

1668

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CODEX SARZANA

COMMON RULES AND CONSTITUTIONS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

The Purpose and Charter of the Congregation

Since our Lord Jesus Christ was sent into the world always to do his Father's will, to preach the gospel to the poor, to give the apostles and their successors the knowledge of salvation for the forgiveness of sins, and since the little Congregation of the Mission has been established to follow in his footsteps in a special way and according to its poor power, it is fitting that its main purpose should be: first, to do likewise the will of God in all things; second, to preach the gospel to the poor, especially the country people; third, to help ecclesiastics to acquire the knowledge of saints by which they should guide people in the way of salvation.

This congregation has both clerical and lay members. The work of the clerics is, following the example of Christ himself and his disciples, to go around to towns and villages preaching and catechizing, breaking the bread of God's word to the little ones in a way that people could understand, recommending and hearing general confessions of one's entire past life, settling quarrels and disputes, establishing the Confraternity of Charity, conducting seminaries for externs established in our houses and teaching in them; giving spiritual retreats, directing in our houses conferences for extern ecclesiastics, and doing other kinds of work to which divine providence might call us. And the purpose of the lay members is to help the clerics in all these ministries by doing the work of Martha in the way prescribed by the superior and cooperating with them by their prayers, tears, mortifications and good example.

In order that this congregation, with the help of divine grace, might attain the end which it has proposed for itself, it is necessary that it make every effort to put on the spirit of Christ which manifests itself particularly in the Gospel teaching: in his poverty, chastity and obedience; in his love for the sick; in his modesty; in the way of living and acting which he taught his disciples; in his relation to others; in his daily exercises of piety; in the missions and other works performed for the benefit of the people. All these things will be found in the following chapters.

Gospel Teaching

Each one must strive, above all else, to ground himself in this truth: the teaching of Christ can never deceive, while that of the world is always false, since Christ himself declares that the latter is like a house built upon sand, whereas he compares his own to a building founded upon solid rock. For this reason, the Congregation shall always profess to act according to the teaching of Christ himself, never according to that of the world.

Since among the first evangelical maxims is the following: Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be given you as well, the congregation shall endeavor to prefer to the spiritual to the temporal, the salvation of

the soul to the health of the body, the glory of God to the vanity of the world. Indeed, it should be determined with Saint Paul to choose privation, infamy, torture, and even death rather than be separated from the love of Christ. Therefore, it shall not be solicitous about temporal goods; rather, it shall cast its care upon the Lord, convinced that, as long as it will be rooted in this charity and grounded in this hope, it will always remain under the protection of the God of heaven, and thus no evil shall befall it nor will it be wanting in any good, even though it may think that all its possessions are about to be lost.

Since it is the primary end of the congregation to do God's will in all things and, if that is done rightly, it is a certain means for the kingdom of God to come to us and through us to our neighbor, each one of us shall strive to the best of his ability to make himself familiar with this exercise and doing it perfectly: first, by observing divine and human commandments; second, by avoiding what is forbidden; third, by choosing from among indifferent things those which are repugnant to our senses; fourth, by accepting repugnant things with calmness and by doing all this in order to fulfill, as Christ did, the good pleasure of God in all things.

Since the Lord Jesus requires of us the simplicity of the dove which consists not only in the simple declaration of things as they are in the heart without useless evasions, but also in doing things without disguise or artifice, having in mind nothing but God, therefore the congregation shall earnestly strive to do all things in the same spirit of simplicity, recalling that God communicates with the simple and that he hides heavenly secrets from the wise and prudent of this world, and reveals them to the little ones.

But, since Christ, while commending the simplicity of the dove, commands at the same time that we embrace the prudence of the serpent, by which virtue we speak and act discreetly, we will therefore be prudently silent about those things that it is not expedient to reveal, especially if they are evil and unlawful; and even in those that are in some way good or lawful, we will hold back circumstances that border on dishonor to God or harm to the neighbor, or that can incline our heart to vainglory. Moreover, since this virtue is concerned, when it is question of things to be done, with the choice of means suitable to the attainment of the end, it shall be a holy and inviolable principle among us always to use divine means for divine ends, and to think and judge about matters according to the mind and judgment of Christ, never, indeed, according to the standards of the world; nor even according to the feeble reasoning of our own intellect. In so acting we shall be prudent like serpents and simple like doves.

Each one shall also show great diligence in learning this lesson taught by Christ, Learn of men, for I am meek and humble of heart. By it we are reminded, as he himself affirms, that the earth is possessed through meekness, because by the exercise of this virtue men's hearts are well disposed to be turned back to the Lord, something which is not accomplished by those who deal harshly and roughly with the neighbor. Moreover, heaven is acquired by humility, for the love of self-abasement is wont to raise us up, leading us step by step from virtue to virtue, until we arrive at our goal.

But this humility, which Christ so often recommended to us by word and example, and which the Congregation must make every effort acquire, demands these

three conditions: first, that we sincerely consider ourselves deserving of men's blame; second, that others see our imperfections, and so hold us in contempt; third, that we conceal, if possible, under the cloak of our lowliness whatever God may be pleased to work through us or in us; but if this is impossible, that we then give the whole credit to the divine mercy and the merits of others. This is the foundation of all evangelical perfection, the node of the whole spiritual life. All [other] good things will come with it to him who will possess this humility, while he who will lack it shall be deprived even of the good which he possesses, and will be disturbed by continual anxiety.

Since Christ has said: If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, everyone shall devote himself to a continual denial of his own will and judgment, also to mortification of all his senses in both licit and illicit things, especially those which are more opposed to the Gospel teaching..

All shall likewise renounce immoderate love for their relatives, following in this the counsel of Christ who excluded from the number of his disciples those who did not hate father and mother, brothers and sisters. To those who would leave them for the sake of the gospel he promised a hundred-fold in this world and life everlasting in the world to come. From this we learn what an obstacle to Christian perfection are flesh and blood. Parents are to be cherished, however, with a spiritual love and according to Christ.

Everyone shall strive with a special earnestness to acquire that indifference which Christ and the saints practiced so assiduously. Consequently, no one shall ever cling with any inordinate affection to works or to persons or places, especially to one's native land, or to any such things; rather shall he be prepared and ready, at the will and pleasure of the superior, to give up all these things willingly and accept in good spirit refusals or changes that may come from him with regard to them. They should be ready, moreover, to admit that all this was well done in the Lord.

In honor of the common life which Christ our Lord chose to lead in order to be like others and so to gain them more easily to God the Father, all shall avoid singularity in all things that could attract attention of others, especially regarding food, clothing, pious exercises and particular opinions realizing that we are not allowed to be singular, except in the most exact observance of our rules and constitutions and that only in this consists the whole striving for perfection to which we are called. So also Christ taught us by his example when he was exceptional in nothing else but in fulfilling the law and commandments of the Father and in practicing the virtues which he recommended to others.

Acts of charity toward the neighbor ought to be practiced constantly by us, such as, to do to others that which we would justly wish them to do to us; second, to agree with others and to approve of everything of which the Lord would approve; third, to bear with one another without complaint; fourth, to weep with those who weep; fifth, to rejoice with those who rejoice; sixth, to show respect for one another; seventh, to be sincerely kind and obliging to others; finally, to become all things to all men that we may gain all for Christ. It is to be understood, however, that in all these things, nothing will be found contrary to divine commandments or the rules of our congregation.

If divine Providence should ever permit that the Congregation or one of its houses or anyone of its members be attacked or troubled unjustly by calumny or persecution, we will praise and bless God for it and, looking upon it as a great good and perfect gift coming down to us from the Father of lights, we will give him thanks with joy, considering it all joy when we fall into various trials, and everyone shall abstain, as much as possible, from any complaint, invective or any revenge against anyone who will calumniate or persecute us. Instead, he will pray for all of them and, when possible, do good to them. Christ taught us this by word and example, and about the apostles it is written: They departed from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus.

Although we ought to observe, as far as we can, all the above-mentioned evangelical teachings as being most holy and beneficent, nevertheless, because some of them are more suitable to us, namely those which recommend in a special way simplicity, meekness, mortification and zeal for souls, the Congregation shall apply itself very diligently to cultivate and practice them, so that these five virtues may be, so to speak, the soul of the whole Congregation, and so that all the actions of each of its members may be animated and seasoned by them.

Since Satan constantly tries to turn us away from the practice of these teachings by proposing his own so entirely contrary to them, each one shall use the greatest prudence and watchfulness to resist and overcome resolutely and courageously all these temptations especially those which are more opposed to our Charter, such as: First, the prudence of the flesh; second, the wish to be seen by men; third, the desire always to subject others to our judgment and will; fourth, the pursuit of the satisfaction of one's own nature in all things; fifth, insensibility to the honor of God and the salvation of the neighbor.

Since the evil spirit frequently disguises himself as an angel of light and may even mislead us at times by his deceptions, all shall carefully guard themselves against them, and shall endeavor to learn how to recognize and overcome them. And since experience teaches that the surest and safest remedy in such cases is to reveal the trouble as soon as possible to those who have been appointed by God for this purpose, each one, when he finds himself beset by thoughts suspected of illusion, or by any serious trouble or temptation, shall reveal it as soon as possible to the superior or to the director appointed for this purpose, in order that a suitable remedy may be applied. Each one shall accept and approve this remedy as coming from the hand of God and shall make use of it with respect and confidence. He shall take care above all not to make it known in any way to anyone else, whether confrere or extern, since experience shows that by such manifestations the matter only becomes worse and that others are infected with the same contagion, so that in the end the Congregation itself is brought clearly in danger or ruin.

And since God has given each one a command with regard to his neighbor and since we ought to assist one another as members of the same mystical body, therefore, when anyone knows that another is being troubled by serious temptation or has fallen into a considerable fault, he will without delay in the spirit of charity and humility notify the superior about it. Moreover, for the sake of greater progress, each one shall

take it in good part that all his defects are made known in the same spirit to the superior by anyone who may have observed them outside confession.

Since Our Lord came into the world to re-establish the reign of his father over souls by snatching them from the demon, who had cunningly deceived and enslaved them through an inordinate desire for riches, honors and pleasures, our merciful savior judged it expedient to fight his adversary with the opposite weapons of poverty, chastity and obedience, and this he did until death. And since the little Congregation of the Mission sprung up in the Church of God to serve the salvation of souls, especially the poor country people, it could use no weapons more powerful and suitable than those which the Eternal Wisdom used so easily and successfully. Therefore, our missionaries shall profess in the Lord that they shall perpetually and faithfully observe this same poverty, chastity and obedience.

Poverty

Since then Christ himself, the true Lord of all things practiced poverty to such an extent that he had not whereupon to lay his head and also established those who labored with him on the missions, that is, his apostles and disciples, in a like grade of poverty so that they might have nothing of their own, and thus unimpeded, might more easily overcome that desire for riches which is the ruin of almost the entire world, all and each one shall more exactly observe this virtue, knowing for certain it will be an impregnable bulwark by which the Congregation, with the aid of divine grace, will be preserved forever. Therefore, no one shall have anything of his own, on the contrary, each one shall strive always to choose for himself what is cheaper and more suitable for a poor person. No one shall use anything as his own, no one shall lend or borrow anything, nor dispose of anything in the house with the superior's permission.

No one shall keep money in his own possession; nor, in the possession of others, not only money but anything else, without the permission of the superior.

No one shall have books without permission. In those books, however, which he is using by permission, he shall not write anything nor make any marks.

No one shall take anything that has been given for the use of others nor shall he receive anything in any way, either for himself or for someone else, without the permission of the superior.

Our rooms shall never be locked nor shall there be any strongbox or any other thing under lock, without the permission of the superior.

No one on leaving one house and going to another shall take away with him anything without the permission of the superior.

No one shall aspire to any benefice, any dignity or office, either in the congregation itself or outside.

Chastity

The Savior of the world clearly showed how highly he esteemed chastity and how ardently he desired to instill it in the hearts of men when he chose to be born by the working of the Holy Spirit beyond the laws of nature and of a spotless virgin and when he said: Anyone who looks lustfully at a woman has already committed adultery in his heart; and, if your eye is an occasion of sin to you, pluck it out and throw it away; he appeared to men so removed from the opposite vice that although the most atrocious crimes were falsely imputed to him, yet we nowhere read that he was even suspected, much less accused of this, even by his most bitter enemies. Therefore, it is of greatest importance that the Congregation be inflamed with the ardent desire of acquiring this virtue and of practicing it always most perfectly and profess it everywhere. Our concern in this regard ought to be greater, the more the works of the Mission oblige us to an almost continuous association in the world with persons of both sexes. Hence, in this matter of preserving chastity unblemished both in body and mind, each one shall use all care, diligence and precaution and shall neglect no means which he knows to be of help in this matter. For this purpose he shall most vigilantly guard his interior and exterior senses. He shall never converse alone with women. In speaking or writing to them he shall entirely avoid words indicating any love for them; he should never come to near to them, either hearing their confessions or speaking to them outside the confessional. And since intemperance is the mother and nurse of impurity, each one shall be temperate in eating and shall make use of ordinary fare, and of wine that has been generously watered.

Moreover, all shall persuade themselves that it is not enough for Missionaries to have attained the highest degree of this virtue; it is further required that every effort be made to prevent anyone from having even the slightest suspicion about any of our members with regard to the contrary vice. This suspicion alone, even though entirely unjust, would do more harm to the Congregation than any other crimes that might be falsely imputed to us. Therefore, to prevent this evil, or to remove it, we shall use every means that can be had, not only ordinary but also extraordinary, such as to refrain on occasion from some works otherwise lawful and even pious and holy, if this will be judged expedient in the Lord.

Obedience

In honor of the obedience which our Lord Jesus Christ taught us by word and example when he willed to be subject to the most blessed virgin, to Saint Joseph and to others in authority, both good and bad, we will strictly obey all who are placed over us considering them in the Lord and the Lord in them. We will, in the first place, faithfully and sincerely render reverence and obedience to our most Holy Father, the pope. We will also, according to our Charter, humbly and constantly obey their Excellencies, our bishops, in whose dioceses the Congregation has been established in all our functions regarding the neighbor, according to the rules of our Charter, like those servants in the Gospels obeyed their masters, so that we will go and come back according to their good pleasure, doing whatever they should command, and undertake nothing for the benefit of the people of their dioceses without their permission, so that we can never under any pretext be dispensed or excused from this obedience. Moreover, we shall never undertake anything in parish churches without the consent of the pastors.

All shall obey the superior general promptly, joyfully and steadfastly in all things where sin is not apparent, and with a certain blind obedience, submitting their judgment and will, not only to his will known to them, but even to his intention, judging that always to be better which he commands, and committing themselves to his disposition, like the file in the hands of a carpenter. Likewise, they will accept with humility the admonitions he will give them and penances he will impose.

This obedience shall likewise be rendered to other superiors, both local and visitors, and to the subordinate officials as well. Each one shall also strive to obey the sound of the bell as the voice of Christ, so that at its first signal he will be prepared to leave a letter unfinished.

No one shall write, send, or open letters without consent of the superior. Each one shall hand over to him the letters he writes, so that he may forward or retain them as he sees fit.

No one shall eat or drink outside the accustomed times without the superior's permission.

Although the pious custom of neither asking for nor refusing anything shall always be practiced among us, nevertheless, when anyone discovers that something is either harmful to him or necessary for him, he shall examine the matter before the Lord, whether he ought to manifest it to the superior or not. He shall be indifferent toward the answer that will be given, and in this disposition he shall declare the matter to the superior, certain that through the will of the superior, the will of God is made manifest. Once it is made known, he shall accept it.

No one, having received a refusal from one superior, shall approach another superior regarding the same matter without making known to him the previous refusal and the reason for it.

No one shall preach publicly or teach catechism without the visitor's permission.

