will be made by whomever the Superior General has named Vicar-General, who will preside over it, etc. And, in the event that none has been named, the Assistant of Saint-Lazare, who represents the Superior General, will be the one by right.

So, two things were proposed:

(1) To decide whether the Rules will be read over again. The decision was taken to have them reread by only two or three men; nevertheless, everyone would sign them because Rules are like our hands: the more we wash them, the more they have to be washed; or like hens who always find something to peck at in a place through which they pass a hundred times.

(2) To decide whether the first Assembly will be bound by oath to follow the Rules, in the event that they are not approved. If the present Pope does not approve our vows, or the one who comes after him, three or four years after his coronation, we will go back to the original way of taking them. That the General will not be elected unless he swears to observe and have others observe and approve the Rules as they are, for fear that his supreme authority may lead him to want to change something.

The means. Prayer and union. Reverend Mother de Chantal used to say that neither the holiest, nor the most learned persons, nor great minds were suitable for being Superiors, but only those committed to their vocation, to the Rule, etc. Always respect confidentiality. The Assistants should see that the Rules are observed and endeavor to get them approved.


(August 11, 1651)

Although it pleased the most holy Lord, Pope Urban VIII, of happy memory, to grant us through the Bull of Erection\(^1\) of our

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\(^1\)Salvatoris nostri (cf. Doc. 84a).
aforesaid Congregation the faculty of composing whatever Constitutions and Statutes pertain to the favorable governance of the above Congregation, provided they be licit and proper and in no way contrary to the Sacred Canons and Apostolic Constitutions, the decrees of the Council of Trent, and our Institute; and approved by the Most Illustrious Archbishop of Paris, delegate of the Apostolic See for this matter; we, Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, having through the mercy of God diligently devoted ourselves for some time to composing the Rules and Constitutions necessary and useful for our Institute, and having drawn up and put them in order, judged it expedient to convene, and as a matter of fact did convene, on October 13, 1642, some Superiors of our houses existing at the time, together with certain other older men whom we judged to have more experience in our way of living. These men are Messieurs Jean Dehorgny, Superior of the Collège des Bons-Enfants; Jean Bécu, Superior of the house in Toul; Lambert aux Couteaux, Superior of the Richelieu house; Jean Bourdet, Superior of the house in Troyes; Pierre Duchesne, Superior of the Crécy house in the Meaux diocese; and, in place of those absent, Messieurs Antoine Portail, François du Coudray, Antoine Lucas, Léonard Boucher, and René Alméras, all priests of our Congregation.

We communicated to them the aforesaid Rules and Constitutions; on their advice, it seemed to us at that time that this endeavor could not be resolved in every way, not only because of insufficient time, but especially because we needed a longer practice of these Rules before committing them to writing. In the meantime, we have delegated four of the above-mentioned Fathers: Antoine Portail, Jean Dehorgny, Lambert aux Couteaux, and René Alméras, to weigh and consider the Rules more carefully and opportunely, along with us.

But, so that we might at some point put the finishing touches to a work so necessary and useful to our Congregation, on July 1 of this year 1651 we held another Assembly of some Superiors of our houses and other men who we felt were more experienced in our way of living; namely, Messieurs René Alméras, Superior of the
house in Rome; Étienne Blatiron, Superior of the Genoa house; Antoine Lucas, Superior of the Le Mans house; Lambert aux Couteaux, Superior of the Richelieu house; Gilbert Cuissot, Superior of the house in Cahors; François Grimaldi, Superior of the Agen house; Louis Thibault, Superior of the Saint-Méen house in the Saint-Malo diocese; Jean-Baptiste Le Gros, Superior of the Petit Saint-Lazare house; and Messieurs Antoine Portail, Jean Bécu, Jean Dehorgny, Jean-Baptiste Gilles, and Pierre Duchesne, priests of the Congregation. Together with them and with their advice, after carefully and opportunely examining the Rules and Constitutions, we judged, and do in fact judge in the Lord, that they are conformable to our way of living, the purpose and Institute of our Congregation, and the other conditions required by the aforesaid Bull, and, in fact, have even been practiced by us for about twenty-five years; consequently, they can be presented by us to the Most Illustrious Archbishop of Paris for his approval, in line with the tenor of the Bull.

Whereupon, on the advice of the aforesaid men, we judged that by these present letters the Most Illustrious Archbishop should be asked and entreated, with all possible humility, reverence, and authority, to be willing, according to his customary fatherly kindness toward us, to approve by his authority the Rules and Constitutions, Common as well as Particular, and in this way to add to them the strength of inviolable apostolic constancy. And we will pray that Almighty God will always be his exceedingly great reward.

In testimony whereof, we, together with all the assembled priests of the Congregation, have signed the present letters in our own hand.

Drawn up at Saint-Lazare in the Paris suburbs on August 11, 1651.

Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission; A. Portail; Étienne Blatiron; Gilbert Cuissot; Louis Thibault; René Alméras; Jean Dehorgny; Jean Bécu; Lambert aux Couteaux; Antoine Lucas; François Grimaldi; Pierre du Chesne; J-B. Gilles.
107. - AUTHORIZATION FOR LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX AND COMPANIONS TO TRAVEL TO POLAND

(September 4, 1651)

Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, to our beloved brothers in Christ of our Congregation, Lambert aux Couteaux and Guillaume Desdames, priests; Nicolas Guillot, subdeacon; Kazimierz Stanislaw Zelazewski, seminarian; and Jacques Posny, coadjutor Brother; greetings in the Lord.

In accordance with the Bull of Erection of our Congregation, we are bound to apply ourselves to the salvation of the neighbor in harmony with the manner indicated therein and the Rules of our Institute, wherever Divine Providence shall call us. For some years now, the Most Serene Marie de Gonzague, Queen of Poland, wife of the Most Invincible and Most Serene Casimir, King of Poland, has deigned to request for the kingdom of Poland some of our men who, applying themselves to our ministries and functions at the good pleasure of the Most Distinguished and Most Reverend Bishops, might labor in this vineyard of the Lord. Therefore, desiring earnestly to comply with the commands of so great a Princess, with all humility and due reverence in keeping with our insignificance, and duly informed long ago of your integrity in all matters, your competence, and your practical experience in many things; in consequence of the request of the Most Serene Queen, and by the present letters, we send you to the mission of Poland to devote yourselves to all the functions of our Congregation.

We instruct all of you to show obedience and respect in all things in the Lord to M. Lambert aux Couteaux, whom we have designated and appointed, and by these letters do designate and appoint, for


1Guillaume Desdames (cf. VIII, 88, n. 1).
2Nicolas Guillot (cf. VII, 68, n. 3).
3Stanislaw Kazimierz Zelazewski (cf. V, 51, n. 4).
4Jacques Posny (cf. V, 51, n. 5).
5Jan Casimir (cf. VIII, 89, n. 5).
6Coste, p. 360, here omits /manda]tum vos in dicit Poloniarn missionem and inserts /cor]poralem designavimus et deputavimus, which is not in the original document.
your spiritual and temporal direction and governance. We give and
grant him the authority and faculty to accept foundations and
houses, draw up contracts, and effect with outsiders other things of
this nature that will seem necessary to be carried out at the time for
the good of the Congregation in Poland. We appoint him in our
stead for all matters in this regard, according to our Institute and for
the time we deem opportune, until we revoke this appointment.

Moreover, we earnestly request our Most Illustrious and Most
Reverend Bishops, Pastors, and all those in charge of the churches
to allow all of you in the Lord passage through their districts to cele­
brate Mass and to receive the sacraments, since it is clear that all of
you are free from every ecclesiastical censure and irregularity.

We also ask all Princes, Viceroys, Governors, heads of cities,
border guards, and guardians of roads and harbors to deign to grant
all of you the faculty of coming and going safely and freely through
their lands, for the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is King of
Kings and Lord of Lords,7 to whom we and our Congregation direct
our devout prayers for their well-being.

In testimony of all these things, we have ordered the present let­
ters, signed in our own hand, to be drawn up and signed by our ordi­
nary Secretary, and authenticated with the seal of our
Congregation.

Given at Saint-Lazare in Paris, September 4, 1651.

VINCENTIUS A PAULO,

Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission

By mandate of my aforesaid Superior General.

DUCOURNAU

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7Cf. 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 17:14.
I, the undersigned, Superior of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission, informed by certain devout ladies of Palaiseau that half of the inhabitants of that town were ill, with ten or twelve of them dying daily, and on their request that I send some priests for the corporal and spiritual assistance of these poor people, suffering for twenty days from the presence of the army there, attest to whom it may concern that we have sent four priests and a surgeon there to help those poor people. In addition, since the eve of Corpus Christi,¹ we have sent them every day—except for one or two—sixteen large loaves of white bread, fifteen pints of wine, some eggs, and, yesterday, some meat. Moreover, since the priests of the Company informed me that flour and a hogshead of wine should be sent for the relief of those sick persons and those in neighboring villages, I have sent off today a cart drawn by three horses, laden with four setiers of flour and two hogsheads of wine, for the relief of the sick poor of Palaiseau and the surrounding villages.

In witness whereof, I have written and signed these present letters with my own hand at Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, June 5, 1652.²

VINCENT DEPAUL,
Superior of the Priests of the Mission


²May 29.
Since the Providence of God has called them to the city of Tunis for the corporal and spiritual assistance of all the poor Christian slaves there, they will bear in mind that this ministry is one of the most charitable they might ever carry out on earth. To fulfill it in a worthy manner, they should have special devotion to the mystery of the Incarnation, whereby Our Lord came upon earth to assist us in our slavery, in which the evil spirit was holding us captive.

