 30:24]. From this first step, ordered charity proceeds by a straight path, for indeed the precept is to love the other in the measure of oneself.'

284. And so, among the very first principles: it is required that this conversation should not be excessive, because in no way could such a practice not impede one's own spiritual growth. Moreover, according to the doctrine of **St. Thomas** [II-II, q. 187, a. 2] this undertaking will be excessive for these three reasons:

1. if it be carried on without the Superior's permission;
2. if it impedes one's own spiritual exercises, and works of divine worship, which each religious is obligated to fulfill according to his rule;
3. if it should so occupy and distract the religious soul that it in some way would render it secular.

However, anyone who would be faithful to the religious state regarding the first two situations here would also maintain right reason toward God, and can hope in the divine assistance, so that he would not fail in the third, but would observe right order. Moreover, to inform the Superior, regarding his own weakness and condition, in so far as this will be possible, is an excellent counsel, and supremely necessary in our Congregation, so that the Superior would not assign anyone to those tasks in which he would become entangled, or burdened with so many activities toward his neighbor that he could not sustain these without spiritual harm to himself.

285. It also pertains to this same moderation that any activity, which is taken up in behalf of our neighbor should be decent and proper for the religious state, because the good of the religious life is to be preferred over one's own good. And for this reason the religious should not engage in commerce, the drawing up of wills, or the execution of them, or that he should be engaged in public affairs, or become involved in any others of this nature, in behalf of one's neighbor, even though he might hope to obtain some spiritual fruit for him from these [Cajetan, in: II-II, q. 187, a. 2].

286. However, it is one thing to put on the dress of a merchant, or to pretend to be engaged in this line of work, so that an opening could be found either for the preaching of the faith, or for some other similar duty of piety, which not a few Saints actually did. In the same way, it is sometimes permissible to don a military uniform, or that of some other secular activity, or to simulate a business transaction, for the ultimate purpose of conversing with hidden Catholics, and of maintaining or increasing the faith among them, which the Missionaries did from time to time. There is no lie involved in this, nor deception, nor anything else that would be less fitting for the religious state, when it will be made clear for what purpose, or out of what need, this would be undertaken.

287. Nor is it a worldly undertaking to take up some work, which the monks of old and even St. Paul himself did, so that from what one is able to sell for his efforts, he might support himself or come to the help of his neighbors, as long as this endeavor is actually indifferent and common in itself.

288. However, there are two principles by which one might discern the decency, or indecency of such an activity:

First, if it is already prohibited of itself, because it is evil either of itself, or by common law, i.e., because it is forbidden for clerics, to whom religious are equal in this, either when it is prohibited by the proper law, or the special law of the religious life [cf. **St. Thomas**, the article above: II-II, q. 187, a. 2].

The second principle is that if such an enterprise is of itself of such a nature that it could hardly be undertaken without danger of sin, as St. Gregory stated [Hom 24, in the

Gospels]. And the same principle holds with due proportion, if the task should excessively occupy the spirit with the care and solicitude for temporal goods. However, because in this there can be broad latitude, so, except for the law or obedience due to the Superior, no certain rule may be prescribed, but each is to employ his prudent judgment, and the practice of the observant and God-fearing religious is to be observed, and that common sense of people with balanced view, and judging that such an enterprise is, or is not alien to the religious state.

289. Therefore, no one of our Confreres will assume, or promise any undertaking, even a pious one, without the permission of the Superior.

290. Moreover, as it was stated from the outset, our Congregation does not admit of the ordinary care of souls. This is understood with respect had for any community of seculars, and especially of the monasteries and congregations of religious women. But this is also so not only for these, but also with regard to any particular care of either men, or especially of the ordinary care of women. And no Confrere will accept, as though assuming almost by his office, or of allowing any obligation of both parties, or one of these parties, nor admit the obedience of any other person.