No one shall either write a book or translate a book and publish it, without the express approval and permission of the superior general.

No one of our coadjutor brothers shall aspire to the study of the Latin language. Should anyone of them feel such a desire he must try to stifle it at once as something coming from an evil spirit, who, perhaps, by a specious pride disguised as zeal for souls, is striving to bring about his ruin. Moreover, they shall not learn to read or write without the express permission of the superior general.

No one shall leave any assignment entrusted to him, even though interrupted by some unexpected business, without giving timely notification to the superior.

At specified times all shall assemble at designated place to hear whatever instructions the superior may have to give with regard to the order of the house. If any have suggestions to make, they may indicate them to him.

No one shall give orders to others, or admonish anyone, unless he has been appointed to do so by the superior.

No one shall interfere with the office or the ministry of someone else.

No one shall enter a place assigned to another office without the superior's permission, or, in case of necessity the permission of the prefect of that place.

No one shall go into another's room without a general or particular permission of the superior, nor shall he enter until he has been told to come in. Moreover, the door is to be left open while they are together.

It is also forbidden to bring others, especially outsiders, into one's own room, unless the superior's permission had been obtained.

No one shall hear confessions of either confreres or outsiders, unless he has been so designated by the superior general or the visitor, and has been appointed to it by the local superior.

Concerning the Sick

Since the care and visitation of the sick, especially the sick poor, was among the other things which Christ did, and which he very frequently recommended to those whom he sent into his vineyard, the congregation shall have a special care for visiting and assisting the sick, not only of the household but also outsiders, with the consent of the superior. We will provide them with the bodily and spiritual help that can conveniently be given them, especially on the missions. We should, moreover, give special attention to establishing the Confraternity of Charity. Whenever we visit a sick person, whether at home or outside the house, we are to look upon him not as a man but as Christ himself, who has told us that he considers such service as rendered to himself. Therefore everyone shall conduct himself modestly in the sick-room, and shall converse in a low voice, and about things that are likely to cheer and console the sick person and edify others who may be present.

Our own sick shall be persuaded that they are confined to bed in the infirmary not only to be cared for and cured by medical help, but also to teach, as from a pulpit, at least by their example, the Christian virtues, especially patience, conformity with the will of God, and obedience. In this way, let them be the good odor of Christ to all who visit them or take care of them, so that their virtue may be made perfect in illness. Since, among the other virtues demanded of the sick, obedience is very necessary, all shall show it with exactitude, not only to their spiritual but also to their medical physicians, but also to the infirmarian and others assigned to take care of them.

In order that no abuse may creep in with regard to the sick, all who feel themselves ill shall make it known to the superior or the prefect of health, or the

infirmarian. No one shall take any medicine, make use of our doctor, or consult any other, without the superior's permission.

Modesty

The modesty of Christ the Lord was so visible that thousands of people followed him into the depths of the wilderness to enjoy the sight of him and to hear the words of eternal life that came from his mouth, such that they forgot to bring with them even the necessary food and drink. The missionaries ought to imitate this lovable virtue of so great a master. Since they are obliged by our institute to have frequent dealings with the neighbor, they ought always to fear lest what they have built up in the Lord by the work of their ministry they destroy by bad example or even the least immodesty. On that account, all shall carefully observe what Saint Paul recommended to the first Christians, Let your modesty be known to all men. Moreover, in order that they may be modest in the presence of others, each one shall practice this virtue in private. Therefore, besides the particular rules prescribed in the congregation, he shall observe the following.

In the first place, they shall keep their eyes from all inordinate wandering, especially in the church, at table, and in public functions. They shall see to it that nothing frivolous or childish appears in their demeanor, nothing affected or worldly in their deportment.

No one shall leave his room unless he is decently clothed.

No one shall sleep without night clothes or sufficient covering or with open window.

All shall avoid touching one another, even in jest, except when it is proper to embrace each other as a sign of charity and greeting, for example, when one is setting out upon or returning from a journey, or when a new member has been received into the Congregation.

On returning home or leaving the house, all shall abstain from ringing the bell without restraint or repeatedly.

Everyone shall be careful to observe a decent cleanliness, especially in his clothing; at the same time, he shall by all means avoid whatever is over-nice or affected.

Everyone shall keep the poor and scanty furniture of his room clean and in good order; he shall also sweep the room every three days, and neatly make the bed after rising in the morning, unless, because of sickness or some duty, the superior has appointed another to these tasks.

Our Relations with Each Other

When Christ our Savior gathered the apostles and disciples, he gave them definite rules for them to live together well, such as to love one another; to wash each

other's feet; to go immediately to be reconciled with a brother if one should have anything against another; to travel two by two; finally, to become least among one's brethren if one wishes to be the greatest among them. Therefore, our little congregation, desirous of following in the footsteps of Christ and the disciples shall strive to observe the following rules.

In order that the charity of brotherhood and a holy union may always exist among us and be safeguarded in every way, all shall hold one another in great reverence always, however, living together as dear friends and, at the same time, carefully avoiding particular friendships as well as particular aversions, since experience shows that these two vices are the cause of divisions and the ruin of congregations.

With great care they shall avoid any appearance of contention, even for the sake of recreation; they will even strive to prefer the opinion of others to their own in all things not forbidden. If anyone holds a different opinion about some point in question he may set forth his reasons in a spirit of humility. Above all, they shall take care in conversation not to take anything with resentment or show themselves offended by anyone or give offense either by words or actions or in any other way.

As is proper, all shall show honor to the superiors and shall uncover their heads in their presence. They shall be careful not to interrupt them while they are speaking with them, or, what is worse, contradict them. All shall likewise uncover their heads in the presence of a priest; the seminarists and scholastics shall do the same in the presence of their directors and professors. The priests also shall pay this honor to one another in the Lord. However, no one shall uncover his head while at table except for the superior or some distinguished visitor.

In public conflicts and wars which may arise between Christian princes, no one shall show a preference for one side or the other, in imitation of Christ who was unwilling to arbitrate between two brothers involved in litigation, or to pass judgment on the rights of civil rulers. He would only emphasize giving them what is theirs. Therefore, everyone shall keep well away from conversations about matters of kingdoms and provinces and other worldly affairs, especially about war and the disputes between rulers and other similar rumors of the world, nor shall he write anything about this.

No one shall speak against other countries or provinces.

No one shall even in the slightest way harm the reputation of others, especially the superiors or ever complain against them or censure anything done or said in the congregation or in other communities.

No one shall complain about food, clothing or beds; nor shall he even speak about this unless is obliged to do so by reason of his office.

No one shall out of curiosity inquire about the administration of the house, nor shall he speak about it with others, or speak directly or indirectly against the rules of the congregation, or constitutions, or even its pious customs.

All shall conscientiously keep silence about the things said in chapter regarding faults and penances.

That catalogue which contains the different subjects that can be brought up in conversation shall always, as far as possible, furnish the matters for our conversations in our recreations and conversations.

In discussions we shall encourage one another to the love of our vocation and to zeal for our own perfection, always mutually praising virtue and mortification, and humbly and politely defending these virtues against those who would speak ill of them, as the Lord would have us do. But if any one of them should be repugnant to us, we will make it known only to the superior or director, taking great care not to reveal it to others either in public or private.

Silence shall be observed except in time of recreation, so that outside of that time no one shall speak except when necessary and then with a very few words and in a low voice, particularly in the church, in the sacristy, in the dormitory, and in the refectory, especially at meal-time. If, however, anyone at table needs something, the one sitting next to him shall call it to the waiter's attention by a word, if a nod or sign is not sufficient. But whenever we speak, all will try to speak in a low voice.

No confrere shall ever, without the superior's permission, hold conversation with the seminarists, the scholastics, or any others, even priests who have not yet completed the biennium after leaving the [internal] seminary, except when meeting them, with the usual greeting.

For the better observance of silence, each shall take care that, while moving about in his room or going about the house, or even in opening and closing the doors, especially at night, he avoids making noise.

Our Relations with Outsiders

Besides the rules which our savior gave to the apostles and disciples regarding their mutual relations, he added some precepts concerning right relations with their neighbor, with the scribes and Pharisees, and with the magistrates when they would be brought to their synagogues and tribunals, and also when invited to banquets. Therefore, according to his example, we will have some rules concerning our communication with outsiders.

Although our Charter obliges us to frequent association with lay persons, especially on the missions, nevertheless we shall not visit them unless obedience or necessity calls us. Even then we must be mindful of these words of our Lord: You are the light of the world, so that we may imitate the light of the sun which gives light and warmth, and which, although it passes through unclean places, yet suffers no loss of its purity.

All shall take great care not to be involved in the lawsuits of outsiders, assuming the duties of an executor of a will, carrying on business, arranging

marriages, and similar worldly pursuits, according to the advice of the apostle: No one serving as God's soldier gets involved in secular affairs.

In our houses no one shall speak with outsiders or call other confreres to speak with them, without the superior's permission.

No one shall invite any outsider to take a meal with us without the superior's permission.

No one shall take upon himself the care of any pious work, or promise his help in conducting them, or even indicate his willingness to do so, without the superior's permission.

No one shall lave the house except in the manner, at the time, and with the person approved by the superior. It is the latter's right to designate the companion, unless he has authorized another to do this. The one selected as companion shall give precedence to the other and shall let him lead the conversation.

When anyone asks the superior's permission to go somewhere, he shall at the same time tell him where and why he wants to go. As soon as he returns, he shall report to him on what he has done.

No one shall enter or leave the house except by the regular door, unless necessity or the superior's permission dispenses from this obligation.

Those who leave the house, or even those who have permission to go out and come in by the back door or through the church, shall put the marker at their name and tell the doorkeeper when they return, so that he can give a satisfactory answer to anyone inquiring about them. They shall not go out before daybreak and shall return before nightfall. As soon as they return, they shall remove the marker from their name.

No one shall bring messages or letters to a confrere from an outsider or from a confrere to an outsider, without the consent of the superior.

No one shall make known our rules or constitutions to outsiders without the express permission of the general or of the visitor. However, with the local superior's permission, the common rules may be shown to prospective members at the time of their spiritual retreat, and even some time before, if this seems to be advisable in the Lord.

No one shall eat or drink outside a [community] house without the superior's permission except when traveling.

No one while traveling and passing through a place where there is a house of the congregation shall go to any other lodging, and shall be under obedience to the local superior. The same shall be observed by anyone who comes there for business. They shall not undertake anything without the advice and direction of the same superior or of the visitor, if they should remain there for some time. The superior of

the other house, however, retains his authority over the companion whom he took from his own house as regards confession and direction.

Spiritual Practices to be Observed in the Congregation

Christ the Lord and his disciples had their spiritual practices, such as to go up to the temple on appointed days, to withdraw at times into solitude, to give themselves to prayer, and so forth. Hence it is reasonable that this little Congregation should also have its own spiritual practices, which it shall perform most diligently and which it shall prefer to any others, unless necessity or obedience forbids it, because these practices lead more effectively to the real observance of the other rules and to the attainment of our perfection.

Since, according to the Bull of our Foundation, we ought to venerate in a special way the most Holy Trinity, the mystery of the Incarnation and the most blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, the Congregation will fulfill this most exactly, at least in the following three ways: first, by celebrating their feasts, namely the feast of the Most Holy Trinity, of the Incarnation of the Lord, and of the assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, with solemnity and the greatest possible devotion. Second, besides the veneration which each one will be able to offer privately, attending with special fervor the adorations and praises offered particularly in their honor in the Mass, in the Divine Office and in the common daily prayers. Third, by trying to instill in the minds of the people, wherever we can, by our instructions and examples, the knowledge, honor and devotion to these mysteries as best we can.

Since the most holy sacrament of the altar contains in itself, as it were, all other mysteries of our faith and since our salvation and the whole good of the Church to a certain extent depends on the worship duly rendered to it, the congregation shall pay to it the highest unceasing honor and shall zealously and untiringly endeavor that all shall render due honor and reverence to this great sacrament at least by acts customary in the Congregation, such as are among others: first, visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently; second, wherever we are when it is being carried in procession, or the ringing of a bell announces that it is being carried, we shall kneel down in adoration and, if possible, join the procession; third, whenever his holy name is pronounced, we shall reverently uncover the head; fourth, in passing by churches we shall, with head uncovered, say the words: Praised be the most holy sacrament of the altar; fifth, and especially, instruct others what they have to believe about this great mystery and how they have to venerate it, and prevent, so far as possible, that any irreverent or inappropriate act is committed against it.

To honor the solitude of Christ, especially the forty days which he spent in the desert, all who enter the congregation, both clerics and lay, shall make a spiritual retreat and a general confession of their whole past life to some priest appointed by the superior. Those who are already members of the community shall make these same spiritual exercises of retreat with a confession from the last general confession, the seminarists every six months, the rest once a year. At the same time each one shall make his spiritual communication customary in the congregation at least every three months and as often as the superior shall see fit.

All shall daily make two examinations of conscience; the one, the particular examen, shall be made before lunch and dinner on some virtue to be acquired; the other, the general examen, shall be made in the evening, on all the actions of the day.

The priests shall go to confession twice or at least once a week to one of the confessors of the house appointed for their confessions, and to no other without the permission of the superior. They shall celebrate mass every day. The others who are not priests and the coadjutor brothers, shall confess every Saturday and on the vigils of the principal feasts to one of the aforesaid confessors, unless the superior shall have appointed another. On Sundays and on the above-mentioned feasts, they shall receive Holy Communion. They shall also hear mass every day.

Although we cannot perfectly imitate Christ the Lord who spent whole nights in prayer to God in addition to his daily meditations, nevertheless, we will do so as far as we are able. Therefore, all shall devote one hour each day to mental prayer in the place assigned to it and, so far as possible, according to the method used in the congregation.

The Divine Office shall be recited by all usually in common even on the missions in a medium tone of voice without chant, in some decent place, with the exception of those places in which we are obliged to the Gregorian chant by reason of endowment or other necessity.

As far as possible, no one shall permit a day to pass without reading something from a spiritual book in keeping with the needs of his soul for a period of time determined by the superior or director. Moreover, the priests and all the other clerics shall read one chapter of the New Testament, and shall venerate this book as the rule of our rules. For greater progress, this reading shall be made while kneeling, with head uncovered, and at least at the end they shall add the following three acts: first, to adore the truths contained in this book; second, to put on the spirit with which Christ and the saints pronounced them; third, to resolve to practice the counsels found in that chapter, and to imitate the examples of virtues.

All shall be diligent in attending the spiritual conferences which shall be held at least once a week and which shall always deal with the denial of our own will and judgment, the practice of doing the divine will in all things, progress in virtues and perfection, especially brotherly union, and those five virtues which make up the spirit of the Mission.

Every Friday each one shall declare his faults in the presence of others to the superior or to the one holding the superior's place. This shall be done both at home and on the missions; and each one shall accept willingly the admonitions and penances given to him either in public or in private. Likewise, the pious custom of asking for public admonition of our faults in chapter shall be observed. Each one shall take care to give such admonition in the spirit of humility and charity.

In order that we may in some way honor the passion of Christ, each one, unless he is on the missions or making a journey, shall be content at the evening meal on Friday with one dish consisting of herbs or vegetables.

When, at the end of mental prayer, spiritual conference or some other public exercise, the superior shall call on someone to admonish him of a fault, that person shall kneel down at once and, in the spirit of humility, shall listen silently and willingly to the admonition, receive the penance enjoined, and faithfully perform it.

According to our Charter, each one shall have the intention from the very entrance in the congregation to devote himself for his whole life to the exercises of the mission and shall often renew this intention.