They will be exact to the Rules of the Company and its holy customs and maxims, which are those of the Gospel, and work tirelessly to acquire the virtues that make a true Missionary: zeal, humility, simplicity, mortification, and holy obedience, and will devote themselves to the temporal and spiritual care of all the sick poor.

M. Le Vacher will be the Director of this little mission; M. Husson, wearing lay dress, will carry out the office of Consul, on the advice of M. Le Vacher, acting in public in the manner befitting a good, pious Consul with his Director, and he will follow his direction in the house and even outside, in those things not pertaining to the running of the consulate, which he will, nevertheless, carry out with the advice of M. Le Vacher, as has been said.

They will endeavor to use every precaution imaginable to get along with the Dey, the Pasha, the Customs House officials, and other leading citizens, and will willingly bear the insults said or done to them by the people.

They will strive to win over by patience the priests and religious who are enslaved there and will see to it that they are held in the honor due them and that they retain their little privileges.

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Document 109. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, seventeenth- or eighteenth-century copy made from the original, which, according to the copyist, had been signed by Saint Vincent.

1Jean Le Vacher (cf. VIII, 90, n. 7).
2Martin Husson (cf. VIII, 2/8, n. 4).
They will do all they can to maintain the greatest possible union among the merchants, treating them fairly but kindly and briefly, and will uphold them before the Lords and Magistrates of the region with all possible concern.

They will send us news of themselves with every boat that comes to France—not of the state of affairs of the country, but that of the poor slaves and the work Our Lord is entrusting to them.

If, without any danger, they can go to visit the poor slaves who are in the rural areas, they will do so and will endeavor to strengthen and console them, giving them some alms for this purpose.

They will submit to the laws of the country, except regarding religion, about which they will never argue nor make any disparaging remarks.

They will find out from those who have been living in that country for a long time anything that might anger those in power or give them any cause for suspicion or for provoking an avania, so as to avoid these.

They will give alms in proportion to their revenue, and, after seeing what they need for their annual upkeep, will give away the surplus. Since it is necessary for the Consul to distribute some in virtue of his position, M. Le Vacher, who will keep the money, will give him some for this purpose whenever he asks—not only to distribute the alms, but for his personal needs and those of his office. Now, each will be exact about writing down the names of the slaves whom he assists, along with the amount he gives them, and will notify the other so that both do not give to the same person and so that M. Le Vacher can use these reports to show, by the annual accounts he will send us, to whom and how much has been given monthly.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
unworthy Priest of the Mission
His Holiness Urban VIII, of happy memory, by the Bull of Erection of the Congregation of Priests of the Mission, issued January 12, 1632, granted the Superior General of the Congregation the faculty to make Statutes in order to maintain in their vocation the priests who had joined this Congregation. These Statutes, however, were to be approved by His Excellency the Archbishop of Paris. Using this faculty, the Superior General initiated a certain way of life expressly excluding the religious state, but still including the taking of the three simple vows, with no one accepting and receiving them.

His Excellency the Archbishop of Paris, not only as the local Ordinary but also as delegate of the Holy See, confirmed and approved this way of life on October 9, 1641, and August 23, 1653. For the greater stability of this Institute, the favor and vigor of the immediate support of apostolic confirmation is now being humbly requested in the hope that it will be granted.

This apostolic confirmation of such a way of life, including the taking and observance of the three simple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, does not, however, constitute the religious state, which the members do not intend to profess.

For, in order to constitute the religious state, it is essential that such substantial vows be made in a religious Order approved by the Holy Apostolic See as a religious Order. Nor is it enough that a way of life be approved by it, unless it is approved as constituting the re-
igious state. This is clearly taught by the *Glossa*, Cum ex eo verbo, 3° de sent. excom; Abbas, *Rubrica de Regularibus*, no. 1; Angelus, under the heading *Religiosus*, no. 1; Silvester, in the article *Religio* I, q. I; Armilla, in the discourse *Religio*, no. 4; and Navarrus, *Commentario I de Regularibus*, no. 15, as quoted by Father Sanchez, l. 5, chaps. 3, 11, 19, *in praecepita Decalogi*.

Therefore, since it is not sufficient to take the three substantial vows in a way of life approved as good even by the Apostolic See, unless it is ordinarily approved also as precisely including the religious state, the apostolic confirmation of a proposed way of life in which the religious state is neither petitioned nor intended, but is, in fact, expressly excluded, will not constitute that state.

For, says Silvester in the discourse *Religio* I, q. I, in order to distinguish whether a way of life approved by the Apostolic See has been approved as a religious state or simply as a good way of life, the words of the apostolic document must be consulted, and, in our case, the words of the confirmation by the Apostolic Delegate must be considered, under which immediate apostolic confirmation is being requested, in such a way, however, that the Congregation in question, because of the profession of the vow, can in no way be considered as belonging to the religious Orders, nor does it cease to belong to the body of the clergy. Thus it is demonstrated quite clearly that such a way of life has neither been approved by the Apostolic Delegate as a religious Order, nor has immediate apostolic confirmation been requested for such.

Indeed, in the Church of God there are examples showing that such a way of life has been approved as good but not as constituting the religious state. The *Glossa* of Clement, *Cum ex eo de Sent. Excom.*, speaks of the way of life of the Third Rule of Saint Francis.

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4 *Glossa ordinaria*: designation given the twelfth and thirteenth century compilations of explanations of texts (glosses). The schools and courts generally held that the *glossa ordinaria* provided defensible original opinions and were considered by some the final authority in questions of Canon Law, to the extent that they were the ones most likely to be adopted by the Roman Curia (cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 6).

5 Noted canonists and theologians of the period: Nicolas de Tudeschis, called Abbas; Blessed Ange de Clavasio, Friar Minor of the Observance; the Dominican Silvestro Mozzolino, author of a theological *Summa*; Martín Navarro, a Spanish canonist; and Tomás Sanchez, a Jesuit theologian.
approved by Pope Nicholas III but not as a Rule that makes the one professing it a true religious.

In his Commentary *I de Regularibus*, no. 15, Navarrus mentions certain priests who, without changing their clerical garb, take the three substantial vows as Oblates in the Monastery of Santa Maria de Montserrat but are not for that reason considered religious because they do not bind themselves to the Rule of Saint Benedict which is observed there. And when His Eminence Cardinal Contarello, then Prodatary, was questioned concerning the conferral of a certain regular benefice on one of the Fathers among those Oblates, he replied that he was not a true religious on whom a regular benefice could be conferred in title.

So, if those Oblete priests in the service of that monastery make the three substantial vows and yet are not religious, why cannot these Priests of the Mission, like Oblates dedicated to the service of the Bishops, take the same substantial three vows without placing themselves in the religious state?

Finally, those Roman ladies of the highest nobility of the Tor dei Specchi in that city offer themselves to live according to a way of life approved as good by the Apostolic See itself but not by any Rule that would make them religious, although they sometimes take simple vows beyond what is required by that way of life.

So, the taking of simple vows in a way of life approved as good by the Apostolic See, but not as religious vows, does not constitute the religious state.

I grant that the taking of simple vows in the Society of Jesus suffices for the religious state, but the situation in our case is altogether different, for the way of life in that Society is approved by the Apostolic See as religious; for Gregory XIII, of happy memory, in the *Extravagante Ascendente*, declared that these simple vows in such a religious Order suffice to make them religious. Since then, this religious Order is approved as a true religious Order, and the Supreme Pontiff, who has the power to establish and approve religious Com-

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6Nicholas III (1277-80).
7Gregory XIII (1572-85) issued this decree subsequent to the publication of the Roman edition of the Corpus Iuris Canonici of 1582.
munities wills that the simple vows, which in some other Community would not suffice without similar approval, suffice in that Society, it is not surprising that for both of these reasons they are, by taking simple vows, true religious in the full sense of the word. That is the opinion of Vasquez, 8 I, 2 q., q. 5, art. 4, disp. 165, q. 6, nos. 105 and 106. The Priests of the Mission wish to exclude both requirements, as is evident from the way of life they have proposed for themselves; nor do they become, because of their simple vows, unfit and incapable of possessing goods and entering contracts, or become apostates, like the rest of religious, if they leave their chosen state.

And so that every difficulty may disappear, their vows are not only pronounced without any solemnity, ceremony, blessing, or consecration, but also without any Superior accepting them, even conditionally, in the name of God or the Congregation, whose acceptance Father Suarez requires for the essence of a religious Order in vol. 2 de Relig., bk. 1, de ess. et honest. vot., chap. 2, no. 12, justifying it by the chapter Ap. de Regularibus, and vol. 3, bk. 2, chap. 4, nos. 5 and 6, and bk. 6, chap. 2, no. 4, and elsewhere. Consequently, in order to defend the statement that simple vows in the Society make true religious, he affirms that in them there is a real and proper offering on the part of the one professing and acceptance on the part of the Society, vol. 4, bk. 3, de admissione scholarium, chap. 3, nos. 9 and 10.

Nor is there any valid objection in the fact that these vows are pronounced publicly, in the hearing of the Superior and a few others because, as Saint Thomas 9 says, 2-2, q. 154, 5, ad 3um, by the fact that the vows are made publicly, they may have some spiritual and divine solemnity; hence there is a difference between a public vow and a solemn vow, and a vow will never constitute the religious state unless it is made in a way of life approved by the Holy See for a religious Order.