Chapter 5

The Manner of visiting or assisting our Neighbors in Danger of Death

291. Every care must be taken that those confreres of ours who assist our neighbors to die well, be experienced in this ministry. They should know what to do in this situation and what manner to bring to bear in this moment of time upon which eternity depends. There should not be lacking those who would hear the confessions of the sick, and who might be of assistance to the dying.

292. When any of our confreres might be called to some sick person, whether he be poor, or rich - whether he is laboring under this, or that malady, and at any hour of the day or the night, 'let him approach this person as quickly as possible, and having entered the sick room, let him sprinkle holy water upon him, and throughout the room, praying the antiphon, *Asperges me, Domine*, and the prescribed prayers.' [Council of Nantes, c. 4].

293. After these initial rites, he will direct that all leave the room, and approaching the bed where the sick person is lying, he will speak to him gently, kindly, that he might place all his hope in God, that he might patiently bear this visitation of God, that he might believe that this will profit his purification and temporal punishment, that he promise emendation, that if God should grant him life, he will look for penance for the sins he has committed, that he would dispose of his worldly goods while he is still conscious and enjoys the use of reason, that he might redeem his sins by giving alms, that he might pardon those who have sinned against him, that he might maintain the right faith and belief, that he never despair of the mercy of God.

When the mind of the sick person is thus relieved with these and other like acts of encouragement, after having given the blessing, the priest will withdraw, to return after a

little while, that he might give some space so that the sick person might be able to think of his sins.

294. Priests who are called to assist those who are close to death will stay with them only as long as necessity demands. However, even though it should prove necessary, it might happen that he should exhort the sick in this situation to drawing up their wills, nevertheless, the confrere should not actually assist them in so composing their wills.

295. For the same reason, where it should prove necessary, the sick person should be exhorted that by reason of the danger he is under, he should dispose of his goods. Nonetheless, there is not to be offered to him any counsel concerning the manner of this disposition, unless only in those matters which may be necessary for his salvation, as making restitution to another, the payment of his debts, appointing his necessary heirs, so that, in so far as it is possible to do so, every occasion of later law-suits and litigation be removed. It is not necessary to descend into particulars, because this presents the same inconveniences.

296. If, however, the sick person should ask for some information concerning those matters about which he can make some disposition, it pertains to the office of Confessor to counsel that which he might judge to be expedient for the greater service of God, and for the greater benefit of the soul of the testator. In order that our Confreres do this in the proper manner, let them observe the following:

297. No one of our Confreres should, or can encourage any testator to leave perpetual alms to the houses and churches of the Congregation. Nor should any Confrere make any effort to have legacies, or debts, or any ill-gotten or doubtful goods, be left to, or bestowed on the Congregation [Clem. 1. *De Privil.*].

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Chapter 1 The Manner of the Regime

298. Although the Superior in governing ought to use the counsel of his confreres, St. Benedict states that 'nevertheless that which he maintains to be more salutary, depends on his judgment, and then all shall obey him' [Rule 3 and 65].

299. St. Basil states [Rule 48 of the more extended version]: 'In no way should anyone curiously seek to find out the Superior's plans, or inquire anxiously about what is being done, with the exception, though, of those who are closest to the Superior with their level of dignity and the prudence of their counsel. However, it will be necessary for him, whenever he is deliberating a matter, to make use of their counsel and mature consideration, thereby fulfilling that precept: ***Do all things with counsel*** [Si 32:24; Pr 13:10 and 24].

300. Chapters of the Confreres are also to be convoked, in which defects are corrected, and good conduct is to be proposed. Again St. Basil says [c. 54]: 'And in these, abundant use must be made of the opinion of the many, with greater authority, that might be judged what is the middle ground that has emerged.' Nevertheless, the judgment of all will not be the definitive one, not even when it is passed concerning individual and ordinary defects.