Although the continual labors of missionaries do not permit them to be burdened by some rule with bodily mortifications and austerities, each one shall, nevertheless, value them highly, and shall always be favorably disposed toward them; he may even, so far as his health and serious occupations permit, practice them after the example of Christ and the first Christians, and even many living in the world, who are filled with the spirit of penance. However, no one shall undertake them without consulting the superior or director, except such as are imposed in confession.

On Monday and Tuesday after Quinquagesima Sunday, we will abstain from meat at home, so that by this small mortification we may honor God at the same time when many Christians are offending him gravely by their revelry and gluttony.

The customary order of the day in the congregation shall be exactly observed by all, whether at home or on the missions, especially with regard to the hours of rising and retiring, making prayer, reciting the divine office, and taking meals.

In order that the mind may be nourished together with the body, spiritual reading shall always be had at table in all our houses, as also on the missions, throughout the whole time of the meal.

Other praiseworthy customs of the Congregation are also to be observed, among which are these: on entering the house, as also on leaving, to go to the church to salute Christ in the Sacrament; in front of the house to give first spiritual alms before the material, that is, catechizing the poor and doing the same when on a journey; to kneel down on entering or leaving our rooms at home in order to ask God's help before any action, and give him thanks after its completion.

If anyone wishes to add others besides these exercises, let him make this desire known to the superior or director and do nothing in this matter, except what they allow him to do, lest, by acting otherwise, he will be doing his own will, and perhaps the will of the devil.

Missions and Other Ministries of the Congregation

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave his disciples rules for conducting missions. He commanded them to beg the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest. He indicated the nations to which they were to go, what they were to do when traveling, in what houses they were to stay, what they were to preach, what they were to eat, and, finally, how they were to behave toward those who would refuse to receive them.

Therefore, we who are walking in their footsteps will, as far as our weakness permits, observe the following rules which treat of the method and order to be followed on the missions and other ministries.

The name Missionaries, or Priests of the Mission, which has not been assumed by us but has been given us under Divine Providence, by the common voice of the people, clearly shows that the giving of missions is to be the first and principal of all our works for the neighbor. Therefore, the Congregation ought never to neglect it under the pretext of another pious work, perhaps in some respect even more useful. On the contrary, each one shall be wholeheartedly devoted to the missions that he shall always be ready to conduct them whenever obedience calls him. But in order that this ministry of ours may be done better, the order prescribed for the missions shall be religiously observed in addition to what is found in this chapter.

Each one, when the occasion arises, shall strive to help the neighbor by counsel and admonition, and shall urge him to the practice of good works. No one, however, shall undertake the direction of anyone, except during spiritual retreats, on the missions, and in those houses of the Congregation in which our confreres have the care of souls, or on other occasions when appointed to this work by the superior. But even in these cases, no one, without the permission and approval of the superior, shall even give any instructions or rules of life in writing.

Those setting out on the missions shall always carry with them the mandate of their excellencies, the most reverend bishops in whose dioceses the missions are to be given, and they shall present it to the pastors or other [rectors] of the churches to which they go. When the missions are finished, before they return home, they shall make a report to our lords the bishops on what has been done, if such is their good pleasure.

On beginning or ending a mission, all shall ask the blessing of the pastors, or in their absence, of their vicars, and they shall do nothing of importance without first informing them, and shall be careful not to undertake anything without their consent.

According to the counsel given by our Lord Jesus Christ to his apostles, when he sent them to preach the gospel to every creature, Freely you have received, freely give, and according to the example of Saint Paul who, to avoid being a burden to anyone, worked night and day with his own hands to provide what was necessary for himself and his companions, we will be a burden to no one in giving missions. We will give all our services gratis, without any temporal recompense. If living quarters and necessary furnishings are offered to us, however, we may accept them.

In proposing doubts about cases of conscience met in confession, great prudence and caution shall be used so that the person concerned may never be discovered. And in order that the evils that could thus arise may be avoided, no one shall propose doubts about any case of conscience of any importance heard in confession, without first consulting the director of the mission.

No one shall visit the sick or settle quarrels and disputes, without the permission of the same director.

No one shall preach or catechize on the missions unless he has been appointed to it by the superior. However, the director, when it shall seem expedient to him, may replace the preachers and catechists by others who are competent, provided that he notifies the superior by letter as soon as possible.

The style of our sermons and catechetical instructions shall be simple and within the grasp of the people, and according to the method which the congregation has been using since the beginning. Therefore, each one shall abhor soft and affected speech, nor shall anyone seek in the chair of truth to give expression to curious and far-fetched ideas or to unprofitable subtleties, recalling that Christ the Lord and his disciples used a simple way of speaking, and through it they gathered an abundant harvest and the richest fruits.

All shall beware of new and particular opinions, indeed, all shall agree, as far as possible, on what they teach, say and write so that, according to the apostle, we may know and think and speak the same thing.

Since human praise is for many an occasion of pride, no one shall praise our confreres for what they preach, catechize and perform all public functions with praise of the people. But they may be prudently commended for the humility, mortification and other virtues, provided they are not present.

All shall carefully abstain from criticizing the preaching and other public functions of others. If someone has to be admonished about this, the superior shall do it or designate someone who shall do it privately and with due moderation.

In all our works, particularly in our sermons and in other functions of the congregation, each one shall try to be animated, as far as possible, by the most pure intention of pleasing God, and shall strive to renew this intention from time to time, especially in the beginning of his principal actions. Before all else he shall see to it that he allows no desire of pleasing men or of gratifying self to creep in. For such a desire would infect and vitiate even the most holy action according to the teaching of Christ: if your eye is bad, your whole body will be in darkness.

As the apostle says, it sometimes happens that, after having begun in the spirit, we finish in the flesh. This generally happens, either when our action is followed by a certain vain complacency, which foolishly gratifies us, if we have had success and the applause of men, or when, not meeting with success in our work, we are so morose and discontented that we find no peace of mind. Therefore, each one must use all care and diligence never to fall into either of these defects. In order to avoid the first, each one will keep before his mind this truth: all glory is to be given to God, whereas nothing but confusion is to be attributed to us. Then, too, it is greatly to be feared that, if we foolishly rejoice in this kind of applause, we shall hear these words of Christ, Amen I say to you, you have received your reward. The remedy for the second evil will be immediately to have recourse to genuine humility and to love self-abasement, which God demands of us at such times. Besides, we ought carefully to consider that very often the patient endurance of such contradictions gives as much glory to God and benefit to our neighbor as from popular and apparently successful sermons.

Those who will be appointed to external seminaries, ordinands, to the conferences to pastors and other ecclesiastics, or to other similar works, shall strive to promote in all of them, both by word and example, piety as well as learning; they shall endeavor especially to deal with them in all humility, meekness, reverence and kindness. Those who will be giving spiritual retreats shall carefully observe all the same rules, in addition to some admonitions about such retreats, given especially for them.

Of all the teachings of Christ, this one ought to be particularly impressed upon us: Whoever wishes to be the greatest among you, let him become the least, and the servant of others. If the congregation should ever cease to observe this teaching, it would come to immediate and complete destruction through the inordinate thirst for glory that would assail it. This evil steals very easily into hearts that are by nature prone to pride, and drives them on to a great many evils, but especially to seeking high positions and offices and to envying those who are promoted to them; or to excessive self-satisfaction, if they themselves are placed in such positions. So, allured and deceived by the false glitter or a little glory, on which they fix their gaze, they fail to notice the nearby precipice into which they miserably fall. Hence, in order to escape from this rising monster of pride, each one shall use all imaginable means, such as becoming more insignificant in his own eyes, by making an act of profound humility. Second, to seek the last place. Third, to ask God and superior to remove us from a higher position, even from the office of preaching or any other work, in which we could gain some distinction and appoint us to some low ministry, according to his will.

All shall likewise make a special effort to repress the first stirrings of envy that might arise from the fact that other congregations surpass ours in reputation, in the favor of men, and honorable occupations. It should be our conviction that it does not matter by whom Christ is preached provided he is preached; and that equal or sometimes greater grace and merit come to us when we rejoice in the good work of others than if we should do the same work ourselves for our own satisfaction, or with a less perfect intention. Hence, each one shall try to put on the spirit of Moses who exclaimed: Oh, that all the people might prophesy, and we will regard other congregations as far more worthy than our own, although we ought to love it more than any other, just as a good child loves his own mother, however poor and unattractive she may be, much more than other women, however remarkable for their wealth and beauty. All must realize, however, that this tender love regards only persons, virtues and grace of the congregation, not what is naturally pleasing or drawing the applause of men. This is something we ought to hate and shun with particular care, not only as it regards our individual selves but even the congregation as a whole, so that we do not even desire that it should be seen and acclaimed by men, but rather that it should be lowly and hidden in the Lord. We must remember that the community is that grain of mustard seed which cannot grow and bear fruit unless it is sown and hidden in the ground.

Since, as Saint Zeno observes, curiosity makes one guilty not learned, and, as according to the apostle, knowledge gives self-importance, especially when we neglect his other advice, let no one rate himself more than he ought, but rate himself

according to moderation, therefore all, but especially the scholastics, shall ever be watchful lest an immoderate thirst for learning for the sake of ostentation gradually take possession of their hearts. However, they are not to cease applying themselves earnestly to the studies necessary to perform properly the duties of a missionary.

All shall likewise beware of two other vices, no less opposed to the Charter of the Mission than they are to each other. They are more dangerous to the degree that they appear to be otherwise, for they imperceptibly take on another appearance, so that they are very often mistaken for genuine virtues. These vices are sloth and immoderate zeal. The first gradually creeping into the soul under the pretext of the discretion necessary to be used in preserving the body, so that we may thereby be more fit for the worship of God and the assistance of souls, leads us to seek after bodily comforts and to avoid the work that accompanies the practice of virtue. This is to be fled, since the virtue, which alone should be pursued for love of itself, shows it [this vice] to be even more false, while [this vice] makes what is worthy appear to us in an odious light. Thus we may incur that curse pronounced by the Holy Spirit against such workers: Curse is the one who does the work of God negligently. The second vice, by concealing our self-love or our unworthiness, pushes us to excessive severity toward both sinners and ourselves; or it urges us to undertake tasks beyond our strength or even against obedience, to the detriment of both body and mind. As a consequence, it may later on involve us in an eager search for remedies, and thus make us slothful and carnal. Therefore, we must all make every effort to avoid these two extremes, and always steer a middle course, which we shall certainly find in the exact observance of our rules rightly understood. We shall also learn it from the lips of those who guard knowledge, and in whose hands our souls have been placed by the special providence of God, provided that we humbly and confidently seek the law from their lips whenever necessary, and submit ourselves entirely and perfectly to their direction.

Although we must always be well versed in those virtues which constitute the spirit of the mission, we will remember above all the importance of being especially strong in them when the time comes for exercising our ministry among the country people. We must then regard these virtues as the five very smooth stones of David, with which we shall conquer the infernal Goliath at the first blow. With them we shall also subject the Philistines, that is, sinners, provided that we first lay aside the weapons of Saul, that is, trust in human means, which are directly opposed to the teaching of the gospel, since experience teaches us that with such weapons we cannot conquer our enemies or even so much as attack them.

All shall have a special veneration and love for their rules, even those which do not seem to be very important. They will regard them as means given us by God himself for acquiring the perfection proper to our vocation and, consequently, for the easier and more profitable working out of our soul's salvation. Therefore, they will often have fervent and generous desires of faithfully observing them. If any of them are repugnant to our understanding or feelings, we shall try to master ourselves and overcome nature, recalling that, according to the words of Christ, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent are seizing it by force.

In order that these common rules, as well as the particular rules pertaining to individual offices, may be more deeply imprinted on our memories and minds, and hence be more strictly observed, each one shall have a copy of them in his possession, and shall read them over or hear them read every month and see to it that he understands them correctly. From time to time during the year each one shall humbly ask a penance from the superior for his faults against them, so that by this humiliation they more easily obtain pardon from the Lord for these failings, and acquire new strength against future relapses. The fidelity with which they shall carry out this rule will be a proof of the exactness with which they have observed these rules, and a sign of the desire they have for their own perfection. If anyone discovers that he has made some progress in their observance, he shall humbly give thanks to Christ the Lord, and shall pray him to grant him and the whole Congregation the grace to observe them better in the future. Lastly, we must be firmly convinced that when, according to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have done everything commanded of us, we ought to say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done what it was our duty to do; and, indeed, that without him we could have done nothing.

THE RULE OR ORDINANCE DESIGNED BY THE SUPERIOR GENERAL,
APPROVED AND CONFIRMED BY HIS EXCELLENCY
THE MOST REVEREND FIRST ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS,
IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD 1642, OCTOBER 8,
CONCERNING THE SIMPLE VOWS
TO BE MADE IN THE CONGREGATION.

Since Pope Urban VIII, by the bull of foundation of our congregation in the year of the Lord 1633, expedited on [February/January] 12, and proclaimed by the Official of his Excellency, the most reverend first archbishop of Paris, deigned to grant us and the superior general of any future time and to our successors the permission and faculty in perpetuity, whenever they see fit, to issue any statutes and ordinances concerning the right administration and government, direction and good order regarding our congregation, its house, persons and property, provided they are licit and honest and in no way contrary to the sacred canons, the apostolic constitutions, decrees of the Council of Trent, the Charter and rule of our Congregation, and are approved by the aforesaid archbishop of Paris, and since, taught by experience, we have to fear that the ecclesiastics of our congregation, as long as they are free to leave as they wish, may yield to the first temptations coming against their vocation, or also, as long as they doubt whether they will persevere in it, although the merciful God gave to many of them abundant grace to persevere in it and observe its rules, may neglect to strive, as they ought to, after the perfection required for the said institute. When we considered also that God himself in the Old Testament wanted to bind the chosen people forever to observance of the law of circumcision, that in the New Law holy baptism obliges us for the whole course or life to serve Christ our Lord, that the Church entrusts the spiritual government of the people only to men who oblige themselves by means of sacred orders to persevere in the ecclesiastical state for the rest of their lives, and that the same Church does not even entrust a wife to a man in marriage except by a sacrament obliging to that state for one's whole life; considering also that all communities and congregations, with few exceptions, so that they members may persevere in their vocation and in the observance of their rules and constitutions, have always deemed it necessary to bind them by some kind of vows; by simple vows in the beginning, but since the time of Pope Boniface VIII of happy memory by solemn vows, we too, having weighed all the aforesaid inconveniences, reasons and examples for the purpose that the ecclesiastics of our congregation may persevere in their vocation and in the observance of its rules, judged it appropriate and ordered that those who will enter the congregation in the future, after they have completed the first year of probation in the seminary shall make the good purpose to remain in the congregation for the rest of their lives and, in the presence of the superior, promise to observe poverty, chastity and obedience. Similarly, after they have completed the second year of probation in the seminary, they shall make the simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, as well as that of stability, that is, to devote themselves for the rest of their lives to the salvation of the poor country people in the said Congregation, according to its rules and constitutions. This simple vow cannot be dispensed, except by the supreme pontiff or by us or by the superior general of the time. The vow is to be taken during the mass celebrated by the superior or his substitute who listens to it, but does not accept it [officially]. Those, whoever, who are already in the said Congregation and wish to take the aforesaid vows, may be admitted by us or by our successors, but in such a way that because of

these vows our congregation shall by no means be counted among the religious orders and, therefore, shall not cease to be of the body of the [secular] clergy.

Form of the Vows

I, N., unworthy priest (or deacon, subdeacon, acolyte, cleric or lay brother) of the Congregation of the Mission vow to God, in the presence of the Most Blessed Virgin and the whole heavenly court, poverty, chastity and obedience to our superior and his successors, according to the rules and constitutions of our Charter. I vow also to work for the whole time of my life in the said Congregation for the salvation of the poor country people, with the help of the grace of almighty God, whom I therefore humbly invoke.

Place, day, month and year.