8Gabriel Vasquez, a Jesuit theologian.
9Saint Thomas Aquinas, Dominican philosopher and theologian.
Furthermore, the dependence of these priests on the Bishops, with regard to the missions and the work of salvation of the neighbor, does not exclude their personal dependence on their Superiors, and its addition cannot delay the requested apostolic confirmation because, first of all, the Supreme Pontiff Urban VIII, of happy memory, already established and regulated both of these dependencies in the Bull of Erection, which therefore cannot be discussed.

Thank God, not the slightest difficulty that might require an apostolic interpretation has so far arisen in any diocese regarding this combination, for which reason they consider it superfluous to request it before any such case of need, unforeseen until now, has occurred.

And the practice is such that, whenever Their Excellencies the Bishops request Missionaries for some mission, the Superior simply obeys such an order and sends from those approved by them whomever he judges most suitable for the work, just as when Their Excellencies, on the occasion of some solemn procession, request the participation of the churches subject to them in this matter, they are obliged to send someone—and, as a matter of fact, do not send some rather than others, but those best suited and capable for this function and its dignity.

Moreover, the above-mentioned previously praised Bull of Urban VIII not only removes every difficulty, but also very clearly explains the conditions on which they were admitted in Rome to perform their ministries by His Excellency the Vicegerent. By order of the Holy Father a meeting was held on that matter and a consultation with the Holy Father took place. They were admitted to carry out their ministries in Rome, but in such a way that, in whatever in these functions concerns the people, they are immediately subject to His Eminence the Vicar and to His Excellency the Vicegerent but are to obey their Superior General in everything else, in accord with the Bull of Erection. This must be the common law everywhere, and the local Ordinaries shall not demand more in their dioceses than His Eminence the Vicar, by mandate of the Holy

\[10\] Urban VIII (1623-44).
Father, in Rome. By this decree, hereby attached, every difficulty regarding this point seems to be resolved.

Therefore, etc.

111. - THE MONKS OF SAINT-VICTOR MONASTERY
AT THE MARSEILLES SEMINARY

1655

In the year 1655, at the earnest request of the Prior of Saint-Victor-lez-Marseille, and with the consent of our Most Honored Father and Superior General M. Vincent, this house took over the instruction and formation in good conduct of the young Benedictine monks and novices of the Saint-Victor House and Monastery in Marseilles. This was done at the entreaties and urgent requests of the Prior at the time, who, ardently desiring the reform of his house and seeing no means more suited to establish it there than a solid formation of the young men in religious discipline, turned to our house in the belief that, by God's grace and through the zeal and piety of our priests, it might contribute to the accomplishment of this plan. For this purpose it won the consent of the Superior General of the Congregation, who gave it only through condescension and with a commitment that was too hasty and doomed to disappointment because, in his great prudence and experience, he could not see how this plan, excellent though it was, could succeed.

Those young monks, most of whom were from the city of Marseilles, came to live with us as boarders, forming, as it were, a minor seminary, where they were taught the humanities according to their ability and were exhorted and helped to live religious life and the regular observance of which they were making profession. Since,
however, most of those young men had no other vocation to religious life than the will of their parents, who wanted them out of their homes and provided with a subsidy as religious such as a benefice, these youths, having no idea what it meant to be monks, followed their feelings and inclinations, and were undisciplined and roguish, seeking only to satify their senses. The result was that, when we saw in them no sign of good nor any hope of reform, we were obliged, after a trial period of one year, to ask the Prior and their parents to withdraw them from our house. They did so, although regretfully and after imploring the Superior of this house to keep them for a few more years.

112. - BULL OF ALEXANDER VII FOR THE UNION OF SAINT-LAZARE PRIORY TO THE MISSION

(April 18, 1655)

Alexander, Bishop and Servant of the Servants of God, to our beloved son, the Officialis\(^1\) of Paris, greetings and apostolic blessing.

We consider it right and reasonable that a benefit to be conferred by the Roman Pontiff should achieve its effect, especially in view of the unwearying pursuit of every Congregation of priests and the persons in them under the observance of a particular Institute, and who have been particularly meritorious in terms of spreading the Catholic faith, both in regard to those petitioning and those serving and for the further progress and happier state of the members, even though the apostolic letters for this were not completed because of the death of the Pontiff which intervened.

Since then, a petition was presented to our predecessor Pope Urban VIII, of happy memory, on the part of our beloved son Vincent

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\(^1\) Alexander VII (1655-67).

\(^2\) The Officialis, or Judicial Vicar, is appointed by the Bishop and given the ordinary power to judge, which is distinct from that of the Vicar-General. The Officialis constitutes one tribunal with the Bishop, but he cannot judge cases which the Bishop reserves to himself (cf. Code of Canon Law, Latin-English edition [Ann Arbor, Michigan: Braun-Brumfield, 1983], Canon 1420, p. 511).
de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, in which it is stated that there existed, in the suburb of Saint-Denis of the city of Paris, a certain hospice known as the leprosarium of Saint-Lazare, instituted and endowed from ancient times by the mayor and magistrates of Paris mentioned below, to nurse and care for the residents of the city who were afflicted with leprosy. In the course of time it acquired the name and title of priory, which it was called even then. From the time of its foundation, its income had been administered by certain secular and regular priests, or perhaps even by laymen, whom the then Bishop of Paris was accustomed to appoint and remove, until the year 1513, when Poncher,3 of happy memory, Bishop of Paris at the time, entrusted this administration to the reformed Canons Regular of the Order of Saint Augustine, introducing them into the aforesaid priory, with the obligation of reciting the Canonical Hours in the church of the priory, celebrating a sung Mass there daily, and receiving poor lepers who might come to them, supplying their necessities. Along with this, the man whom the Bishop of Paris had chosen from among those religious as Prior for the time being became, at the discretion of the Bishop, Administrator of the priory and hospice and its income, with the obligation of rendering an annual account of his administration to the same Bishop.

Not long ago, however, Adrien Le Bon, a solemnly professed priest of the same Order, Prior or Administrator at that time, appointed by Henri de Gondi, of happy memory, known during his lifetime as Cardinal de Retz of the Holy Roman Church and Prelate of the Paris diocese, reflected, along with the other religious of the same priory or hospice who were still living there, that no lepers had

3Hoping to bring about a reform in Saint-Lazare Priory, Étienne Poncher had installed there the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine from Saint-Victor Abbey, and the religious had continually occupied the Priory since 1513. They had come to consider it their own property, which it really was not. All the provisions of their tenure indicated that the Bishops of Paris reserved to themselves the right to recall the Prior and even to replace the religious of Saint-Victor with other priests. Moreover, on December 5, 1625, the religious of Saint-Victor Abbey had decided that the various houses of the Order would henceforth be independent from the abbey. This was, in fact, a renunciation of their rights over Saint-Lazare. Although Pope Urban VIII had signed a Bull on March 15, 1635, uniting the Priory to the Congregation of the Mission, it was never sent. This Bull formalized the union of the Priory to the Congregation.
been present for a long time, nor are now present in the priory or leprosarium, so the revenues left by the Founders no longer served the purpose for which they had been designated. They thought it would be very worthwhile to assign these same revenues to those workers who offered spiritual food and medication to persons afflicted, not with bodily leprosy, but with that of the soul.

Among other Institutes, that of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission, erected not long ago by apostolic authority in the city of Paris, is especially conspicuous. Its members, in consideration of their own proper and particular Institute, had proposed for themselves the instruction, in things pertaining to the salvation of souls, of people living in country towns and villages, freely and for the love of God, expecting the reward for their labors from God alone. It was obvious that in carrying out this work they had expended and continued to expend such great and assiduous efforts and tireless zeal for souls and bodies that, by their teaching, they reached many people in the different regions and provinces of France, but chiefly in the Montauban diocese. These persons, after abjuring the ignominy of heresy, with which they were tainted, embraced the Catholic faith, as was the common report throughout France.

For this reason, the religious of the leprosarium thought it would not be contrary to the intention of the Founders if the revenues designated for the care of bodily leprosy be assigned to those who care for the leprosy of souls, giving them the means to be able to dedicate themselves to this work. Under the good pleasure of the Apostolic See and the Archbishop of Paris, they drew up with the said Vincent, acting in the name of his Congregation, a contract which was approved and confirmed by our predecessor, whereby Adrien Le Bon, its Prior or Administrator, and the religious of this priory or hospice, agreed to hand over all their own rights and interests so that the priory with its church, buildings, and each and every one of its goods, rights, profits, appurtenances, and dependencies be granted to the Congregation, renouncing every right associated with the priory or leprosarium and its competent administration, as stated in greater detail in the duly compiled public document mentioned above.
Next, on the strength of this contract, entered into under certain clauses and conditions as expressed above, to be approved and confirmed by apostolic authority, Jean-François de Gondi, the then Archbishop of Paris, granted it because to him and to his predecessors, as was said previously, belonged the appointment and removal of the Prior or Administrator of the priory or leprosarium. Noting wisely that the introduction of the priests of the Congregation into the priory or hospice would yield concession of it and its affairs, properties, and profits to the same Congregation for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, and fully informed of the contract and all it contained, he granted in perpetuity to the same Congregation, by his ordinary authority, with the consent of the Most Christian King of France and of Navarre, and of the Provost of Merchants and the Magistrates of the city, founders of the same priory or hospice, its goods, gardens, properties, profits, and emoluments, together with its church and all of its buildings, as well as all the liberties, franchises, and privileges pertaining to it, with the obligation of observing permanently the clauses and agreements contained in the aforesaid contract, and under the conditions written below, namely:

That the said Adrien continue thereafter to act as Superior of the religious, and that those same religious show him the obedience they had professed; that, for the time being, the Archbishop of Paris maintain full jurisdiction and the right of visitation in spiritual and temporal affairs over the priory and the priests of the Congregation residing there for the time being; that those priests, one of whom will be elected Superior by the Congregation itself, recite the canonical Divine Office in choir in a moderate tone, without chant, and with the doors of the choir closed, and celebrate the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in a low voice, lest they be delayed in their ministry of going through the villages and teaching in them; that they fulfill all the foundation Masses and offices of the priory or hospice and receive any lepers from the city and its environs;

That at least twelve members of the Congregation be stationed there, eight of whom would be priests engaged in going through the villages of the Paris diocese at the expense of the Congregation it-
self, staying one or two months in each village, according to the needs of the place; that they teach there the mysteries of Faith, hear confessions—especially general confessions—instruct in Christian doctrine those who are uneducated, prepare others for the worthy reception of the Most Holy Eucharist, and arrange peace between those who are at odds with one another; that they be bound to admit at the customary times when Orders are conferred in Paris the ordinands sent to them by the Archbishop of Paris, receiving them in the priory or hospice and furnishing them with what they need by way of room and board during the two-week period they are with them preceding ordination;

That they engage them in spiritual exercises such as general confession, daily examination of conscience, meditation on the change in their state of life and on those things proper to each Order and fitting for priestly men, and teach them to perform properly the ceremonies of the Church. Once they have fulfilled these obligations they may apply to the common use of the Congregation whatever remains from the income and profits of the priory or hospice.