301. Therefore, every Superior of the Congregation, according to the nature and limits of his office, is to have integral authority, and only councilors, and not co-judges will be added to him. In the first place, because this form of regime is better in itself, and in its own kind, in the common view. And then, because in the religious state, without doubt, this can contribute the most to perfection. This is so because in this manner a more pure and more perfect obedience is exercised; also because by this, there is a greater dependence of the members on the head; and also, in this manner, a greater union ought to result, as that between the father and his sons; furthermore, in this way there is removed the occasion of multiplying the dignities of so many judges, and prelatures in religious life, and consequently, there is diminished the occasion for ambition. Then, lastly, because if orders, judgments and other expeditious handling of matters were to depend on the opinion and will of many, there are multiplied the dangers of schisms and divisions: which it would seem would be of far greater importance, and of a greater frequency than there would be if the power of the regime would be placed in one alone, and tempered only by the counsels of the sage.

302. However, in matters of greater moment with lasting effect, it is not the Superior alone, but the Superior himself with his council and the decisive vote of the majority of the Professed Confreres, have the right of legislating. Affairs of this kind would be the making, or changing, of statutes; declaring, or resolving doubts which may arise concerning them; the selling, or dissolving houses once founded, and other such more serious concerns.

303. In other matters, which are not of such major moment, the Superior, assisted, in so far as he himself will deem necessary, by the counsel of his confreres, has the full right of

giving orders and commanding whatever will seem to him in the Lord to pertain to the glory of God and the common good.

304. An Admonitor should also be constituted, who having first prayed to God, with the proper modesty and humility, ought to advise the Superior whatever he might feel there is required in the Superior for the greater service and praise of God. For indeed this office toward the Prelates is most necessary, as St. Basil has taught [Rule 24, from those more extended].

305. St. Basil adds [ib.]: 'The admonition of this kind is to be delegated to those who by age and prudence stand out over the others, so that there will be no harm to the ordinary discipline.

306. The Superior of the Institute will of himself establish the Director in every other house which will be founded, and which might be founded. Or, should he communicate this power to anyone, it will nevertheless still be up to the Superior of the entire Institute, to confirm, or remove those local Superiors.

307. Therefore, the judgment concerning the proper grade of each confrere, and the determination and distribution of duties, will be entirely in the hands of the Superior of the Institute - or, of those whom he himself substitutes for himself with this authority: this is so that the necessary proper order might be maintained in every well established community.

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Chapter 2 Denunciation

308. Smaragdus relates this rule [n. 24, in the *Rule of St. Benedict*]: 'If anyone should know of a confrere who cannot stand the regimen of the monastery, and is thinking of running away, and who does not immediately make this known, should have no doubt that he is a participant in the perdition of the other, and he should be separated from the company of his brothers, until this other might be reclaimed.

309. In the same source it is stated [c. 3, from the Abbots, Paul and Stephen]: If someone sees another, in any place performing something illicit, either in word or deed, and puts off making this known to the Prior, he should understand that he enables the sin of the other, and through every consideration sins in equal manner, because he thereby becomes a most bitter enemy of his own soul, and that of the other, for whom he covers up.

310. In the Constitutions of the Order of Preachers, it is prescribed: Each one should denounce whatever he has seen, or heard, so that vices may not be hidden from his Prelate [Dist. 5, c. 13, § 4].

311. In this same source [c. 18, § 6] it is stipulated: If anyone should commit anything of this kind outside the Monastery, the Confrere who is with him, should strive to make his excessive behavior known as soon as possible.

312. In the Constitutions of the Friars Minor [edited by William Farinario, and approved by the General Chapter in the time of St. Bonaventure], it is stated: Out of obedience, those Friars who go out of the house, on their return are held to make known in a secret manner to their Guardian, any notable excesses.'

313. St. Ignatius [in his **Constitution n. 63**] states: For the candidate's greater progress in his spiritual life, and especially for his greater lowliness and humility, he should be asked whether he will be willing to have all his errors and defects, and anything else which will be noticed or known about him, manifested to his superiors by anyone who knows them outside of Confession.

314. **St. Ignatius** also adds that the future Novice on entering the Society, is to be questioned at the beginning whether he would be content to have all his errors and defects, etc...[In **Examen c. 4, § 8 = CSJ n. 63**].

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