Statement on the Vow of Poverty

All and each one of those who will be admitted to our Congregation, who will possess either movable or immovable goods or simple benefices, will be held to transfer to the Congregation the free administration and the use of the fruits accruing therefrom. They will be able, even after taking the vows, to dispose by testament, according to local laws and customs, of the fund of these goods as well as to relinquish the said benefices either by resignation or grant to whomever they wish. If they leave the Congregation, they will recover the fund and the benefices not only as regards the entire property but also its entire use and income. However, they will have no claim to the fruits and income of these goods and benefices already received by the Congregation.

JOHN FRANCIS DE GONDI,
BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE
FIRST ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS
TO OUR BELOVED VINCENT DE PAUL
SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE CONGREGATION (OF ECCLESIASTICS)
OF THE MISSION
APPROVED BY US MANY YEARS AGO
GREETINGS IN THE LORD

On your behalf a petition has been submitted to us indicating that His Holiness Pope Urban VIII by the bull of foundation of the said Congregation and proclaimed by our official, deigned to grant you and the superior general of any future time the permission and faculty in perpetuity, whenever you or your successors may see fit, to issue any statutes and ordinances concerning the right administration and government of the said Congregation, its houses, persons and property, provided they are licit and honest and in no way contradict the sacred canons, the apostolic constitutions, the decrees of the council of Trent, the Charter and rule of the aforesaid Congregation of the Mission, and to be approved by us or our successors. Since taught by experience you have to fear that the ecclesiastics of the said Congregation, as long as they are free to leave as they wish, may yield to the first temptations coming against their vocation or also, as long as they doubt whether they will persevere in it, although the merciful God gave to many of them abundant grace to persevere in it and to observe its rules, may neglect to strive as they ought to, after the perfection required for the said Institute; besides, when you considered also that God himself in the Old Testament wanted to bind his chosen people to observe the law of circumcision, that in the New Law holy baptism obliges us for the whole course of life to serve Jesus Christ our Lord, that the Church entrusts the spiritual government of the people only to men who oblige themselves by means of sacred orders to persevere in the ecclesiastical state for their whole life, that the same Church does not even entrust a wife to a man in marriage except by a sacrament obliging to that state for her whole life; considering also that all communities and congregations, with a few exceptions, so that their members may persevere in their vocation and in the observance of their rules and constitutions, have always deemed it necessary to bind them by some kind of vows; by simple vows in the beginning, but since the time of Pope Benedict VIII of happy memory by solemn vows, you too, having weighed all the aforesaid inconveniences, reasons and examples for the purpose that the said ecclesiastics may persevere in your congregation and in the observance of its rules, judged it appropriate and ordered that those who will enter the congregation in the future, after they have completed the first year of probation in the seminary shall make the good purpose to remain in the congregation for the whole time of their life and in the presence of the superior promise to observe poverty, chastity and obedience; similarly after they have completed the second year of probation in the said seminary, that they shall make the simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, as well as that of stability, that is to devote themselves for the whole time of their life to the salvation of the poor country people in the said congregation according to its rules and constitutions, this simple vow cannot be dispensed from, except by the supreme pontiff or by you or by the superior general of the time. The vow is to be taken during the mass celebrated by the superior, who listens to it, but does not accept it [officially]. Those, however who are already in the said Congregation and wish to take the aforesaid vows, may be admitted

by you or by your successors, but in such a way that because of these vows they shall by no means be counted among the religious orders and, therefore, shall not cease to be of the body of the [secular] clergy. Lastly, since in the said petition you requested that we may deign to approve and confirm your regulation regarding the aforesaid matters, We, having carefully considered the aforesaid reasons and wishing to accept and favor your petition, graciously approved and confirmed, and by this letter do approve and confirm your ordinance, since it is in no way contrary to the sacred canons, the apostolic constitutions, the decrees of the council of Trent, nor to the Charter and the rule of the said congregation; on the contrary, it is undoubtedly useful to the persons of the said congregation and to the preservation of the observance of the rules, and thus gives us hope that by the grace of God its work will please God and will be fruitful for the Church. In confirmation and witness of all and each one of the foregoing statements we ordered that the present letter of our approval and confirmation be drawn up and signed by the secretary of our archiepiscopal office in Paris. We likewise ordered and had this approval sealed with the seal of our chancery.

Given at Paris in the year of the Lord one thousand, six hundred forty-one, on the nineteenth day of October.

RULES OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

The superior general represents the person of Jesus Christ for the whole Congregation. In the first place he must be continually united with Jesus Christ in his prayers and actions in order to receive grace and light from this union. Second, he must be endowed with all kinds of virtues, especially humility and charity. Third, he must be free of all inordinate affection. Fourth, he must know how to combine righteousness and severity with meekness and kindness. Fifth, [he should be] endowed with strength and generosity to go forward and endure without fear of the threats of the powerful, even though he should face danger for his own life. Sixth, a clear mind, sound judgment, extensive knowledge but even more, prudence and discretion are required of him. Seventh, vigilance in pursuing the things he had begun, and firmness in bringing them to a happy conclusion. Eighth, finally, a healthy and well formed body and the highest reputation.

[1°] He shall be permanent and have full power over the whole Congregation.

2° He shall admit either himself or through someone else those whom will judge fit, and, on the other hand, dismiss the unfit; he shall dismiss them from the Congregation regardless of the length of time since their admission.

3° To him shall belong the government of houses, persons, officials, and superiors of the said congregation; likewise, he has the right to appoint, transfer, and call its members to render account of their administration, to enter contracts of buying, selling, exchanging, paying the annual rent due to some contract, and to redeem such rent. However he shall have no authority to sell immovable goods or to suppress houses, save with the consent of a general congregation.

4° To compound and apportion the goods of the congregation to any of its houses, not, however, the goods given to a particular house.

5° The visitors and local superiors as well as other delegated by him shall have in these cases the power which he may give them.

6° He has the authority to command that all the rules be obeyed everywhere, and to dispense from them, to distribute offices and ministries and to remove from them.

7° He shall use the faculties given to the congregation and shall give them to the superiors and other officials and likewise revoke and restrict them to the extent that he shall see fit.

He shall have the right and power to correct and impose penalties, 1° such as he shall judge proportionate to the faults.

2° convoke the general assembly in the matters of greatest importance and order the visitors to convoke the province. To direct the general assembly and dismiss the assembled members whenever he shall see fit. However, this has to be understood about the assemblies convoked by the free will of the superior general outside the time of the triennial congregations, not about the congregations themselves.

3° No member of our congregation shall accept a benefice without his consent. But he shall never give his consent without the command of the supreme pontiff unless it is a matter of benefices united or to be united to the Congregation.

4° He shall appoint superiors of the houses for a term as he shall see fit, and the visitors for a term of three years, unless he shall deem it appropriate to leave them in office for a longer period of time, or to depose them sooner.

5° If he delegates the power to the visitors to appoint superiors, it is his power to either confirm or reject them.

6° He shall appoint officials necessary for the administration of the Congregation, such as procurators or the secretary general and shall give them the faculty as he shall see fit.

7° He shall admit foundations and houses. Moreover, he shall admit those who wish to give themselves to the congregation but who do not wish to become its members. He shall do this under those conditions which, however, he will be able to revoke should he find out that they would harm the congregation. At the same time he would compensate the damage as he should see fit. If he should admit some foundation harmful to the end of the congregation the convoked congregation shall take up the matter for deliberation whether he could accept it under harmful conditions.

8° He will not be able to transfer a house already founded or relinquish it without the consent of the congregation convoked for that purpose in a general assembly.

9° It is necessary for him to have a full knowledge of his subjects, especially those he wishes to appoint to offices.

10° He may command in virtue of obedience each member of the congregation concerning their own perfection and the salvation of the neighbor, and although he may have given this authority to other as, for example, to visitors and commissaries, he may either approve (or revoke) or rescind or (revoke) what they have done and decide what he thinks is right. Therefore all shall obey him and revere him as the one who takes the place of our Lord Jesus Christ in the congregation.

Nevertheless, the congregation shall have authority over him in order to temper his government in six cases.

First, regarding external things, that is clothes, food and other necessities.

2° Regarding his body, so that he will not go to excess either in work or in mortifications.

3° Regarding his soul, giving him an admonitor who shall first make an hour of meditation before admonishing him.

4° Regarding ecclesiastical dignities which he will not be able to accept without the consent of the congregation, which, in turn, will not be able to give its approval unless the pope commands it under the penalty of mortal sin.

5° In important things, if he should become so remiss and negligent either become of some illness or weakness that he would cause harm to the congregation. In that case, a vicar general or coadjutor may be given him who may be chosen by the superior general himself and by the visitors, or by the visitors themselves and two superiors of their particular province who would send their vote by letter to his assistants who would open and read them and collect the votes in his presence or also in his absence if should not wish or could not be present. The one who would have most of the votes should be considered vicar general and have his authority.

6° Regarding his morality, namely, if he should fall into sin of impurity, if he should kill or mutilate someone, if he should appropriate for himself the goods of some house and squander them, or give them to someone, or hold some heretical

doctrine. May such evils, so far as can be foreseen, never happen, with the help of God. In these four cases, if sufficiently proven, the congregation could and should depose him and even, if the case demanded, dismiss him in the general assembly convoked for this purpose, as will soon be stated.

In this way the Congregation shall act in those things that regard the superior general. It will be the task of the visitors to examine the situation and decide what has to be done. The Congregation shall elect two assistants, or, God willing, if the Congregation should come to that, four of them with whom the superior general shall discuss more important matters, although the decision remains with him. The assistants shall reside in the same house as the superior general. They shall help him in all things pertaining to doctrine and practice and shall provide in the first three cases mentioned above: the first one regarding the clothes, food and other necessities; the second, his work; the third, the good of his soul. These assistants will be elected by the same members as the superior general and at the same time as he. In case one of them dies, or the superior general sends him out for important business, the superior general shall substitute another for the one who had died or is absent. Such substitute shall be admitted to office, unless the visitors object.

And if he should fall (which God forbid) into the above mentioned sins which require his deposition, the assistants, who are bound by oath to bring it to the attention of the Congregation, shall testify to it, or after the superior general himself has confessed it, shall write to the congregation, that is, to the visitors, sign the letters in which they notify them about the matter, and convoke them to the general assembly. They shall be obliged to come with two superiors of their province elected for this purpose in the provincial assembly on the appointed day in the place designated.

But if the matter has already been divulged, then the visitors shall as soon as possible notify each other and convene, without waiting for the decision or convocation by the assistants and on the very first day of their coming to the place of the convocation where the assistants also shall be present, and have a member of the convocation well acquainted with the case, clearly explain the matter to them and immediately after the superior general has been heard and has left the assembly, the oldest one of the visitors together with the secretary of the assembly, and one of the assistants shall proceed to the vote, where the first question will be whether the guilt is sufficiently proven; 2^o whether it involves all the conditions required to depose the superior general. Then the oldest member shall count aloud the majority or plurality of the votes which, in order to be valid, must exceed two thirds of the votes. Immediately after that the election of another superior general must take place. If possible, they shall not leave the meeting room until the congregation shall have another superior general. If that cannot be done on that same day, they shall do it as soon as possible according to the form found in the chapter on elections.

But if the crime is not of those which require deposition, the congregation shall elect four of its members to deliberate on what kind of admonition should be given him and they will also give it. But if they cannot agree on the kind of admonition, then they shall elect one or three others to decide the matter.

On the other hand, if the superior general should be incapable of governing and directing the congregation, the question shall be discussed partly with him present, partly in his absence and according to the majority of the votes is shall be decided whether a vicar general having his authority should be given to him. If the majority of the votes inclines toward this solution, then the deliberation shall proceed as indicated. But if there is no need for such a solution, they will see among themselves whether it would be advisable to choose one or two additional assistants who would help him carry the burden, along with other assistants already elected and according to the plurality of votes.

If, however, the question should be of accepting some dignity, the things shall not even be discussed, unless the pope should command it under the penalty of mortal sin, because the most certain answer will always be in the negative on the basis of experiences of doubt and controversy. After this election the superior general will begin his spiritual retreat. After he has finished it and celebrated mass, he shall write, having only God in mind, on two pieces of paper, namely on the one, the name of the confrere whom he judges in the Lord to be capable after his death of carrying on the office of vicar general until the election of the new superior general, and on the other the names of two who after his death shall be proposed to the congregation so that either one of them may be elected as his successor in office, but in such a way that the congregation retains the right to elect a different one, if it so desires, someone who is supposed to be more qualified for that office. He shall place the above notices after he has completed writing them and signed them by his own hand and sealed them with the seal of the Congregation, in two boxes, each having two different locks. Each notice he shall deposit in its own box. One key the superior general himself shall keep, the other shall be kept by the first assistant. For the sake of greater safety in this matter another notice, written by the hand of the same superior general, signed and immediately sealed with the same seal shall be firmly affixed to each of the boxes so that the key-holes of either lock will be completely covered. Both notices of the first box shall contain the following words: The notice concerning the election of the vicar general is contained in this box. The other box will have this inscription: The notice regarding the election of the superior general is contained in this box. Both boxes shall be kept in the archive of the house where the superior general regularly resides until his death. Then they shall be brought out and opened, one immediately after his death in order to nominate the vicar general; and the other on the day of the election of the new superior general. But the superior general may every year or more often, if he judges it expedient in the Lord after the spiritual retreat, open either one or both boxes, if he should decide in the Lord that he has to change the names he had proposed for the election and, having made the change, locks the boxes again, replacing the inscriptions to be fixed at the key-holes and doing the rest of the things prescribed just above. That all this may be done more easily and more securely, the superior general and the first assistant shall have each his own key placed in some purse and wear it always and everywhere hanging around their neck, except when the boxes have to be opened according to the constitutions or when one or the other or both of them fall seriously ill. In the latter case the key of the superior general shall be given in custody to the oldest missionary in order of vocation present at the time, provided he is not one of the assistants to the superior general. He shall keep it until the superior general recovers. In that case that key shall be returned to him. But if he dies, the oldest one as mentioned above, once the older ones are gathered together and

the time comes for the opening of the boxes, shall immediately hand it over. As for the key of the first assistant, whether he becomes seriously ill or dies, his key shall be given in custody to some other of the older ones nominated and designated by the same superior general, so that, if he recovers, the key shall be returned to him; but if he dies, the key shall be handed over to the first assistant, his successor. But if the assistants are changed, the key shall be given to the first assistant replacing the former. And as regards the election of the new superior general everything shall be observed as prescribed in the aforesaid chapter concerning the election of the superior general.

The greatest care of the superior general shall be to choose the subordinate officials who are capable and frequently communicate with them by letters about their administration and likewise to admonish, consult and correct them and see to it that also the local superiors do the same thing with regard to their officials.

In order that he may more fully and perfectly attend to the government of the whole congregation, he shall not have the administration of any particular house, except the house of his residence and he shall not engage in any outside work, even a pious one that does not belong to his office.

In his possession he will have a catalogue of the privileges of the congregation, the catalogue of other houses and of the property of each house as well as the catalogue of all the priests, clerics and coadjutor brothers together with the record of their condition, intelligence and qualifications for various works.

RULES OF THE VISITOR

REGARDING HIS PERSON AND THE ENTIRE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVINCE

CHAPTER I

1. He shall keep in mind that the purpose of his office is to promote in the houses to be visited the acquisition of perfection in the manner of our institute and according to the rules given to him.

2. In his visitations he shall imitate the charity, meekness and kindness of Christ our Lord, show the example of a perfect missionary, and direct his subjects more by example than by word. But whenever necessary he shall mix severity with meekness and fulfill his office in such a way that he will never neglect striving for his own perfection.

3. He shall not abolish any rules or constitutions of the Congregation or introduce new ones without consulting the superior general; on the contrary, he shall govern the houses of his province according to what is already stated.