In virtue of these things, the same Archbishop Jean-François, in his own name and in the name of his successors, had released and exempted the aforementioned Priests of the Congregation from rendering an account of the administration and revenues of the priory or hospice and its annexes and dependencies, as outlined in greater detail in the letters previously drawn up for this by the Archbishop Jean-François himself, as mentioned above.

Since, however, everything mentioned previously had been done for the greater glory of God, as indicated in the same petition, and since the said Vincent, in thinking of how to carry it out, wanted all this to be strengthened by the protection of the Apostolic See, he humbly petitioned our predecessor to deign to grant his requests and, with apostolic kindness, to attend in a timely manner to the other matters mentioned below.

Indeed, when the same predecessor who, established by Divine Providence on the supreme summit of the Apostolic See, seeking always the welfare and progress of every Congregation, especially that of the Priests of the Mission, as well as the preservation of di-
vine worship and the spread and growth of the Catholic faith, by reason of which all the above things were said to have been done, was asked to strengthen them by his apostolic protection, as has always been done, having no certain knowledge about the aforesaid, ordered that these Institutes remain firm and permanently undiminished, and arranged things as he judged most expedient in the Lord. He absolved and declared absolved the said Vincent and the secular members of his Congregation from any excommunication, suspension, or interdict, as well as from all other censures and ecclesiastical penalties imposed a jure vel ab homine, by whatever occasion or cause, should they be under any such penalties. To achieve so great a result in the aforesaid matters, and accepting the above-mentioned contracts and document of the Archbishop, Jean-François, provided they were not contrary to the preceding statements, and being inclined at the time to petitions of this kind, he willed and granted at your discretion, on March 15, in the twelfth year of his pontificate, the mandate that, once all those were called who had to be summoned, and with the vote of the congregation of our venerable brothers the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, placed in charge of the affairs of Regulars, you might approve and confirm permanently the concession of the priory or hospice of this kind, its church and all goods, properties, and dependencies granted to the Congregation of the Mission by the Archbishop, Jean-François, as already mentioned, and each and every one of the items contained in the letters, provided they be licit and honorable, having legitimately followed everything in accord with the petitions of the parties, entreatying you to add to them the force of perpetual and inviolable apostolic authority, and to supply for each and every defect of right, deed, and solemnities, even though substantial and required by law, if there were any; and to decree that Vincent himself be obligated to carry out the conditions laid down as contained in them, without being able to withdraw from them, and

4In present Church law “a penalty is incurred automatically by the very commission of the offense (laeae sententiae) a jure; or “a penalty is to be inflicted by a sentence (ferendae sententiae) ab homine (Code of Canon Law, Can. 1314.).
that everything done contrary to them, by whatever authority, is null and void.

Nevertheless the priory or hospice, which is neither titular nor an ecclesiastical benefice but a simple administration, should exist as removable, at the will of the Archbishop of Paris of the time, together with its church and all its members and appurtenances, with each and every one of its burdens, reservations, clauses, and conditions contained in the contract and document, as well as in the letters of the Archbishop Jean-François, fully and sufficiently repeated here, which the same predecessor willed to hand over to the same Congregation of the Mission, in such a way that it be licit for its Superior and the priests of the priory or hospice, with its church and goods, all its rights and dependencies, to take possession freely by proper authority to be retained in perpetuity, for themselves or for others, in the name of the same Congregation or in their names. It will also be licit for them to collect and exact rent and dispose of their profits, revenues, products, rights, income, and emoluments, bearing the burdens and fulfilling the clauses and conditions contained in the contract and the document of the Archbishop Jean-François, and to apply what is left to the benefit and use of the Congregation, without having to seek permission for this from the local Ordinary or from anyone else. By the same apostolic authority you will likewise decree that the present document not be included under any revocations, suspensions, limitations, or other dispositions contrary to other favors similar or different, but be always exempt from them.

And, as often as it may happen that they are revoked, suspended, or attacked in some way, just as often you may decree by apostolic authority that they be restored, replaced, and reinstated in their original, most valid state; therefore, anything that may otherwise happen to them on the part of any judges, ordinary or delegated, or Nuncios of the aforesaid See, by any authority, knowingly or in ignorance, is null and void; the clauses of the most recently celebrated Lateran Council\(^5\) prohibiting permanent unions except in cases

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\(^5\)Fifth Lateran Council (1512-17).
permitted by law, and other Constitutions and apostolic ordinances of the priory or hospice and Order, even the power of an oath or apostolic confirmation; any endorsement, Statutes, customs, and anything else to the contrary notwithstanding.

As for the letters of our predecessor concerning the aforementioned absolution, approval, confirmation, strengthening, supplying for defects, concession, assignment, and decree, which were not sent because his death intervened, they are valid, no matter how long delayed; and so that the aforesaid Vincent and this Congregation, wishing and basing themselves on similar apostolic authority, not be deprived of their effect, we determine that the absolution, approval, confirmation, strengthening, supplying for defects, concession, assignment, and decree of this predecessor not be deprived of their effect, beginning on the day of the Ides of March, just as if the letters of the predecessor had been drawn up on the said day, as indicated above;

And so that the present letters may serve as fully approving absolution, approval, confirmation, supplying for defects, concession, assignment, and decree of the predecessor, as above, and may suffice everywhere, requiring no other supporting proof for this, we entrust to your discretion, through apostolic letters, that, when all those are called who should have been summoned, and with the petition of the parties, you may, by our authority, approve and confirm in perpetuity a concession of this kind, and concede, assign, and pronounce decisions on the priory or hospice, all the above-men tioned things notwithstanding.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter’s, the fourteenth day before the Kalends of May, in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord 1655, the first year of our pontificate.
Pope Alexander VII, for the future remembrance of the matter.

Because of the responsibility given us by the Supreme Shepherd of the Lord's flock, we willingly devote ourselves to those matters which we judge, as the occasion may arise, to be in the best interests of the status of Congregations of ecclesiastical persons founded for the greater glory of the Divine Name and the salvation of souls.

Accordingly, we wish to remove some doubts that have arisen in regard to the status of the Congregation of the Mission, begun in France and subsequently approved by the Apostolic See. We also wish to treat our beloved son, Vincent de Paul, Superior General of this Congregation, with special favors and kindness, absolving him and declaring him to be absolved from any ecclesiastical sentences, censures, and penalties of excommunication, suspension, and interdict a jure vel ab homine, whatever the occasion or cause of imposition, if he be in any way bound by any of these, but only for the purpose of obtaining the effect of this letter.

Taking into consideration the petition humbly submitted to us in his name, and on the advice of our venerable brothers the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, interpreters of the Sacred Council of Trent, to whom we have referred the matter for examination, by our apostolic authority and by the tenor of this letter, we confirm and approve the Congregation of the Mission, already begun and approved in the manner we have stated, with the taking, after two years of probation, of simple vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, as also of stability in the Congregation, with the object of devoting oneself all one's life to the salvation of poor country people.
While these vows are being pronounced, no one shall assist with the purpose of accepting them in the name of the Congregation, or of ourselves, or of the Roman Pontiff at the time. Only the Roman Pontiff shall have the power to dissolve these vows so taken, as well as the Superior General of the Congregation when dismissing anyone from the Congregation. No other person, even in virtue of any Jubilee or Bull of Crusade or other privilege or indult, or other Constitution or concession whatsoever, shall have power to dissolve, commute, or dispense from them, if there be not therein special mention of these vows taken as above in the Congregation.

We further establish that the Congregation of the Mission be exempt from the jurisdiction of the local Ordinaries in all things, except that the persons who have been assigned to the missions by the Superiors of the Congregation will be subject to the Ordinaries, but only in regard to the missions and to those things which concern the missions. We establish also that the Congregation should not therefore be considered of the number of religious Orders, but that it is of the body of the secular clergy.