4. He will have the authority to dispense from the rules, ordinances and decrees, and even from the constitutions in particular cases, but if he has dispensed in an important matter, when it seemed to be urgent, he will as soon as possible inform the superior general of the dispensation and of its reason.

5. All the faculties of the superiors who are subject to the visitor belong also to the visitor, and may be suspended by him when he will consider it expedient in the Lord.

6. When he will not be able to visit some house at the appointed time or when he will be in danger of death, he will have the right to appoint another visitor with the advice of his consultors, unless the superior general has designated another one, and the latter will have the same faculties, unless the superior general should restrict them, but he shall in no way change the way of administration.

WHAT WILL HELP THE VISITOR IN THE GOOD ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVINCE

CHAPTER II

1. The superior general shall give the visitor four consultors, one of whom will be his admonitor and associate. If they should be absent and the matter requires, he shall consult them by letter. In every house he shall use the advice of the superior and his consultors whom he will think he has to consult. However, he will have the right to call to consultation others as well, or by letter explain the matter to those he knows will give him good advice.

2. Letters and documents belonging to the matter of consultation he shall show to the consultors, unless there is something against it, so that they will be able to be well informed and give better advice.

3. When he receives some ordinances from the superior general intended for all, he shall see to it that they are communicated to the superiors and consultors of his visitation, and, if they are of some importance for their government and instruction, he shall see to it that they are copied in each house in the book designated for it.

4. In the course of consultation on some matter, he shall explain the reasons for and against it, but shall not show any inclination for one or the other side.

5. If something should happen which he could not, or should not discuss with the consultors, he will be able, in order to find a solution, to deliberate according to the first and second method given in the spiritual exercises for elections.

6. He will gladly accept admonitions from others, especially from his admonitor regarding his person and his office.

7. He shall have in his possession an authentic copy of the Apostolic Letters regarding the congregation's privileges and rules and the ordinances of the superior general, and shall see to it that he understands them well and makes them observed.

8. In the place where he will have to stay for some longer time, he will have an archive where he will keep the authentic documents and other things belonging to the office of the visitor and for the common use of the province. All these things written down in the catalogue he shall hand over to his successor.

9. He shall have a book in which he will record the consultations, provisions, and letters to the superior general, lest they be forgotten.

10. He may prescribe for a certain time masses and prayers in the houses to be visited by him, even in the whole province, for the needs which will seem to require it, but shall not exceed the right measure.

HIS SUBORDINATE SUPERIORS AND THEIR OFFICIALS

CHAPTER 3

Although it belongs to the general, the visitor will sometimes have the right to remove the superiors of particular houses, namely, when there is danger in waiting for an answer from the superior general. When some superior dies, the visitor will be able to appoint someone to take the place of the deceased in the meantime, a spiritual and experienced man, until the superior general is notified and takes action. But the visitor may appoint, if he thinks it necessary, assistant procurators, prefects of studies, subassistants and prefects of health care.

2. He shall appoint the directors of internal seminarists in the non-separated seminaries who, however, have to be confirmed by the general; these must be spiritual men proven in the way of proceeding of our congregation.

3. He shall chose the spiritual directors and the ordinary confessors of our members from among whom it will be almost always convenient to select the spiritual directors.

4. He will also be able to choose the consultors and admonitors of superiors and notify the superior general about this so that he will confirm them.

5. He shall designate the preachers and confessors of externs charged with the care of souls, both those working on the missions and those working in our houses, after they have passed the examination at home and have been approved by the ordinaries.

6. Lastly, he will choose the teachers in sciences both divine and human and other principal officials of the seminaries for externs. However, he shall not add new lectures and he shall never open new schools anywhere without the permission of the general.

7. He shall protect the authority of the superiors of particular houses with regard to their subjects with the understanding, however, that all may have recourse to the visitor or to the general so that whatever has to be done or changed in regard to their office, they shall see to it that it is done prudently and in the Lord.

8. If he shall consider some as capable of governing, he shall gradually let them undergo a trial in handling the affairs and domestic ministries so that they will show the quality of their talent and the congregation will be able to entrust them its offices safely.

9. He shall observe whether some are less successful in certain ministries but would be more qualified for others. However, he shall always keep in mind to prefer always the better and common good.

10. He shall never dispense anyone from the obedience to the superior, without consulting the general, except when there is danger in delay. In that case he shall inform the general of the person and the reasons for such dispensation.

ADMISSION

CHAPTER 4

1. The visitor shall be able to admit, either by himself or through his delegate those postulants whom he shall consider in the Lord as fit for our institute. However, he shall see to it that they are not attracted because of human means but because of virtues and the reputation of a good life, and likewise that the congregation is not filled with unfit and unqualified members. For this purpose he will take care that the rule of admission is observed exactly.

2. He shall not dispense in the first five impediments unless the postulant has some extraordinary gifts of God of which he shall inform the general. If he should doubt about these impediments, he shall have the same recourse. In the secondary impediments, on the other hand, he will have the faculty to dispense, except in notable deformity or considerable defects, such as eunuchs or men below twenty-five years or age or above fifty, or married men, even when there is no essential impediment.

3. In some cases he may anticipate or postpone the usual examinations in the seminary or moderate them or change some of them, provided that the seminarists are well tested during the biennium. He may also extend that period of time if he should consider it necessary.

4. The seminarists in the second year of probation he may also dispense from studies, if he shall judge it expedient in the Lord, provided that those dispensed live apart from the seminary and away from the scholastics, observing, so far as possible, the rules of the seminary and are entrusted to some priest appointed by him who shall act as director of the seminary and see to its rules and examinations.

5. The number of lay brothers coadjutor fulfilling the office of Martha shall not be larger than needed.

DISMISSAL

CHAPTER 5

1. The visitor shall have the faculty of dismissing his subjects, even those who have taken vows, except those who were sent by the superior general to his province, or were so deserving for the province that they must have special consideration. In these cases he must not proceed with the dismissal without consulting the general, unless the reasons are so urgent and serious, or when he has no doubt that the general will agree.

2. It will be the task of the visitor to proceed to the expulsion after hearing his consultors, or, if the case is urgent, the superior and the consultors of the place where he is staying at the time, provided that effective means were tried first and the decision has been made with his consultors.

3. Regarding the manner of dismissal, he shall observe what is written regarding those who are to be dismissed. He shall also diligently consider whether he should take the documentation with him.

4. Those dismissed will be informed that they are free from the simple vows, if they had made them according to the usual form of the Congregation.

He shall be convinced and keep it as a principle that those who have been dismissed or have of their own accord left the Congregation and later on wish to return are rarely fit for our institute.

STUDIES

CHAPTER 6

The visitor shall designate some of our more learned and capable members as lecturers in theology and philosophy as well as teachers of humanities in those houses of the Congregation where those studies are offered, with the approval of the general. It shall be his duty also to apply to studies those whom he will judge capable of them.

He shall see to it that the rules of studies are observed and, especially, whether the lecturers in theology and philosophy in disputations take care that in the disputations the point of the thesis to be argued by the opponent is explained by the respondent himself and that the two opponents are instructed to come to the sum and substance of the difficulty at the very outset. After one or another point, the respondent shall give the solution in the spirit of meekness and humility. They will also be advised to base their opinions in theology and especially in philosophy on common teaching.

For those who by reason of advanced age or other reasons cannot progress in higher faculties and scholastic studies the visitor shall see to it that they do not waste time in them, but that they devote themselves to the study of cases of conscience, and that there are always some confreres who are well versed in this study so that the congregation will have a sufficient number of workers qualified for hearing confessions.

At the end of the studies he shall inform the general about the talent of each student and report on the progress of each one.

He shall not allow any of our confreres to print a book or even write or translate one from one language into another without the permission of the general.

ADMISSION TO ORDERS, TO VOWS AND TO THE THIRD YEAR OF PROBATION

CHAPTER 7

1. The visitor may, either himself or through others, according to the instruction given by the general, present the confreres whom he considers eligible to receive ecclesiastical orders.

2. He shall admit the seminarists of the congregation to good purposes after the first year, and to vows after the second year, unless he thinks for a just reason that the two things have to be postponed.

3. He shall see to it that all members of his province after the sixth or seventh year after they have completed the seminary make the third year of the seminary in the way determined for it, unless the superior general should decide that this time should either be anticipated or postponed or that something should be changed with regard to such a year of the seminary.

Before he admits those who are about to take vows he shall see to it that they observe all the requirements of the constitutions such as, the disposition of their temporal goods, if they still have any, spiritual retreat and other things found in the decrees of the Congregation,.

He shall see to it that those who will make good purposes make them separately, not together with those who take or renew vows.

He shall have a book in which are written the names of those who have taken vows in the houses of his province, according to the order given to the superiors.

As soon as possible he shall send to the general a signed copy of their names.

PROPERTY OF THE HOUSES OF THE PROVINCE

CHAPTER 8

The visitor shall see to it that the buildings are kept in good condition and, if necessary, that they are renovated. But if some of greater importance have to be built, like a church, dormitory and the like, this shall not be done without the consent of the superior general, to whom it belongs to prescribe the form and manner of our buildings.

He shall see to it that immovable goods are preserved and shall watch whether they are increasing or diminishing. If anyone wishes to add to them, he may approve it, but if some conditions are demanded, he shall not approve them without consulting the general.

If the house to which something has been given is in need of money, he may allow it [the house] to sell it with the consent of the general, if the value exceeds about two hundred ducats of Tours, otherwise he may sell it on his own authority.

He shall engage in no litigation and shall defend no one in court, unless he has first tried everything to settle the dispute between the opponents by transaction or arbitration, and has obtained the consent of the general.

He shall see to it that authentic copies of contracts of major importance, especially of permanent goods, are sent to the archives of the house where the superior general resides.

He shall review the accounts of the superior and the economer, and ask for a report of income and expenses, and have the latest result of his own account briefly described; he will sign this account in the book kept for this purpose. This account will also show the total of income and expenses since the last visitation, whether there remains some profit or even some debt.

He shall make a visitation of the immovable goods outside the house, if he can make such visitation without serious inconvenience, to see whether they need repair.

If some offer is made for founding a new house, he shall consider the public benefit that can be hoped for, the conditions attached, whether the place is healthful and he will inform the general about all this, and in the meantime he shall promise nothing for certain.

He shall not allow the houses to be burdened by debt and, according to the yearly income, he shall moderate the expenses and the number of persons.

Regarding clothing, he shall keep four things in mind: first, that they are decent; 2° whether they are suitable for the use of good priests of the place where one lives; 3° are not incompatible with holy poverty; 4° that they show uniformity, as far as possible.

He shall inspect the workshops and clothing depots and the rest of the movable things, and shall not permit necessary things to be missing, nor superfluous things to be present. He shall have an inventory compiled and have it compared with the inventory of the latest visitation signed by the visitor. He shall also inform himself whether economy is kept in mind.

ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE NOT YET GIVEN UP THEIR PROPERTY

CHAPTER 9

The visitor shall not allow anyone of the confreres to give up his property, unless it is quite certain that he will persevere in his vocation and shall proceed in this matter always with mature deliberation.

He shall not allow any confrere to make an agreement with his relatives or anyone else about a legitimate portion or other goods pertaining to him, less they were told that the Congregation has no right to those goods and the general has been notified ahead of time about the whole matter.

If some goods were donated to the congregation, he shall be very careful that they are claimed not with harshness but with good grace and charity through extern procurators rather than through our confreres. It will also be appropriate that some alms from these goods be given to the poor of the place where these goods come from and that a written declaration be made stating for what reasons and under what conditions the goods were donated.

He shall not tolerate that any confrere should ask anything from his relatives and friends, but the congregation will provide anything they need.

HIS RELATION TO THE SUPERIOR GENERAL, WITH OTHER PROVINCES AND EXTERNS

CHAPTER 10

The visitor will show obedience, reverence and fidelity to the superior general and give in this matter an example to others and see to it that they strive for outstanding submission to him, and therefore have a good opinion of all their superiors.

He shall take great care that the status of the houses entrusted to him is well known to the general and that the local superiors and his own consultors likewise advise him according to the form devised for such reporting.

He shall keep in mind the common good of the congregation and promote it. He shall convoke the provincial assembly according to the traditional form. If he should notice anything concerning the decrees and constitutions, or if something should happen which requires a general congregation, he shall write to the superior general or give it to his procurator, who will visit him every three years.

If any opportunity arises of helping other provinces, he shall not disregard his obligation of charity, and by correspondence in the usual fashion he shall foster unity and charity.

He shall see to it that everyone show his gratitude toward founders and benefactors, and if any of them becomes estranged from the congregation, he shall try to inform them better and reconcile them

To the superiors he shall prescribe the ordinary and extraordinary alms that can be given according to the possibilities and obligations of each house, after he has heard the consultors of that house. Of the goods of the church he shall assign even larger alms, especially in the places where they are received.

THE ORDINARY WAYS OF HELPING OTHERS

CHAPTER XI

Especially by the end of studies he shall know which of our confreres should be employed, to what extent and for which functions at home or abroad and especially on the missions and he should present them to the superior so that in due time he may apply them to such ministries.

He shall see to it that masses are celebrated and other sacraments are administered according to the rite and the use of the Roman Church, and that the preachers and catechists follow the style and method of the Congregation and they work uniformly. But if anyone does not adjust to this rule, he will employ him for other ministries.

He shall do what is necessary that confessors, preachers and catechists are capable of their work and carefully observe their rules, especially that they receive no compensation or gift for their functions during the mission and that they use the apostolic privileges.

In places where there are two houses of the congregation he shall provide that one of them be used for the ordinands and retreatants and also as the seminary for externs, while the other is for the missionaries themselves and for the internal seminarists.

In honor of the poverty of the suffering Christ, he shall see to it that the decorations and church vestments of our churches are not made of precious and very splendid materials, but of [wool??] or other common material and although some silk vestments interwoven with gold or silver are donated by externs, we shall use them only on more solemn feast days when the Divine Office has to be celebrated solemnly, or when a prelate or some other priest of greater dignity is celebrating in our churches. In those cases we will venerate the majesty of Christ triumphant.

He shall see to it that on the fast days which we celebrate more solemnly, either at home or on the missions, especially on those days when the communion and procession of children is to take place, the decoration of churches and the form of ceremonies be moderate and devout, and so far as possible, without too much disturbance of our own confreres and annoyance to externs.

He shall not allow our confreres to join extern confraternities or their conventions to take place in our houses, unless they conform to the purpose of our institute.

If their excellencies the bishops should call us to the examination of ordinands, we shall not express our opinion whether they should be admitted or rejected, and we shall leave the decision to our lords the prelates. But if they should ask our opinion directly, we shall obey but with secrecy, so that the matter will never become known to the ordinand concerned.

MISSIONS AND TRANSFER OF MISSIONARIES

CHAPTER XII

The visitor shall not stay outside the province assigned to him without the permission of the general, nor shall he allow local superiors to stay away from their houses without the visitor's permission, except in case of missions or when the place is close and the reply of the general or the visitor cannot arrive on time.

If he should send someone out to do something that is rather important, he shall instruct him, usually in writing, regarding both how he should proceed, and the means he would wish him to use to achieve the purpose he has in mind and, when he is informed by frequent correspondence of the entire matter, he shall help him from the place of his residence by advice, prayers and in other ways as the matter should demand.

When he has to transfer someone to another house, he should use, so far as possible, the appropriate means so that those from whom he is called away will remain well disposed rather than offended and resentful.

He shall send no one outside his province, not even for the purpose of missions, or some more important business, except when it is certain that such is the will of the general or after the agreement of the visitor of the province where he wants to send him, but these changes shall not be made without the permission of the superior general regarding the provinces outside Europe or within it.

After the death of the general he shall not send any of those who have the right to vote far away or outside the province before the convocation of the provincial congregation, unless some urgent matter demands it and the majority of his consultors think that such a person must be sent.

When he is about to send several confreres to some distant place, he shall appoint the one of them whom he trusts most as the prefect or superior to the rest.

The travel expenses for those departing will be paid by the house for whose benefit the travel was undertaken and if any doubt about that should arise, the superior general shall decide.

When he is transferring someone from one place to another he shall give to the superior to whom the one in question is being sent as much information about him as needed to know him and help him, and he shall send no one from one place to another without an accompanying letter.

THE VISITATION

CHAPTER 13

Every year he shall visit his province and shall stay even a longer time in the places where he shall judge it more necessary.

[missing words?]¹

He shall inquire whether there are any confessionals in the house and if any are found he shall order immediately that they be removed, unless we are in charge of the care of souls, in which case he will see whether they are properly and decently built, and if there are none, he shall see to it that some are properly made and placed.

Afterwards, he shall visit the personnel and show himself kind and benevolent to all so that no one may suspect that he looks rather somber on account of some bad information he had received. He shall ask the superior and then the consultors, officials, and some older confreres whether they know something important about the house and, if needed, he shall have a private report made about the matter, which he will keep to himself and show to no one. He shall also see to it that no one may begin to suspect who reported such private information to him.

¹There appears to be a missing page here, as is seen from the confusion of the numbering of this page, called 70 and 71-72.

After receiving and considering such information he shall along with the superior draw up a catalogue of personnel of the house and obtain from him brief information about each one of them.

Then he will call each one individually in the order convenient to him and question each one separately according to the instruction found in the following chapter. He shall do the questioning from memory rather than from written notes, but the remarks he will think that have to be made he will write down for the sake of memory. Which questions, however, he shall ask each one of them is left to his prudence.

He shall encourage all to tell the whole truth lest it should be imputed to them that the ills unknown in spite of their knowing about them remain undetected and could not be cured. He shall also admonish them that they must keep secret whatever they discussed with him which require secrecy, if anyone inferior to him should inquire about it.

He shall not easily believe if he is told something against others, especially against the superiors, but he take note of it and will try to find out the truth and shall take precaution lest while he is in charge, they may become weaker in their obedience to their immediate superiors.

If anyone is found to be the cause of divisions and dissension among those living with him or with his superior, he is to be speedily separated from that house like a pestilence which could infect the house, if no remedy is provided.

The visitation of property or parts of the house is to be done according to the preceding rules especially those in the ninth chapter of these rules, during which the rules of the officials who are taking care of those things are to be examined. But if anything requires not only information but inspection, he shall do this either himself or through his companion.

He shall go through the common rules with the superior, consultors, and assistants and, if he finds out that some are not observed, he shall consider the reasons, and use remedies so that they can be observed. But the rules of the assistant, the consultors and the admonitor, the preachers and priests, as well as the main officials, he shall examine with them. The rest of the rules of other officials he may entrust for the purpose of examination to his companion or to someone else in their presence.

The visitor shall ask for, according to the constitutions, a complete report of the past life of those who are entering the congregation and of those who had been sent for studies and have completed them and are to be sent for the third year of the seminary. If sometimes he should not be able to do it himself, he shall ordinarily delegate for it the superior of the house. Every year in each house of his province after the visitation of domestic affairs or during the visitation itself (if in some of them he should judge it more convenient) he shall receive from all the internal communication since the latest communication they have made in some previous visitation, according to the manner prescribed below. If the visitation should take place around the

renovation of vows, the renovation should be delayed for about a month, or anticipated, so that it can be made in his presence and for that occasion he shall appoint some better qualified confessors to hear the general confessions of the confreres. And he shall kindly hear those who want to make their confession to him.

After the visitation of all persons, on the last day, he shall see the superior of the house concerning the things regarding his person and office according to the rules of his office and regarding the things he had gathered from the information received.

After completing the visitation of the house and seeing everything, so that he may gather the fruit of his labor, he shall review everything he had known in the visitation and still give a more diligent consideration to more important things, and carefully discern what is clear and what is only probable, about which things he has to consult the general, which things have to be arranged with the superior of the house alone, which also with the consultors, and which with other individuals.

The things which, according to his judgment will have to be corrected in the administration of the house he shall commit to such persons as he knows that they can have a better judgment in the matter. And before he completes the implementation, he shall commend everything to God in prayer and the sacrifice of the mass, so that everything will be done according to his divine will.

Finally, the chapter of faults, which must be omitted during the visitation and delayed until this last day, must be held by the visitor himself, in which all or, according to the number of persons, at least some designated for that purpose, shall accuse themselves in the usual way of three, usually main, faults committed since the last visitation. After this the new norms shall be read and explained if necessary. Then the visitor himself shall hold a brief exhortation to rightly and perseveringly observe these norms, and immediately all the papers containing secret information shall be burned in the presence of all, whereupon all shall immediately fall on their knees and as a sign of deep mutual love embrace each other in the Lord as it is proper.

After completing all these things and having them in mind, he shall write in the memorial or the book in which temporary norms are recorded, he shall write down the temporary norms he has given to be observed, and cancel those articles which had been given for observance in the preceding visitations. But in the book in which only norms of major importance are to be written down, he shall write and sign only those things about which he had informed the superior general and the latter had approved them.

INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IN THE VISITATION

CHAPTER 14

Questions concerning government,
to be asked of superiors, consultors and others, if necessary

1. He shall ask whether something important had happened in the house which he has found out outside confession and what remedy was used.

2. How the rules concerning the seminarists of the Congregation have been observed.

3. Whether anyone, especially children and women were urged indirectly to make vows or observe other counsels.

4. Whether anyone in the house seems to be too attached to his relatives, or is obliged to their support.

5. About the number of confessors and whether there are enough of them, especially in the houses where we have the care of souls, and about the frequency of confessions and their benefit to the penitents.

6. How the spiritual retreats for ordinands and external seminarians are held; and how the talks or confreres to clergy or other externs are held; whether the Confraternities of Charity are visited and promoted.

7. What care is devoted to the direction of retreatants and what benefit is derived from them, whether the conferences about cases of conscience are held regularly, and how other studies in the house are done.

8. How the studies of humanities are carried on and how exactly are observed the instructions concerning new opinions and dissident opinions, as well as the methods of argumentation. Whether it seems that some have to be removed from studies and applied to other works or ministries of the congregation.

9. How the missions are conducted, that is, whether sermons, exhortations and catechizing is done according to the method and style of the Congregation. Likewise, whether due care is devoted to the visitation of the sick and settling disputes; whether anything is being received as compensation for our functions, and whether the rest of the rules concerning missions are observed.

10. Whether in houses obliged to the care of souls the pastoral functions are performed rightly and exactly, and whether the rest of the things prescribed by the Roman Ritual and by the rules of the rector of the church are observed.

11. With whom and how conversations between our confreres and externs are carried on.

12. Whether some, under the pretext of ill health, are slowing down on the way of perfection, dislike the works of our institute and tend to idleness.

13. Whether due care is given to the sick and guests, and whether the confreres returning from the missions and from elsewhere are received with kindness and concern.

14. Whether some signs of ambition or property have been noticed in someone.

15. How alms are distributed to poor outsiders.

16. Which of the pious works of our institute bear more fruit.

Questions that may be asked of all

1. How is their health and strength, and how food, lodging, clothing and the physical exercise they do agree with them.

2. Let them confidently explain whether they have some doubts or difficulties and what could be done for their encouragement, instruction and progress.

3. How he is treated by his superiors and what he thinks about them as regards both their persons and their offices.

4. Whether any superior interfered with the freedom of his subjects to write to higher superiors or signified in any way that he does not like that the confreres write them about him or his government.

5. Whether he knows, outside of confession, something about any person which he does not approve, like disobedience, murmuring, conspiracies, especially against superiors, whether something immoral or imprudent has happened in undue familiarity with some person or, on the contrary, out of dislike for them.

6. How in the house are observed the constitutions, decrees, general orders and norms given by the superior general or other superiors.

7. How the ministries of the congregation toward externs are performed as regards the manner of performance.

What progress the confreres are making in spirituality and what the effort is to acquire solid virtues.

8. Let him speak freely if he has anything that seems important about other houses of the province.

Additional questions for the scholastics

1. What he thinks are his talents, memory, strength and inclination for studies.

2. Whether he is distracted from spiritual things by external occupations or studies.

3. Whether he studies the necessary books, whether he writes, reads, engages in disputations.

4. What he thinks about his progress in knowledge.

For the intern seminarists

1. Is he firm in his purpose to live and die in the Congregation?

2. Is he indifferent regarding all the ministries and exercises of the Congregation as obedience may call?

3. Did he make the spiritual retreat and other exercises of the seminarists, and in which of them did he make greater progress? Other questions may be asked if appropriate in view of the internal seminary.

How to receive an accounting of conscience

Among all the rules of his office, the visitor shall most carefully observe the one regarding receiving the accounting of conscience of the confreres. When one shall have said what he wanted to say according to the instruction, the visitor may, if he things that he has to ask further question, do so, although the things which are very embarrassing for a person should not be asked outside confession, nor shall he inquire into details, but act prudently and cautiously with respect to persons, showing such kindness that he will not appear in all those things as a judge but as a loving father who tries to know those things for the encouragement of the subject.

So that such accounting of conscience may be made more easily, tactfully and fruitfully, the visitor may use the shorter formula. That formula is the one we use each month in the ordinary communications and is as follows:

1. The visitor shall fervently exhort all of them together to prepare well for this accounting of conscience, make a meditation on the subject regarding the following three points: 1. the motives, 2. what each one knows; 3. the means.

2. Following that, a conference shall be given on the same subject, the visitor presiding.

3. Each one shall examine his conscience about five points of the regular communication, namely, 1° what virtue was especially recommended for practice in the previous communication; whether or not he has made any progress in it; if not, 2° what are the main faults committed since the latest visitation against the rules, constitutions, common order and resolutions made during the latest spiritual retreat; 3° what progress in solid virtues; likewise what graces have been received from God, what spiritual consolations and lights; 4° how he feels about his vocation; if he is firm in it, and whether he loves everything that goes with it. 5° what is the main need or weakness of soul or body, namely, what vice dominates his soul and how is his physical health.

4. He shall see to it that each one write down his accounting of conscience consisting of five points briefly and distinctly and hand it to the visitor and, if necessary, read it in his presence.

5. After giving the communication to the visitor, the latter will give him immediately, in the spirit of meekness and charity, the appropriate instruction and efficient remedy against relapsing; the summary of it he will regularly give him in a note with three or more main faults gathered from the information as above along with the acts of the opposed virtues.

6. Upon the completion of the communication, in order to give more consolation and edification to the visitor, the confrere will, in a spirit of humility, kneel down and bless him, saying these words: May the blessing of almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit come upon us and remain with us forever. Amen.

The visitor will always diligently consider this pious custom of receiving an accounting of conscience as the most serious and useful among other practices and continue among us, and he will from time to time admonish each of the superiors of the province about it, and ask an exact accounting in the Lord.

For the rest, he shall try diligently to observe everything prescribed in the rules of local superiors regarding their persons, all the more because by reason of his office he must surpass them in the effort of spiritual care. In order to better achieve this, he shall diligently keep in mind the purpose of his office and the holiness required of the visitor.

RULES OF THE LOCAL SUPERIOR

REGARDING HIS PERSON AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

CHAPTER I

1. The local superior should be the kind of person to guide others to be spiritual men striving for their own perfection and the sanctification of others. He shall envision himself as the soul of his house and must, therefore, fashion his house with his prayers, holy desires and examples and strive, as best he can, to first fulfill what he requires of others.

2. He shall strive to give to others an example in observing the common rules and avoid, so far as possible, singularity in food, clothing and in the use of other things, and be careful lest he offend others by familiarity and indulgence with some.

3. He shall observe the customs received and approved by the general or the visitor, and shall see to their observance. Other customs, if there are any, introduced by a former superior he shall not change without consulting the visitor, nor shall he introduce new ones without the approval of the general or the visitor.

4. He shall prudently appoint those who perform duties in the house, with the exception of those whose appointment belongs to the visitor. He will give to each one his rules, he shall see them occasionally, and evaluate them as he will deem it in the Lord. He will either leave them in their service or remove them as he will see fit. Since, however, some service demands experience in order to be performed well, those who are qualified for them shall not be easily changed.

5. He shall provide help for the officers so that they will not be overburdened by work and, when they do not have enough to do, he shall see to it that they use their free time for the divine service.

6. Although he has the power to appoint confessors for his subjects, he shall not appoint the ordinary confessor of the house without the visitor's approval.

7. Although he may command absolutely, that is, in virtue of holy obedience, he shall not do so, except most rarely and for a serious and grave reason.

8. He may impose only ordinary penances, such as accusing oneself in chapter, being publicly admonished, asking pardon during the repetition of prayer, conferences or other such public actions, kissing the feet of others, helping in the kitchen, denying himself some daily food or drink, taking the discipline.

9. In case of necessity and for a greater good, he may dispense individual confreres from rules, constitutions and decrees of the general congregations, provided he informs the superior general about the matter as soon as possible.

10. He shall have a book in which will be recorded the names of the members of his house who take vows, with the date and place. He shall have a separate catalogue with the names of those who have not completed their biennium.

He shall see to it that understands well the faculties granted him by these rules, by the constitutions and the norms of the superior general, so that he may know how to have recourse to the superior [general] when, in certain matters, he does not have them.

THINGS THAT MAY HELP THE SUPERIOR IN THE GOOD ADMINISTRATION OF THE HOUSE

CHAPTER 2

He shall carefully see to it that the assistant [or his substitute] and other officials do not neglect their office, regardless of others who can prevent such negligence.

Every week, or at least every two weeks, he shall meet with his consultors, except when for something that came to his attention, an extraordinary consultation has to be made concerning matters of greater importance that occur at various times and in various affairs. He shall discuss with them, although after hearing them, the right to decide about any matter shall remain with him.

He shall listen kindly and willingly to the consultors and all others who have to propose something, especially when the matter has been brought to the attention of his admonitor and, in his own house, he shall see to the observance of what is prescribed regarding the manner of writing a report.

He shall have in his possession the record of the visitation of his house approved by the superior general as well as the ordinances of some importance sent by the same superior general and are to be carried out permanently. Those which are temporary shall be written separately. The prescriptions of the visitor shall be written in a different book.

He shall try to have a complete knowledge of our institute which he shall achieve 1° by carefully reading the bulls or apostolic letters, constitutions and decrees of the general assemblies, likewise the common rules and the rules of his office as well as those of his subordinates, and even those of the visitor; 2° paying attention to the received customs and their observance; 3° in doubts recurring to the visitor and, if necessary, to the general.

He shall have a notebook in which he shall put down everything that he has to do for the good of his house or about which he will have to write to the superior general or to the visitor, lest he forget.

He will be able to prescribe and have masses of his confreres applied for the current common and private needs, but moderately, according to the custom of the Congregation.

SPIRITUAL CARE OF THE CONFRERES

CHAPTER 3

He shall see to it that all who are subject to the officers show them due obedience and the officers to him, and he himself shall try to carry out most exactly the orders of the superior general and the visitor.

He shall see to it that the rules and constitutions are exactly observed. With all solicitude he shall watch over all the members of the house and defend them in the Lord against everything that could harm them at home and away, by preventing evil and, if anything wrong should happen, by applying a remedy.

Every three months let him hear the accounting of conscience which everyone shall make either to him or, if that is impossible, to someone else appointed by him, in the manner prescribed by the [rules of] office of the visitor.

Let him remember that during the spiritual retreat that each one has to make every year all renew their vows, after completing the usual requirements.