We decree that this letter is and always shall be firm, valid, and efficacious, and that it shall be approved and inviolably observed by all whom it concerns and will concern in the future; that it must be judged and defined by all judges, whether ordinary or delegated, even by auditors of the cases of the Apostolic Palace, according to what is stated above; and that any action to the contrary, whether done knowingly or in ignorance, by anyone or on any authority, is null and void; Apostolic Constitutions and ordinances, even conciliar, notwithstanding, or even, if the case should arise, ordinances of the Congregation, even fortified by oath, by apostolic confirmation, or by any other strengthening whatsoever; and Statutes, customs, privileges, or apostolic indults and letters notwithstanding, if contrary to what is stated above, no matter how granted, confirmed, or innovated. From all and each of these at this time we specially and expressly derogate, considering their contents as if this present letter were fully and sufficiently expressed and inserted in them in order to achieve the effects of this letter, other things to the contrary notwithstanding.
We wish further that the same acceptance, both in and outside of court, be granted to transcripts and printed copies of this letter, if signed in the hand of a public notary and stamped with the seal of a person constituted in ecclesiastical dignity, as would be granted to the present letter itself if it were exhibited or presented.

Given in Rome, at Saint Mary Major, under the ring of the Fisherman, September 22, 1655, the first year of our pontificate.

S. Ugolinus

114. - ACCEPTANCE BY THE SAINT-LAZARE HOUSE
OF THE BRIEF EX COMMISSA NOBIS

(October 22, 1655)

We, Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, explained to our beloved brothers in Christ, the priests, seminarians, and coadjutor Brothers of our Congregation living in the Saint-Lazare House, and convoked and united in chapter, that, although our Most Holy Father Pope Urban VIII, of happy memory, had approved our Congregation and granted us through the Bull of Erection the faculty of forming certain Statutes and ordinances for its happy rule and governance, as well as what concerned the direction of houses and persons, it still had to be approved by His Excellency the Most Reverend Archbishop of Paris.

And since we, the Superior General, had indicated that it would be most expedient for the Congregation itself to be more closely united by a more perfect bond to God and to the Church, and its members to the head and to one another in a more holy way; for this purpose, each and every one, after two years of probation, should take the three simple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and that of devoting themselves for their whole life in the Congregation to the salvation of

3Stefano Ugolini was Secretary of Briefs for Alexander VII. Appointed to that office in 1655, he became Titular Archbishop of Corinth in 1665 and was later named Titular Latin Patriarch of Constantinople. Ugolini was also Canon of St. Peter's in the Vatican and died in Rome on July 10, 1681.

the poor country people. This, however, would be done in such a manner that these vows could be dispensed only by the Roman Pontiff or the Superior General of the same Congregation; therefore, the Congregation itself would not be considered a religious Order, nor would it cease to belong to the body of the clergy.

And so that we might proceed more surely in a matter of such great importance, in the years 1642 and 1651 we convoked in Paris the principal Superiors, together with some of the older priests of the Congregation, and discussed with them the simple vows already in use in our Congregation. They themselves not only praised this usage, but also judged that it should be continued, especially since the established approval of vows of this kind already existed, given on October 19, 1641, by His Excellency the Most Illustrious Archbishop of Paris, as Apostolic Delegate for approving the Statutes of our Congregation established by us, the Superior General.

And although the use of simple vows of this kind had been introduced so licitly by us, considered in such a timely way by the assembled Superiors and some of the older priests of the Congregation, so legitimately approved and confirmed by the Apostolic Delegate, and continued in such a holy way in the Congregation itself, both for the greater consolation of the Congregation, as well as for lasting steadfastness; it seemed desirable that the power of apostolic confirmation should be added to our vows of this kind. For which purpose, on the advice of our Assistants, we humbly petitioned our Most Holy Father Pope Alexander VII for the approval or confirmation of these simple vows. After having previously consulted the Sacred Congregation of the Most Eminent Cardinals of the Council of Trent, and having heard the very learned theologians on the validity and use of vows of this kind, he deigned with fatherly affection to grant this confirmation through a brief given in Rome on September 22 of the current year.

We presented the original of this brief to the undersigned priests, seminarians, and coadjutor Brothers of our Congregation, who were assembled in Chapter. After the public reading of the brief in the presence of the undersigned, not only in Latin, as in the...
original, but also in French, translated verbatim from the same original for the benefit of our coadjutor Brothers, we asked each and every one of the undersigned priests, seminarians, and coadjutor Brothers whether they accepted a brief of this kind and submitted themselves to it. Filled with a common joy and very special filial gratitude to the Apostolic See for the much desired approval and confirmation of our vows, all responded unanimously: “We accept this brief and submit ourselves to it most willingly.”

In testimony whereof, we, the undersigned Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, the priests, seminarians, and coadjutor Brothers, each and every one of the same Congregation, have signed this document and placed upon it the seal of our Congregation, and we have asserted that the present Act has been examined by the notaries public who have signed below.

Drawn up at Saint-Lazare in Paris, October 22, 1655.2

115. - FOUNDATION FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF BARBARY SLAVES

(December 20, 1655)

We, Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, acknowledge that a gentleman from this city of Paris, who made us promise never to reveal his name, moved by compassion for the great ills suffered by the Christians enslaved in Barbary and the loss of the souls who renounce Christianity there and become Muslims, has entrusted us with the sum of 30,000 livres to be used by us and by our successors for the relief and redemption of poor slaves by the priests of our Congregation, who have been residing for about ten years in the cities of Tunis and Algiers in Africa, where they have been assisting the poor slaves. I promise this in my own name and in that of my successors as General in our Company.

In testimony whereof, I have signed this letter with my own hand and have had it sealed with our seal and verified in the presence of the undersigned notaries.

2The signatures of fifteen priests and thirteen coadjutor Brothers were appended here.

116. - DECLARATION RELATIVE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT
IN CRÉCY

[Between 1654 and 1660]

We, Vincent de Paul, Superior of the Congregation of the Mission, attest to all those whom it will concern that since our Company was established in the Meaux diocese, we have maintained three or four priests there in the town of Crécy and that they have worked constantly giving missions in the diocese, in the places where the Bishop of Meaux or his Vicar-General has sent them, assisting the Bishop in his visitations of his diocese, going ahead of him to preach, catechize, and hear the confessions of the poor, preparing them by this means to receive the grace of the visitation. They continued to do so until [1654], when we recalled two of the priests to help us minister in this diocese and in other neighboring ones, leaving in our house in Crécy only one priest, a Brother, and a servant. The priest celebrates Holy Mass daily in our chapel, hears confessions in the parish there every Sunday, and visits all the sick who request this, while waiting until the disagreement between the Bishop and M. Lorthon, the King's secretary, is settled.

In testimony whereof, I have written and signed this letter in my own hand and have placed upon it the seal of our Company.

VINCENT DEPAUL
116a. - RECEIPT SIGNED BY SAINT VINCENT

(June 4, 1657)

I, the undersigned, Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, established at Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, acknowledge having received from the noble person M[essire, , ,,1 Councillor of the King and Receveur for the municipality of Paris, the amount of eight setiers of wheat, Paris measure, for the term expiring on the day and feast of this past Ascension, for the two muids of wheat that the Saint-Lazare House has the right to take annually on the said domain under the customary terms from which I release M . . .2 and all others.

Given at Saint-Lazare, June 4, 1657.

VINCENT DEPAUL

117. - BULL UNITING SAINT-MÉEN ABBEY TO THE SEMINARY ESTABLISHED IN THAT PLACE

(April 5, 1658)

Alexander, Bishop and Servant of the Servants of God, to our dear son the Officialis of Dol,2 greetings and apostolic blessing.

 Called to this supreme apostolic dignity, not through our own meager merits but by divine dispensation, and considering the numerous benefits resulting for the Christian community from the establishment of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission and the erection of seminaries entrusted to their care and direction over


1The name was erased.
2The name was erased.

Document 117. - Archives of the Congregation of Rites, Summariun additionale, Parisien., Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Vincentii a Paulo, undated manuscript, pp. 18ff., written in Latin.

1Cf. VII, 62, n. 1, for the difficulties involved in this union.
2Dol-de-Bretagne, chief canton town of Ile-et-Villain.
a wide area, we attend with pleasure to all that may contribute to
nurturing the progress and stability of these seminaries, especially
when the pious, salutary desires of Christian Kings and the Prelates
of the churches confided to them concur in this, and, when we deem
it appropriate, we grant them favorably the blessings of our provi­
dence.

The petition which the present Superior of our beloved sons, the
Priests of the Congregation of the Mission, presented to us not long
ago, confirmed the statement that our brother Achille de Harlay de
Sancy, of happy memory, Bishop of Saint-Malo at the time, had
made to us previously, expressing his distress that, although his dio­
cese of Saint-Malo with its huge population extended over a large
area, there was no public collège and no seminaries for boys or stu­
dents for the priesthood, where the humanities, philosophy, and
theology were being taught publicly. He also stated that the inhabit­
ants of this diocese, lacking this world’s goods for the most part,
could not pay the necessary expenses to educate their children in a
public school outside the diocese, and, therefore, the latter would
remain deprived of literacy studies. Thus, whoever was Bishop of
Saint-Malo at the time was obliged to accept ignorant clerics and
priests who were uneducated and ill-suited for the care of souls. For
these reasons, the people would not be adequately instructed in
Christian doctrine and in the other things necessary for salvation.
Furthermore, the income of the parish churches of that diocese was
so meager that they would not be able to support the expenses re­
quired to maintain a seminary.

The Benedictine Monastery of Saint-Méen, however, situated
almost in the center of the diocese, is not attached to any general
Congregation nor dependent on any other principal monastery of
any Order, but is subject to the visitation and discipline of the
Bishop of Saint-Malo, at the time Bishop Achille, and which he ob­
tained in commendam for life by concession and apostolic dispen­
sation. For many years, observance of the Rule in this monastery
has lapsed, and because only two monks of the Order are left now,

--- Achille de Harlay de Sancy (cf. VII, 219, n. 2).
since the time of the aforementioned Bishop, and they are absolutely incapable of carrying out the duties of the monastery, its Abbot and Perpetual Commendatory felt obliged to call on secular priests to fulfill those duties.

Consequently, Bishop Achille, in keeping with the duties of his pastoral office and in order to meet the special needs of the people, erected and founded in the convent of the monastery and monastic buildings, by our apostolic authority confirmed later by us, a seminary for boys or students for the priesthood, in accordance with the Sacred Canons, where clerical students of the diocese would be faithfully formed, free of charge, in doctrine and morals, as well as in offices of piety, church ceremonies, and other matters necessary for divine worship and the instruction of the people. All of the above would be subject to the jurisdiction and correction of the local Ordinary and the perpetual direction and administration of the priests of the Congregation of the Mission, already erected and established by apostolic authority and recently confirmed by us. Five of its priests are already in residence; while those two monks are still alive, twelve students will be maintained, and, after the death of the monks, twenty seminarians will be maintained and educated, free of charge.

All this is being done at the urgent request of the clergy of the Saint-Malo diocese assembled in synod, with the consent of Louis our very dear son in Christ and Most Christian King of France and of Navarre, to whom the privilege of naming suitable persons for the monastery, vacant at the time, belongs by apostolic indult. It is also subject to the consent of the two monks and without prejudice to the abbatial table of the monastery, which remains completely separate from the conventual table, the living quarters, certain gardens, and the pond depending on the abbatial table. With the agreement of the Apostolic See, he has seen that each and every one of the goods and dependencies of the abbatial table of the monastery were applied previously, a certain portion of the assets and revenues as-

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4A fund to guarantee the support of the monastery, its members, and its works.
signed, and appropriate measures taken for the maintenance of these two monks during their lifetime.

Lastly, an annual income of five hundred livres tournois was assigned in perpetuity to this seminary by Bishop Achille from his own resources, which he was able to dispose of legitimately by will. He also spent a considerable sum of money to purchase the furnishings needed for the seminary, in this way enabling the priests of the Congregation, as well as the seminarians, to perform services in the church of the monastery, recite the Canonical Hours, fulfill the obligations of pious foundations, hear the confessions of pilgrims coming there through devotion, supply books and vestments needed for the proper celebration of the Divine Offices, and keep the buildings in good repair, using for this purpose timber from the woods belonging to the Abbot or Perpetual Commendatory, as granted heretofore.

The Abbot or Perpetual Commendatory will be obliged to maintain in a proper state of repair the cloister, refectory, and other buildings, at his own expense, as formerly. The students will be selected by the Bishop of Saint-Malo at the time from his diocese and will be examined and approved by him or, in his absence, by his Vicar-General for spiritual affairs. Once they are admitted as students in the seminary, they will take an oath before the Bishop or, in his absence, before the Vicar-General, that, when they complete their studies at the seminary, they will not withdraw from the Saint-Malo diocese without the permission of the Bishop or his Vicar-General but will devote themselves to whatever sacred ministries or offices have been assigned to them and which can assure their maintenance appropriately, since they were maintained and educated for so many years in the seminary.

The Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission will appoint and send to the Saint-Malo diocese five priests of the Congregation, two of whom will devote themselves to the customary missions, and the remaining three to the direction and governance of the seminary and of the other priests living in it. They will admit for retreat clerics of the same diocese who are to be promoted to Holy Orders, with the authorization of the then Bishop of
Saint-Malo or his Vicar. These five priests will be subject to the Bishop of Saint-Malo of the time in everything relating to missions, the direction and governance of the seminary, and all functions pertaining to the salvation and assistance of the neighbor. For all else, however, they will remain subject to their Superior, according to the Rule of their Congregation. The priests will seek no exception to the above; otherwise, they can be removed by the Bishop of Saint-Malo at the time, and other priests substituted for them, subject to a free visitation and correction and to certain other legitimate, honorable conditions contained more fully in the above written documents.

As the aforesaid petition added, very great spiritual benefits are to be rightly expected in the diocese from the erection of this seminary and other things mentioned previously, and have, in fact, already begun. Therefore, so that no one may in the future raise any doubts concerning this foundation, the Priests of the Mission entrusted with its direction and administration are most anxious that the erection, application of funds, and other matters foreseen and promised—with, however, previous things of the Order and essence of regular conventual table being permanently suppressed and extinguished—be approved and confirmed, or granted anew, and that our venerable brother Ferdinand, Bishop of Chartres and recently Bishop of Saint-Malo, who obtained by similar apostolic grant and dispensation the handing over of the monastery in commendam for his lifetime, should agree to their request.

Therefore, a humble request was made to us on behalf of those Priests of the Mission that, in accordance with our desire to support this worthy Institute by our paternal protection, we might deign to provide for its erection and, as indicated in the foregoing, accede in an appropriate manner to the application and assignment made by Bishop Achille; moreover, that we confirm and approve everything as being in proper order, together with the documents drawn up for this, that everything in them is legitimate and proper, and that we add the strength of perpetual and inviolable apostolic authority to

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2Ferdinand de Neufville de Villeroy (cf. VII, 561, n. 4).
all these documents and the matters they contain, both of law and of fact. They desire furthermore that, in accordance with the benevolence appropriate to the apostolic office, we might provide for and correct any omissions or errors that may, in any way whatsoever, have arisen in the text.

In keeping with our concern for the good of those in the seminary, and to see that they produce in due course much good for the Church of God, we absolve the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission, each and everyone therein, and declare them absolved from every excommunication, suspension, and interdict, and from any censures and ecclesiastical penalties by which they may be impeded, with a view to obtaining the effects of the present letters. In addition, accepting the contents of the documents, we submit the request for such absolution to your discretion. Seeing that the Episcopal See of Saint-Malo is now vacant, and, as the above-mentioned priests indicate, that our venerable brother in Dol is the nearest Ordinary, we command you by apostolic letter, to suppress and abolish, totally and forever, by our perpetual apostolic authority, every vestige of monastic Rule in the monastery, and all Regular status and dependency therein, with no prejudice to the abbatial table of the monastery.

With the consent of those holding a vested interest in the proceedings, after convening those entitled to be summoned and assuring in perpetuity the proposed revenue of five hundred livres, as mentioned earlier; and, on condition that the students to be accepted in the seminary are born of lawful wedlock and have satisfied the other conditions laid down by the Council of Trent, a seminary for youths or students for the priesthood is to be established in the same monastery buildings for the maintenance and formation of the clergy of the above-mentioned diocese by the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission in sufficient numbers to assure the service of the church, in accord with each and everything that is established above and ordained by Bishop Achille, without prejudice to the abbatial table of the monastery, taking into account any title to be conferred or any commendam that may exist. Once this seminary has been erected and established, each and every one of its goods,
properties, dependencies, rights, profits, revenues, and emoluments from any source whatsoever pertaining to the monastery and related in any way to the conventual table will be applied in such a way that the priests of the Congregation assigned to the management and direction of the seminary will freely take real and actual possession of all the above-mentioned goods, and will retain possession in perpetuity. You will, by the same perpetual authority, apply and appropriate to the needs of the seminary and their own use, by themselves or their agents, the profits, revenue, benefits, rights, and emoluments of the conventual table, with no need of a special permission from the Bishop nor from anyone else.

May you declare that these documents are, and always shall be in perpetuity valid, and efficacious to the benefit of the same seminary, its Directors, Administrators, and students; nor can they ever, through any deception, stealth, crafty operation, claim of nullity, lack of required intention on our part, or dispute of words, be assailed, invalidated, withdrawn, or reduced to an appeal or controversy in law. Even less, can they be subjected to revocations, suspensions, limitations, or contrary rulings by any vested interests or other similar or dissimilar situation, but shall always be exempt from them. If, however, they are subjected to any such disputation, they are to be, and will be, restored to their former status, and are thus subject to no scrutiny or judgment by any kind of judges, ordinary or delegated, auditors of the Apostolic Palace, and Roman Cardinals, even Legates a latere and Nuncios of the Holy See; and you must declare null and void anything that may be decreed, knowingly or unknowingly, contrary to what is laid down above concerning these matters by any authority whatsoever, including any previous decrees recently passed by the Lateran Council, except in the cases allowed by law preventing the establishment of unions, promulgated in universal, provincial, and synodal constitutions and by apostolic edict, even under oath with papal confirmation; statutes, customs, and norms whatsoever enjoyed by any other kind of power notwithstanding.

Given at Saint Peter's in Rome, on April 5, in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord 1658, the third year of our pontificate.
Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, to my dear brothers in Christ, the priests, students, and lay brothers of the Congregation, greetings in the Lord.

Here at long last, my dear brothers, are the Rules or Common Constitutions of our Congregation. You have been very anxious to have them and have had to wait a long time for them.

It is now about thirty-three years since our Congregation was founded, but I have not had our Rules printed for you before now. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, I wanted to take our Savior as a model. He put things into practice before He made them part of His teaching. Secondly, delaying their printing has avoided many problems which most certainly would have arisen if these Rules or Constitutions had been published too soon. There could have been problems about living up to them later on, as they might have seemed too difficult or not so relevant. With the help of God's grace, delaying like this has saved us from such a risk. It has also

Document 117a. - The editors have made use of the translation of the "Common Rules or Constitutions" contained in Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission, published in English in 1989. The Latin text for the Rules published in 1658 and the English translation of the 1954 edition have also been consulted. A few minor changes in translation and style have been made. In line with the 1917 Canon Law, articles V, 16; X, 6, 11; and XI, 4, were suppressed in this 1954 edition.