Every Friday he shall give an exhortation either himself or someone else appointed by him in which he will speak about the observance of the rules in general or about any of them in particular. In the same way he will speak about fraternal charity, patience, humility, mortification and other virtues, especially obedience and simplicity.

Frequently and with great charity he shall address his subjects about their physical and especially their spiritual needs, particularly when aware of some temptation assailing any of them. He shall try to help them either himself or through someone else.

He shall also see to it that the lay brothers firmly believe the mysteries of faith so that they can instruct the poor about them when and how he shall see fit.

When giving corrections and penances he shall keep in mind the dispositions of individuals and the edification of others.

He shall give corrections, unless prudence requires otherwise, 1° in the spirit of charity and meekness; 2° in charity but inspiring shame; 3° in the same charity by adding fear.

For public faults he shall impose public penances, but he shall not tell those things which could make a bad impression on others.

He may delegate a confessor or others to approve or disapprove penances which anyone would take upon himself for his greater spiritual progress.

He shall take precaution in giving permission for fasting and other penances, that no one exceeds the measure of right reason and discretion, but also impress upon all that there is no singularity if someone fasts when others are not fasting, provided that some kind of regular custom, which is not according to the constitution, is not introduced.

He shall pay very special attention that mutual unity and uniformity is preserved in the house and, if there be any quarrel among the members of the house, that it is settled immediately.

According to the custom of the Congregation, he himself and other priests according to his decision shall sometime during the year and for a certain time take over the duty or duties, even those of the brothers who work in the house.

He shall carefully inspect all documents and letters written to the members of his house or which the latter write to others, or shall appoint some other faithful and discreet man who will read and either pass or retain them as he will judge appropriate in the Lord, and report to him if something is so important that the superior must be notified, and obliterate what is not fitting, and shall allow no one to write vain things or matters offensive in any way. He shall not allow anyone to have his own seal made without the visitor's permission and attend to the observance of the rest of the rules concerning the form of writing.

There shall be no weapons in the house, unless time and place require it, nor musical instruments, except an organ, especially a portable one, and manichords² and the like which help to learn intervals, nor shall he allow new kinds of recreation to be introduced.

STUDIES

CHAPTER 4

He shall not admit anyone to begin studies, nor move anyone who has been admitted by the visitor's permission to another faculty without the approval of the same visitor to whom, after mature consideration and examination, he shall at the appointed time express his own opinion.

He shall remove the impediments that keep the minds of the students away from studies, such as excessive mortifications or devotions, or external occupations. He shall carefully watch over their health, whether they are keeping the right way in their intellectual work, and whether they enjoy a reasonable comfort with regard to their body, so that they can humbly advance in their studies as regards both acquiring and using their knowledge for the glory of God.

He shall see how all our teachers in letters and the sciences perform their work and shall take care that especially those teaching or learning philosophy and theology

²Also known as a "monochord," a kind of zither with a keyboard in use in France from before the 16th century.

observe what is prescribed by the common rules, by the rules of the visitor, and by the rules of study. He shall also inquire either himself or through others what progress the scholastics are making in their studies, and if he should notice that anyone is wasting time, he shall notify the visitor.

Every week one day at least after lunch shall be reserved for rest, when he may send them to the garden or the house farm or some other place for physical exercise or recreation, but for the rest of the intermissions of study he shall follow the order prescribed by the general or the visitor.

Although he cannot appoint teachers either for external seminaries or for the scholastics of our Congregation without the permission of the visitor, in case of necessity he may do so temporarily.

The rules of the scholastics of our Congregation shall be read every year three or four times a year, at least to our men, in a place appointed for it, and separated from the externs, but the rules prescribed for the externs of seminaries for boys as well as for ecclesiastics in our houses shall be read to them at least once a month.

By the end of studies it will be the superior's task, after hearing his consultors, to inform the visitor about each one's talent and report on each one's progress, although whether some are to be promoted to sacred orders or to be proposed as confessors, preachers, teachers or lectors.

DOMESTIC ORDER

CHAPTER 5

Every day after morning prayer Mass shall be celebrated which all who are not priests shall attend, except those who are bound to the common recitation of the canonical hours at the same time and others, both lay and clerics, who have permission for special reasons to attend mass at some other time.

Whenever our confreres, especially clerics, will receive holy communion, particularly on Sundays and solemn feast days, the superior shall see to it that, if it can be done conveniently, they all receive it in the church, but separately from externs, and observe the rest of the things prescribed in the rules of the prefect of the church.

During the time assigned to prayer and other exercises there shall be somebody to watch whether they are all present and this shall sometimes be done even by the assistant or the superior himself.

At home he shall appoint someone as supervisor, unless he uses for this task the assistant or subassistant. The supervisor's task shall be to manage everything that belongs to propriety and external decency; he shall likewise inspect the church and the public places of the house and if he finds anything improper, he shall notify the superior. Besides him, he shall have other particular supervisors in every department, who shall be chosen, as far as possible, from the more prudent and mature ones.

All scholastics, except those who, in his judgment, ought to be excepted, shall take one quarter of an hour before lunch or dinner for physical exercises.

From the signal for lunch at least eight hours shall pass before dinner, according to the custom of the region, and seven hours from the time when confreres go to bed to the signal for rising.

The blessing and thanksgiving in the refectory shall be done according to the usage of the Roman Breviary at the first table; at the second, however, the private one, the ancient benediction and thanksgiving may be used by each one in a low voice and standing.

At table, the priests precede others who have not been promoted to that level. However, among the priests and among those who are not priests, there shall be no precedence.

If the superior cannot be present for some reason at the first table, he shall see to it that the assistant is present.

On Sundays and feast days, if convenient, and even on other days, if the superior sees fit, there shall be some chosen by the superior, especially from the among the scholastics at home, who, instead of reading, shall give a sermon during the meal. To these some convenient time on the same day shall be given, according to the superior's judgment, for preparation.

After dinner and supper one hour, and on Friday half an hour after the evening meal shall be faithfully devoted to recreation, and that in one place, if it can be done conveniently. However, even outside this time, [the superior] shall not allow work to be continued for too long without some proper relaxation.

Conferences on cases of conscience, on controversies or other matters pertaining to giving missions shall be held every day or at last every other day during the entire summer when the missionaries usually interrupt the missions. All the priests who can without inconvenience and others destined for the work in the Lord's vineyard, according to the superior's decision, must attend, while some learned man, who is able to explain clearly and define the matter of the session, shall preside. On the other hand, during the season for missions and also after it, when the missionaries have returned home, such sessions will be held, when the time will allow, at least once a week as the superior will find it convenient.

Where there is a sufficient number of them, all scholastics unless some of them have to be excused, shall, according to the custom of the Congregation, several times a month on Sundays and feast days at the end of the recreation after lunch, take practice in preaching. In it they shall frequently bring out subjects like self-denial, progress in virtues, and fraternal charity.

REGARDING TEMPORAL THINGS

CHAPTER 6

He shall add to and preserve the temporal goods of the house in such a way that the reign of God and his justice will be sought first.

He shall notify the general if some stable goods have been given as a gift or legacy to the house and under what conditions they were accepted, so that he shall not accept that burden except by his advice and thus either retain or return what had been given.

Each month he shall require from the procurator the account of income and expense of the whole house so that he is informed about the state of administration and can report it to the visitor and take precaution that the house is not burdened by debts.

Regarding food, clothing and housing, and other material needs, he shall see to it that, although in such things virtue is tested as well as self-denial, nevertheless the necessities required by nature must not be lacking, taking into account individual conditions.

He shall take the best care possible of the sick and provide as best as possible the food and other things prescribed by the physician.

When anything is sent or given to individual by an extern, he shall see to it that it is received for common use and distributed.

He shall avoid litigation and shall initiate none without consulting the visitor, nor shall he respond to any unless forced to it.

If the goods of some confrere have to be distributed, if some contract is to be made, if building of some extent has to be undertaken, if extraordinary expenses have to be made, or if goods are being offered with some obligation, he shall report the matter to the visitor.

He shall take precautions against unnecessary or not very useful expenses and therefore shall not accept any without consulting the consultors and without the approval of the visitor, nor shall he disapprove or change what has been done by his predecessors; if anything has to be built, destroyed or notably changed at home or on the farms, he shall not do so without consulting the visitor.

He shall not allow any deposit of money [in the house] and may accept other things only with the greatest caution, provided they are owned by persons to whom we are very indebted or else such service cannot be refused without serious offense.

Without his permission he shall allow no one to be compelled to undergo questioning in civil and much less in criminal cases, except by those who can oblige under penalty of sin and he shall not give such permission except in cases regarding the Catholic religion or pious causes which are beneficial to someone without being harmful to someone else.

He shall allow no confrere to keep an animal that he would use for riding, except in cases of chronic illness or public business that the general would judge urgent.

WORK FOR SOULS, COMMUNICATION WITH EXTERNS, GRATITUDE TOWARD FOUNDERS AND BENEFACTORS

CHAPTER 7

He shall endeavor that our confreres are constantly occupied in the exercises of the Congregation, especially for missions, ordinands, those on spiritual retreats and seminaries for externs, but in such a way, if possible, that they are not overburdened.

He shall provide that there is always at least one designated at home for giving spiritual retreats and for visiting the Confraternities of Charity.

He shall also see to it that some time during the year, conferences are held about the correct and fruitful conducting of spiritual retreats, and the correct performance of other functions of the Congregation.

He shall not allow our confreres to undertake the direction of women, not even of nuns. However, during the missions he may allow them to preach to those nuns who request it with the consent of their superiors, and to hear their confessions. He may direct Daughters of Charity, however, following the norms received from the superior general or the visitor.

He shall go on the missions and conduct other such ministries of the Congregation when the occupations of his office allow.

He shall not admit externs to work on the missions nor use them at home for any function of a missionary without the permission of the superior general or the visitor, but he may and even must use extern seminarians in his house whom he judges capable at a proper time and according to their rules for work on the missions. He will observe the same about the clergy conferences.

He shall not allow our members to visit women or to write to them, except in case of necessity and when there is hope for great benefit, but only to the very reliable and prudent.

He shall not allow women to enter our house.

He shall not allow confreres to take a meal with externs nor externs to visit our sick confreres, unless a grave reason compels him to grant permission.

Nor shall he allow confreres to pay frequent visits to the prominent people of the place, except for the sake of pious works, or to offer them presents to obtain some favor.

He shall be very careful to keep as friends, and he shall try to befriend, those who are ill disposed toward us, with prayers and other suitable means.

He shall be very exact in rendering to founders what is due them, and show them gratitude.

CONCERNING THOSE WHO ASK TO BE ADMITTED,
THOSE WHO WISH TO STAY IN THE HOUSE,
AND THOSE WHO ARE SENT AWAY

CHAPTER 8

He shall admit no one into the Congregation except with the approval of the general or the visitor. He will refer those who wish to be admitted to the visitor, or write to him who they are and what gifts they have from God.

If the petitioner is very suitable for our institute and there is no time for waiting, the superior may receive him as a guest in the house until he receives the visitor's reply or may send the candidate to him if that is more convenient. But the superior shall not accept someone who has left another place of the Congregation without permission or has been dismissed from it. If he thinks it better to receive him, he shall write to the visitor about it and wait for his answer. In the meantime, he may place him as a guest in some separate place in the house without any communication with our confreres, or, if more convenient, in some other pious place.

He shall show great charity to the members of our Congregation who pass through and will help them with everything they need.

When someone is leaving the house, he shall give him a suitable companion, and he shall allow no one to leave the house alone, unless he is absolutely reliable or for some very important business, and necessity demands it.

He shall send no one from his house to another one without an accompanying letter.

Whenever he is about to send several confreres to work in the Lord's vineyard, he shall appoint the one he trusts the most as the prefect or director of the others.

If he should see that someone is constantly ill disposed toward the house or his transfer seems necessary for some other reason, he shall ask the visitor if he may send him to another place.

Those who are leaving should not be deprived of their cassock and the other interior clothes they are wearing, unless time or charity should require them to change their clothes for better ones. All other things needed for travel shall be provided with great charity by the place they are leaving, but at the expense of those who have to pay the travel expenses.

Externs shall not be accepted as overnight guests, except by reason of a spiritual retreat, or if they are persons to whom we owe much, or again, if such service cannot be refused without great offense. In this matter the principal excuse will be for the clergy and religious who come to us out of necessity.

THE GENERAL CONGREGATION³ FOR THE ELECTION OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

When the superior general dies, the key to the boxes in which he had deposited the two notices, one about the election of the general and the other about the nomination of the vicar general, shall be immediately given in custody to the oldest missioner priest of the house where the general has died, provided that the Missioner is not one of the assistants general. The Missioner will keep that key until the time comes to open the boxes.

This transfer of the key shall be done by the other older Missioners present at the time, unless it has been done already at the time of the illness of the general, as explained in more detail in the rules of the general. As to the box containing the notice about the future vicar general, it shall be opened in the presence of the assistants and the other priests of our Congregation who will be in the house at that time, or at least in the presence of the majority of them convoked for this purpose. The opening shall be done by the same older confrere, to whom the first assistant shall give the other key in the presence of the others. All this shall be done as soon as possible, even on the very day of death. The oldest confrere will then immediately open the notice and display it before to the eyes of all, so that it can be recognized by each one of them as written by the hand of the deceased superior general. The one whose name is found on the notice will be, without any objection, recognized as the vicar general. If, however, it should happen that the one nominated on the notice as vicar general has died, or is detained by grave illness, or impeded in some other way so that he could not discharge his office well enough, then the oldest assistant by reason of vocation will have to be admitted by all as the vicar general.

The one nominated as vicar general shall convoke a general assembly to elect the superior general as soon as possible, considering the larger or smaller extent of our Congregation; however, he shall not exceed the time of five or six months. Whatever the extent of the Congregation may be, he shall see to it that the delegates admonish the rest of the confreres that masses ought to be celebrated and prayers offered for a successful election. The election itself of the superior general shall be done by the visitors, the assistants of the deceased superior general, and two deputies of each province designated by the provincial assembly of each province held to elect these deputies. The deputies shall be chosen from the priests who have not only taken the four vows of the Congregation, but have also completed at least six years in the Congregation after their vows, unless they are from among those who, although they have not yet taken their vows, they were received in the Congregation two years before the feast of the apostle Matthew, 1642. However, if it should happen that one

³Congregation, now called an “assembly” in Vincentian documents, is capitalized in this translation when it refers to the Congregation of the Mission, and is left in lower case when it refers to the assembly. Perhaps because of this confusion of terminology, the term assembly was chosen instead. “Congregation” is the term used by Jesuits.

of those who did not take vows is elected superior general, he will have to take them, if he so desires; if not, someone else shall be elected.

Once the general assembly after the death of the superior general has been convoked by the vicar general nominated by the superior general before his death to represent him after death, and the delegates are assembled, the vicar general shall either himself or through someone else give an exhortation consisting of three points. First, he shall explain the reasons they have to especially recommend themselves to God in order to elect someone endowed with those gifts of body and soul necessary to act as superior general. 2° He shall explain with what good qualities he must be endowed, the qualities which are contained in the rules of the superior general. 3° He shall point out the means they must use to act as they should in such an election. Among these means he shall explain that in the box to be opened in the next session there is a notice written by the hand of the late superior general which will announce that the superior general, when he was on spiritual retreat for the purpose of proposing to the Congregation two men who, in his opinion, closely portray the gifts required to represent the person of the superior general; after his mass, when he placed himself in the state in which he wished to find himself on the day of judgment after death) he, in fact, designated them because he believed them to be quite able to carry such a burden. In conclusion, he will say that now it pertains to them to elect either one of the two or a third whom they like and exclude the other two. After the exhortation the delegates may discuss among themselves the qualifications of mind and body of those whom they shall consider in the Lord as qualified for taking that office.

The next day they will still be free to visit those whom they know better, but in such a way that they shall not disclose why they are consulting them about the matter and in no way make up their minds whom they will elect until in the second session they are confined in the place where the election is to be held. But as soon as they are assembled in that place, they shall no longer have any discussion among themselves about the election but they shall, as much as possible at that time, recommend themselves to God to show whom he himself has chosen. Each one shall be bound by the penalty of automatic excommunication to denounce to the vicar general or to one of the four oldest ones not by reason of age but by reason of entrance into the Congregation, and who are present at the general assembly, if he knows whether there is someone of those convoked who had at any time manifested either by word, nod or other sign, that he wished or strived for, or still wishes and strives for the generalship either for himself or for someone else. If that should be so, the vicar general and the four oldest ones shall thoroughly inquire into the matter and, if the accused is convicted by evident testimony, he shall automatically and forever be deprived of active and passive voice in the general assembly as well as in all other assemblies. And if the vicar general himself should commit this crime, the accuser shall approach directly one of the four oldest ones and inform him in the way set out above.

On the day of election, which will be the third day inclusive after the first session of the general assembly--since there will be one day between the first and second session--in which the election shall take place, the holy sacrifice of the mass shall be celebrated by one of those convoked and all delegates shall be present and receive holy communion. Then all those having the right to vote shall be called by the ringing of the bell to the place where the election is to be held. Then the first assistant

of the deceased superior general to whom the same superior general entrusted the other key of the box in which the names of the two he considered as most worthy that one of them should be elected as his successor, goes to the table placed in their midst and places the key, in the presence of all, on the table. In the same way the oldest confrere, mentioned before, shall offer his key, and then both of them return to their places. Then, immediately, the vicar general shall hold a brief exhortation with the purpose, as before, of presenting the reasons for acting in the present situation as each of them in the hour of death would wish to have acted. 2° what they have to do that the election be done for the greater glory of God. After the hymn Veni Creator Spiritus, all delegates will be locked in the place of election by one of the Congregation commissioned for that duty. In that way no one will be able to leave and nothing else will be brought in except bread and water, until they elect the superior general. And so that everything will proceed in order, first a secretary and an assistant shall be elected by a plurality of votes in the following manner. Each one shall write on his ballot the one he elects and hands the ballot to the vicar general. The latter shall read the ballots with the two oldest ones by reason of their entrance in the Congregation. The two of those present in the general assembly who have obtained the most votes shall be the secretary and the assistant of the general convocation. Immediately after, they shall take an oath to faithfully observe secrecy and fidelity.

Then only, after this election, the box in which the late general had deposited on a paper the names of the two whom he considered most worthy for one of them to succeed him, but that nevertheless there remains to the Congregation the right to elect someone else who would be considered more suitable for that office, as already stated in the rules of the superior general. That notice shall be read aloud by the vicar general and shown to all those present, so that they may assure themselves that the notice had been written by the deceased general.

Now, if it should happen that all, moved by common inspiration, not waiting for the outcome of the voting should elect someone, that one shall be accepted by all as the superior general, since the Holy Spirit who had moved them all to such an election abundantly makes up for any form of election.

But if the election is not done in the preceding manner, the following form shall be observed. After the box in question is opened and the notice of the late general read, each one for himself shall pray to God silently in the presence of his divine Majesty and elect the one whom he considers most capable. Then he shall go to the end of the table by himself, and then and there write on the ballot containing the words of the oath given below, the name of the one he intends to nominate as the superior general, and signs his own name. Then he shall fold the ballot, keep it and return at once to his seat. Then all, each one in order, shall do the same, beginning with the vicar general, followed by the secretary, then the assistant and the rest of those convoked shall come forward in order, and return. That whole process, so far as possible, shall be completed in about an hour. Then the vicar general and with him the secretary general and the assistant previously elected shall rise and then shall solemnly affirm that he does not want to elect anyone who does not have the required qualities, nor to reject anyone who has them.

After that he shall absolve the whole congregation from all the censures they may have incurred because of the election, but only as regards the present election. Then, after invoking the help of the Holy Spirit, he shall come to the table and take, in the presence of all and saying it aloud, the oath that he nominates the one whom he believes before God to be the best qualified. The oath shall be expressed in the following words. "With all reverence I, N., invoke as witness Jesus Christ, the eternal wisdom, that I elect and nominate as superior general of the Congregation of the Mission the one whom I think most capable of carrying that burden." Having done this, he passes the ballot signed in his own hand and containing the form of the oath and the name of the one he is voting for, in the presence of the assistants and all the rest of them, to the secretary who drops it into a locked box that has on top an opening of about one inch; whereupon the secretary, the assistant and all the delegates shall do the same, that is, each one individually repeating the oath, passing the ballot signed in his own hand and containing the oath and the name of the person he is voting for, to the vicar general publicly in the presence of all, which then the vicar general drops into the box likewise before the eyes of all, but in such a way that the next one to pass his ticket does not rise until the one ahead of him has passed on the ballot and returned to his place. The rest of them shall observe the same order.

Then the secretary shall take the ballots out of the box, each one separately, unfold them and show them to the vicar general and the assistant and, omitting the name of the elector, shall read aloud the name written on the ballot. Then the vicar general, the secretary and the assistant, each one separately, shall count the names of those nominated and the one who received more than half of the votes shall be the superior general. Then the vicar general shall ask the whole group of delegates if they approve the election of the one nominated by the majority of them as superior general. Upon their approval he shall issue the decree of election as follows: "In my own name and with the approval of all I elect as the superior general of the Congregation of the Mission N.," and immediately all shall salute him individually, kneeling down and humbly kissing his hand. The one elected shall not refuse the burden laid on his shoulders and the salute offered by all, mindful of him in whose name he must graciously accept the election. Then, finally, the hymn Te Deum laudamus shall be sung.

But if no one obtained more than half of the votes, all the delegates shall agree that the whole business of election is to be commissioned to three or five electors who shall be nominated by a plurality of votes in the same way as the election of the secretary and the assistant was done before. And the one to whom the majority of the three or five electors consent shall be considered and saluted as the superior general of the whole Congregation. And for the election they shall give thanks to God and the hymn Te Deum laudamus shall be sung, as noted above.

This is the form of the oath they shall take for the election of the electors: "I invoke Jesus Christ, the eternal wisdom, as witness that I elect and nominate as superior general of the Congregation of the Mission the one whom the electors chosen for that purpose shall elect and nominate."

After the salutation of the superior general no one shall have the right to revoke his vote or attempt a new election, and each one must think seriously for

himself whether he wants to be a schismatic and the cause of ruin and collapse of the whole Congregation, incur automatic excommunication and the other grave censures which the vicar general or the newly elected superior general shall declare against him.

But if it should happen that the general assembly will have to be held because of the fault of the superior general himself, namely because of some crime committed by him or for some other person enumerated in the rules of the superior general for which he has been deposed or expelled from the Congregation, then the nominations written on the notices by the superior general during his spiritual retreat shall be disregarded. In fact, immediately after his deposition the procedure for the election of another shall be initiated in the form just described, omitting the prescriptions regarding the two boxes with the two notices for the election.

After the end of the election of the superior general, discussions may be held about other important matters in the way followed when there is no question of the election of the superior general, found in the next chapter.

THE GENERAL CONGREGATION NOT FOR THE ELECTION OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL BUT FOR OTHER MATTERS

The general congregation held not for the election of the superior general but for other important matters is ordered by the superior general himself except in the case spoken of in the rules of the general, article 5. It is also his right to prescribe the convenient time and place for the assembly. The convocation is done in the form as prescribed above for the election of the general, but it is not necessary that the delegates be locked in, although every effort must be made for the matters to be dealt with as quickly as possible. As soon as all are gathered in the designated place, each one in his order shall briefly present his judgment concerning the matter proposed. A brief summary of it shall be placed on the table in their midst, so that those who want to read it can do so and express their opinion in the following session.

After the matters have been discussed back and forth in one or several sessions, if there seems to be nothing to contrary, four of the participants in the assembly shall be elected by common consent of all, or by the consent of all those present and having the right to vote, to decide by a majority of opinion, the rest of them agreeing to abide by their decision. Whenever needed, the four thus chosen shall meet with the superior general and decide all the matters under discussion. However, if not all consent, the preference shall be given to the majority and accepted by the whole congregation as coming from the hand of God. It is to be noted, however, that the superior general has two votes and the prerogative to break the tie, but the vicar general and the visitor have only the prerogative of breaking the tie.

THE PROVINCIAL CONGREGATION

1. The provincial congregation is to be called in six cases:
 - 1° for the election of the deceased general;
 - 2° if it should ever happen, which God forbid, that the general has to be deposed;

3° if the superior general upon the advice of the assistants and the visitors calls a general congregation;

4° if the general with the procurators or deputies who, according to the prescription of the article about the triennial congregation must meet with the general, judge that a general congregation must be convoked;

5° for the purpose of electing every three years the procurator or deputies;

6° if for some important matters the general himself convokes a general congregation.

However, all this is to be understood as applying only to the provinces of Europe, since outside Europe even other congregations cannot convene for the election of the general nor are they obliged to send procurators every three years.

2. Its convocation belongs to the visitor.

3. It shall be attended, with the right to vote, by the visitor, all the local superiors of the province and, in addition, by one priest from each house who, after taking the four vows of the Congregation, has completed at least six years in the Congregation, elected by the majority of the priests of each house who have taken the four vows.

4. If the question is of sending to the general congregation two priests who after their vows have completed six years in the Congregation who will accompany the visitor. But if the question is of electing the procurators who are sent every three years to the general, one priest must be elected who, after taking the four vows, has completed six years in the Congregation. Besides, the visitor cannot be elected procurator.

5. After the election of delegates those things must be discussed which have to be proposed in the name of the province either to the general congregation or to the superior general. However, the provincial congregation must understand that it is never allowed, even under the pretext of consultation or proposal to the general congregation, to discuss the matters which belong to the substance of our institute, but to consider these things as our foundations and take up other matters which can preserve and promote them.

6. And when the question is of sending procurators, these three things must be discussed and decided. 1° whether calling a general congregation is advisable; 2° what are the concerns of a province about which it cannot decide anything but wishes to have a decision from the superior general; 3° about the election of the procurator who should take to the superior general the thinking of the province concerning the first point as well as about other matters.

TRIENNIAL CONGREGATION OR CONVOCATION

The triennial congregation shall be held around the fifteenth of November, unless some other time shall be considered by the as more suitable. Its members shall be the procurators or deputies, one from each province. For the election of these

procurators or deputies a provincial assembly shall be held in each province consisting of superiors and delegates and shall be convoked fifteen days after Easter. In this provincial assembly, three things shall be discussed and decided with the plurality of votes according to the form observed in the general assembly convoked for the purpose of business: first, whether it is advisable to hold the general assembly; 2° what are the matters of the province which cannot be decided by the province and therefore the decision of the superior general is desired; 3° the election of the procurator who shall convey to the superior general the opinion of the province concerning the first point as well as concerning other matters.

On the day on which the general convocation is called, the procurators shall gather, discuss and share among themselves the opinions and reasons concerning the convocation of the general assembly for two or three days. On the third or fourth day afterwards, they shall meet with the superior general in the appointed place. Then the superior general shall put to them this question, namely whether the business of the Congregation requires a general convocation. In front of the general there shall be a container placed on the table, into which each procurator shall drop either a white or a black bean. The white bean shall mean “yes,” the black one “no.” Then the first of the assistants who shall have their seats beside the general shall take the beans out of the container before the eyes of the other assistants and of all those present. He shall count them to make sure that the number of beans corresponds to the number of procurators. If the number does not correspond, the beans shall be dropped again into the container until their number is the same as the number of procurators. Then he will separate the white ones from the black and count them. If the number of the white ones is larger than the black, the superior general shall announce in a loud voice that there will be a general assembly. On the other hand, if the black beans have the majority, then it shall not be held. After that he shall give the answer to each province and dismiss the procurators as soon as possible.

It must also be noted that the procurators are not obliged to follow the opinions and reasons of their provinces whether or not a general assembly should be held nor regarding the business and government of the Congregation, but that they are free to adopt the contrary opinion.

The following are the main reasons why the provincial assemblies should think that a general convocation ought to take place: 1° to restore order and stop divisions that might have arisen in some province; 2° that the Congregation should return to uniformity when diversity in some activities has gradually and imperceptibly crept in; 3° to correct all those things which the superior general either through the visitors or extraordinary commissaries or even personally were not able to correct.

Jean François de Gondi, by the grace of God and the holy Apostolic See the first archbishop of Paris, to our beloved Vincent de Paul, superior general of the Congregation of the Mission approved by us many years ago, greetings in the Lord.

We have received your petition stating that Pope Urban VIII of happy memory by the bull of foundation of your Congregation given in Rome at Saint Peter's in the year of the incarnation of our Lord 1642, on 12 January, and proclaimed by our official, deigned to grant to you and the superior general of any future time, whenever they see fit, to issue any statutes and ordinances concerning the right administration and government, direction and good order of the Congregation of the Mission, its houses, persons and property, provided they are licit and honest and in no way contrary to the sacred canons, the apostolic constitutions, decrees of the Council of Trent, the Charter and rules of the aforesaid Congregation of the Mission and to be approved by us and our successors.

In virtue of those apostolic faculty granted to you, you formulated and issued for the good government of your congregation the rules and constitutions contained in this document, namely, the common rules as well as the particular rules of the superior general, the visitor, the local superior the general and provincial assemblies for the election of the general and other important matters. You submitted them to us with a humble request to deign to approve and confirm them according to the above-mentioned faculty granted you by Pope Urban VIII for that purpose. According to this apostolic authority and wishing to hearken to and favor your humble petition, we have approved and confirmed them and by the present letter we again approve and confirm the aforesaid constitutions which we have seen and had them examined by some of our doctors in theology, and we found that they fulfill all the conditions required by the aforesaid bull, containing as they do the statutes and norms for the good administration, government, direction and ordering of your congregation regarding its houses, persons and property, all of them licit and honest and in no way contrary to the sacred canons, the apostolic constitutions, decrees of the council of Trent and the institute and rule of your Congregation. So now, in so far as necessary, we again approve and confirm by the present letter in virtue of the apostolic authority the rule or regulation contained in the said rules and constitutions formulated and issued twelve years ago and at the same time already approved and confirmed by us for the greater stability of your congregation and the more perfect observance of its rules and constitutions as a congregation of simple vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and stability to be taken in your congregation, and which cannot be dispensed except by the supreme pontiff or by you or by the superior general of the time. This practice and use of such vows introduced by you a long time ago has been continued to the present day with considerable benefit.

In proof and witness of all and each statement we have signed in our own hand this letter and ordered the secretary of our archdiocese of Paris to issue and sign it and, in proof of our approval, seal it with the seal of our chancery.

Given in Paris, 23 August 1653.

Compared with its whole and unimpaired original by us, the undersigned apostolic notaries in Paris. After the comparison the said original was returned with the present letter to the sender.

Done in Paris, in the year of our Lord [1654] /1655/ on 3 January.

Legay

Roger

We, Nicholas, of the counts of Guidi di Bagno, by the grace of God and the holy apostolic see, archbishop of Athens and nuncio of the same apostolic see to the most Christian King and the entire kingdom of France, confirm and testify that the notaries signed above are trustworthy and that to their writings trust has always been given and it is being given even more with the passing of time.

Given at Paris, 3 February 1655.

Nicholas, archbishop of Athens.

(Place of the seal)

By order of the most illustrious and reverend lord Nuncio

Simon Orlando, for the lord secretary.

[Translated by Francis Germovnik, C.M.
Revised by John E. Rybolt, C.M.]