In this presentation of the "Common Rules or Constitutions," the footnotes incorporate differences found in the text that has come to be known as the "Codex Sarzana." This manuscript was discovered in Sarzana, a small town in northern Italy, where the Congregation of the Mission has had a seminary since 1734. Among other documents, the manuscript contains a draft of the Common Rules. The Codex, entitled: "Common Rules and Constitutions of the Congregation of the Mission," is authentic and reflects Saint Vincent's thinking in the years just before his publication of the Common Rules in 1658. It does not have the Saint's introductory letter. (Cf. "Codex Sarzana," trans. and ed. by John E. Rybolt, C.M., Vincentiana, 33 [1991]: 303-406, hereafter cited as Sarzana.)

made it possible for the Congregation gradually and smoothly to get used to living the Rules before having them in print. You will not find anything in them which you have not been doing for a long time, and I must say how pleased I am that you do live by them and that they have enabled you all to help one another.

So, my dear brothers, take these Rules with the same affection which I have in giving them to you. Think of them, not as the product of human ingenuity, but as a gift from the Holy Spirit. Everything good comes from Him, and we are not qualified of ourselves to claim anything as our own achievement. After all, can you find one single thing in them which will not be a help to you in avoiding evil, in growing in virtue, and in putting into practice the teachings of the Gospels? And, as you can see, I have tried to base all the Rules, where possible, on the spirit and actions of Jesus Christ. My idea was that men who are called to continue Christ's mission, which is mainly preaching the good news to the poor, should see things from His point of view and want what He wanted. They should have the same spirit that He had and follow in His footsteps.

That is why, my dear brothers, I ask you very sincerely, in the Lord Jesus, to make a genuine commitment to basing your life firmly on these Rules. You can take it as absolutely certain that if you do this you will find them sound guidelines which in the long term will lead you safely to the goal you long for, happiness in heaven. Amen.

JESUS, MARY, JOSEPH

CHAPTER I—THE PURPOSE AND NATURE OF THE CONGREGATION

1.—We read in Sacred Scripture that Our Lord Jesus Christ, sent on earth for the salvation of the human race, did not begin by teaching; He began by doing. And what He did was to integrate fully into His life every type of virtue. He then went on to teach, by preaching the good news of salvation to poor people, and by passing on to His
Apostles and disciples what they needed to know to become guides for others. Now, the little Congregation of the Mission wants, with God's grace, to imitate Christ the Lord, in so far as that is possible in view of its limitations. It seeks to imitate His virtues as well as what He did for the salvation of others. It is only right that if the Congregation is to do the same sort of work, it should act in the same sort of way. This means that the whole purpose of the Congregation is: (1) to have a genuine commitment to grow in holiness, patterning ourselves, as far as possible, on the virtues which the great Master Himself graciously taught us in what He said and did; (2) to preach the good news of salvation to poor people, especially in rural areas; (3) to help seminarians and priests to grow in knowledge and virtue, so that they can be effective in their ministry. 2

2.—There are both clerical and lay members in the Congregation. The work of the former is to travel around through towns and villages, as Christ Himself and His disciples did, breaking the bread of the Divine Word for the neglected by preaching and catechizing. They should also urge people to make general confessions of their entire life and hear these confessions. Their ministry also includes settling quarrels and disputes, establishing the Confraternity of Charity, staffing seminaries which have been set up in our houses for diocesan clergy, giving retreats, and organizing meetings of priests in our houses. Their work also includes any other ministry which is supportive to those mentioned. The lay members help in these ministries like Martha in whatever way the Superior wants them to. This help includes "prayers and tears," mortification, and good example.

3.—If the Congregation, with the help of God's grace, is to achieve what it sees as its purpose, a genuine effort to put on the spirit of Christ will be needed. How to do this is learned mainly from what is taught in the Gospels: Christ's poverty, His chastity

2 Sartana: "Since Our Lord Jesus Christ was sent into the world to do always the Will of His Father, to preach the Gospel to the poor, and to give the Apostles and their successors saving knowledge for the remission of sin, and since the tiny Congregation of the Mission has been begun so that for its own reason it should, as best it could, follow in His footsteps, it is proper that its purpose should help seminarians and priests to acquire the knowledge of the saints, by which to direct the people into the way of salvation."
and obedience; His love for the sick; His decorum; the sort of lifestyle and behavior which He inspired in His disciples; His way of getting along with people; His daily spiritual exercises; preaching missions; and other ministries which He undertook on behalf of the people. There is something on each of these in the chapters which follow.

CHAPTER II.—GOSPEL TEACHING

1.—Let each of us accept the truth of the following statement and try to make it our most fundamental principle: Christ’s teaching will never let us down, while worldly wisdom always will. Christ Himself said that this sort of wisdom was like a house with nothing but sand as its foundation, while His own was like a building with solid rock as its foundation. And that is why the Congregation should always try to follow the teaching of Christ Himself and never that of the worldly-wise. To be sure of doing this we should pay particular attention to what follows.

2.—Christ said: Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things which you need will be given to you as well. That is the basis for each of us having the following set of priorities: matters involving our relationship with God are more important than temporal affairs; spiritual health is more important than physical; God’s glory is more important than human approval. Each one should, moreover, be determined to prefer, like Saint Paul, to do without necessities, to be slandered or tortured, or even killed, rather than lose Christ’s love. In practice, then, we should not worry too much about temporal affairs. We ought to have confidence in God that He will look after us since we know for certain that as long as we are grounded in that sort of love and trust we will be always under the protection of God in heaven, we will remain unaffected by evil and never lack what we need, even when everything we possess seems headed for disaster.

3.—A sure way for a Christian to grow rapidly in holiness is a conscientious effort to carry out God’s Will in all circumstances
and at all times. Each one of us, then, should try to integrate into his life, as far as possible, these four principles: (1) We should conscientiously carry out what is ordered and avoid what is forbidden, when these orders or prohibitions come from God, from the Church, from our Superiors, or from the Rules or Constitutions of our Congregation; (2) when there is a choice open to us in matters neither ordered nor forbidden we should choose the less palatable rather than the more pleasing. This does not apply, of course, if the more pleasing things, being in some sense necessary, have to be chosen. Still, though, in such cases our motivation ought not to be that we like them, but simply that they are more pleasing to God. Finally, if when faced with a choice between things neither ordered nor forbidden there is no real element of personal preference between the options available, then any one of them may be chosen at random as coming from God's Providence; (3) when something unexpected happens to us in body or mind, good or bad, we are to accept it without fuss as coming from God's loving hand; (4) our motive for putting the above three principles into practice is that they are God's Will. It is in this way that we can imitate Christ the Lord. Christ always lived by these principles, and for that very motive. He tells us this Himself: *I always do what pleases the Father.*

4.—Jesus the Lord expects us to have the simplicity of a dove. This means giving a straightforward opinion about things in the way we honestly see them, without needless reservations. It also means doing things without double-dealing or manipulation, our attention being focused solely on God. Each of us, then, should take care to behave always in this spirit of simplicity, remembering that God likes to deal with the simple, and that He conceals the secrets of heaven from the wise and prudent of this world and reveals them to little ones.

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*Sarzana: “Since the primary purpose of the Congregation consists in doing the Will of God in all things, and doing it as well as possible, it is certain that the means by which the kingdom of God comes to the Christian people, and through us to the neighbor, [is that] each one should try to integrate this exercise into his life as far as possible (1) by fulfilling divine and human commands, and (2) by fleeing what is forbidden; and (3) when matters are indifferent, by choosing those things which are less pleasing to the senses; (4) by tolerating calmly what is repugnant; and by following after God's Will to fulfill it in all things with Christ.”*
5. But while Christ recommends the simplicity of a dove He tells us to have the prudence of a serpent as well. What He means is that we should speak and behave with discretion. We ought, therefore, to keep quiet about matters which should not be made known, especially if they are unsuitable or unlawful. When we are discussing things which it is good and proper to talk about we should hold back any details which would not be for God’s glory, or which could harm some other person, or which would make us foolishly smug. In actual practice this virtue is about choosing the right way to do things. We should make it a sacred principle, then, admitting of no exceptions, that since we are working for God we will always choose God-related ways for carrying out our work, and see and judge things from Christ’s point of view and not from a worldly-wise one; and not according to the feeble reasoning of our own mind either. That is how we can be prudent as serpents and simple as doves.

6. We should make a great effort to learn the following lesson, also taught by Christ: Learn from me because I am gentle and humble of heart. We should remember that He Himself said that by gentleness we inherit the earth. If we act on this we will win people over so that they will turn to the Lord. That will not happen if we treat people harshly or sharply. And we should also remember that humility is the route to heaven. A loving acceptance of it when we are humiliated usually raises us up, guiding us, as it were, step by step from one virtue to the next until we reach heaven.

7.—This humility was very often recommended by Christ Himself, by word and example, and the Congregation should make a great effort to master it. It involves three things: (1) to admit in all honesty that we deserve people’s contempt; (2) to be glad if people notice our failings and treat us accordingly; (3) to conceal, if possible, because of our personal unworthiness, anything the Lord may achieve through us or in us. If that is not possible, though, to give the credit for it to God’s mercy and to other people’s merits. That is the basis of all holiness in the Gospels and a bond of the entire spiritual life. If a person has this humility everything good will come along
with it. If he does not have it, he will lose any good he may have and will always be anxious and worried.

8.—Christ said: *Anyone who wants to come after me must deny himself and take up his cross each day*; and Saint Paul added, in the same vein: *If you live according to your unspiritual nature you shall die, but if, by the Spirit, you mortify it you shall live.* Each one, therefore, should be most conscientious in accepting the overruling of his personal wishes and opinion, and in disciplining the gratification of each of his senses.⁴

9.—In the same spirit each one is to avoid over-attachment to relatives. Christ indicated this when He refused to have as a disciple anyone who did not “hate” his father, mother, brothers, and sisters. He promised a hundredfold in this world, and eternal life in the next, to all who left family for the sake of the Gospel. All this goes to show what an obstacle to full Christian living blood relationships can be. Parents, of course, are to be loved in a spiritual way, as Christ showed.

10.—Each one should show a great eagerness in that sort of openness to God's Will which Christ and the saints developed so carefully. This means that we should not have a disproportionate liking for any ministry, person, or place, especially our native land, or anything of that sort. We should even be ready and willing to leave all these things gladly if our Superior asks it, or even hints at it, and to put up, without complaint, with any disappointment or disruption this causes, accepting that in all this the Superior has done well in the Lord.

11.—Christ the Lord wished to lead a communal style of life, so that He would be like other people and in that way win them over more easily to God the Father. All of us, then, as far as possible, are to maintain uniformity in everything; we should look on this as the safeguard of good order and of the holiness which comes of being together. In the same way we should avoid anything out of the ordi-

⁴Sarzana: “Christ said: ‘Anyone who wants to come after me must deny himself and take up his cross each day.’ Each one, therefore, must be most conscientious without interruption . . . gratification of each of his senses in matters both permitted and forbidden, especially those things which run greatly contrary to the teaching of the Gospels.”
nary, as it can be the cause of jealousy and disagreement. All this applies not only to food, clothing, bedding, and so on, but also to methods of direction, teaching, preaching, exercising authority, and even spiritual practices. Only one thing is needed for this uniformity to be maintained constantly among us, namely, the most exact observance of our Rules and Constitutions.\textsuperscript{5}

12.—Charitable behavior toward the neighbor should always be characteristic of us. We should try, then: (1) to behave toward others in the way we might reasonably expect to be treated by them; (2) to agree with others, and to accept everything in the Lord; (3) to put up with one another without grumbling; (4) to weep with those who weep; (5) to rejoice with those who rejoice; (6) to yield precedence to one another; (7) to be kind and helpful to one another in all sincerity; (8) finally, to be all things to all people so that we may win everyone for Christ. All of this is to be understood as in no way going against the commandments of God, or Church law, or the Rules or Constitutions of our Congregation.

13.—If Divine Providence ever allows a house or member of the Congregation, or the Congregation itself, to be subjected to, and tested by, slander or persecution, we are to be extra careful to avoid any retaliation, verbal abuse, or complaint against the persecutors or slanderers. We should even praise and bless God, and joyfully thank Him for it as an opportunity for great good, coming down from the Father of Lights. We should even pray sincerely to Him for those who harm us and, if the opportunity and possibility present themselves, should willingly help them, remembering that Christ commanded us, and all the faithful, to do this: \textit{Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for persecutors and slanderers}. And to get us to do this more willingly and more easily He said that we would be blessed in doing so and that we should be joy-

\textsuperscript{5}Sarzana: “Christ the Lord . . . God the Father. All of us, then, will flee what is out of the ordinary in all those things which can make us stand out in the sight of others, particularly regarding food and clothing, but also spiritual practices and individual opinions. We should understand that we cannot be out of the ordinary, especially in the very careful observance of our Rules and Constitutions. Likewise, all our striving should be for perfection; we have been called to this and we should work on it alone. Christ, too, taught us this by His own example, since He was not out of the ordinary, except that He was sent to fulfill the law and to carry out His Father’s Will, which He commended to others.”
ful and glad about it since our reward is great in heaven. And, more importantly, He was gracious enough to be the first to act in this way toward others so as to be a model for us. Afterward the Apostles, disciples, and numberless Christians followed His example.\(^6\)

14.—We should follow, as far as possible, all the Gospel teaching already mentioned, since it is so holy and very practical. But some of it, in fact, has more application to us, particularly when it emphasizes simplicity, humility, gentleness, mortification and zeal for souls. The Congregation should pay special attention to developing and living up to these five virtues so that they may be, as it were, the faculties of the soul of the whole Congregation, and that everything each one of us does may always be inspired by them.

15.—Satan is always trying to divert us from living up to this teaching by suggesting his own, which is the exact opposite. Each one of us, then, should be fully aware of this, and completely ready to oppose and overcome all those things. This applies especially to those values which conflict more obviously with our Congregation, such as: (1) mere human prudence; (2) the desire for publicity; (3) always wanting everyone to give in to us and see things our way; (4) the pursuit of self-gratification in everything; (5) attaching no great importance to either God’s honor or the salvation of others.

16.—The evil spirit often disguises himself as an angel of light, and now and then tricks us by his illusions. All of us must be ever alert for these tricks and should pay particular attention to learning how to recognize and overcome them. Experience has shown that the most effective and surest remedy in such cases is to discuss them as soon as possible with those appointed by God for this. So, if anyone feels himself troubled by ideas which seem to be in some way misleading, or upset by acute anxiety or temptation, he should tell his Superior, or a Director appointed for this, as soon as possible.

\(^{6}\)Sarzana: “If it should happen that Divine Providence should ever allow the Congregation, one of its houses, or one of its members to be subjected to, and tested by, slander or persecution, we will praise and bless God for this and joyfully thank Him for it as an excellent and perfect gift coming down from the Father of Lights. We will regard it as all joy when we fall into various temptations, and each one will refrain from any complaint, curse, or revenge against those who abuse us with calumny or who persecute us. Instead, we will pray for all of those and do good to them, if possible. Christ taught us this by word and deed, as did the Apostles, of whom it is written: They went out joyfully to suffer abuse for the name of Jesus.”
so that the matter can be competently dealt with. And he should accept with approval, as coming from God's hand, whatever solution is suggested, and put it into practice with confidence and respect. Above all, he should take care not to discuss it in any way with anyone else, whether a member of the Congregation or not. Experience has shown that this worsens the problem, causes similar trouble for others, and can, in the long run, even do serious damage in the whole Congregation.

17.—God has told everyone to help others as members of the same mystical body. We, then, in the Congregation should help one another. So, if anyone is aware of someone else being greatly troubled by temptation, or of having been guilty of a serious fault, it will be his responsibility, promptly and in the best way possible, to see that effective remedies be suitably applied at the right time by the Superior. He must, of course, act from love and in the most practical way. Each one should accept it gratefully, as a means of spiritual progress, if his defects are pointed out to the Superior in a spirit of love by someone who has noticed them outside of confession.7

18.—Our Lord came into the world to reestablish the reign of His Father in all persons. He won them back from the devil who had led them astray by the cunning deceit of a greedy desire for wealth, honor, and pleasure. Our loving Savior thought it right to fight His enemy with the opposite weapons: poverty, chastity, and obedience, which He continued to do right up to His death. The little Congregation of the Mission came into existence in the Church to work for the salvation of people, especially the rural poor. This is why it has judged that no weapons would be more powerful or more suitable than those which Eternal Wisdom so tellingly and effectively used. Every confrere, therefore, should keep to such poverty, chastity, and obedience faithfully and persistently, as understood in our Congregation. And in order that each one might persevere until death in observing these virtues more certainly, easily, and meritoriously, he should try to the best

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7Sarzana: "God has told everyone . . . a serious fault, without delay and in a spirit of love and humility, he will inform the Superior. He will be content that all his defects are pointed out to the Superior."
of his ability to carry out what is prescribed about them in the follow­
ing chapters. 8

CHAPTER III.—POVERTY

1.—Christ Himself, the Lord of all, lived in poverty to such an extent that He had nowhere to lay His head. He formed His Apostles and disciples, His co-workers in His mission, to live in the same sort of way so that individually they did not own anything. In that way they were freer to combat greed for wealth in a better and more practical way, a greed which is ruining almost the whole world. That is why each confrere must try, weak as he is, to imitate Christ in developing this virtue of poverty. We must all realize that it is the unbreachable rampart by which the Congregation, with the help of God’s grace, will be defended. 9

2.—Our ministry on missions could hardly be carried out if we lived in total poverty, since missions are to be given without charge. Nevertheless, we should try, in the Lord, to maintain poverty as an ideal and, as far as we can, in practice as well, especially as regards what is set out here. 10

3.—Members of the Congregation, individually and collectively, should understand that, following the example of the first Christians, all our belongings are common property and are given out by the Superior to individual members, such as food, clothes, books, furniture, and so on, according to the needs of each. We have all accepted poverty, and so, to avoid any deviation from it, no one may, without the Superior’s permission, dispose of any of this sort

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8 Sarzana: The last sentence does not appear.
9 Sarzana: The paragraph concludes thus: “Therefore, no one should use anything as though it were his own personal property. Instead, each one should try always to choose whatever is poorer or more fitting for a poor person. No one should ever use anything as his own, nor lend or receive anything, nor give away something belonging to the house without the Superior’s permission.”
10 Sarzana: “No one will keep money to himself, nor place it with others. No one will have anything else without the permission of the Superior.”
of property belonging to the Congregation, or pass it on to others.\textsuperscript{11}

4.—No one, either, should have anything which the Superior does not know about, or does not authorize, or which he is not prepared to give up at once if the Superior says so, or even hints at it.\textsuperscript{12}

5.—No one should use anything as though it were his own personal property. No one should give away or accept anything, or exchange or lend anything, or go looking elsewhere for something, without the Superior’s permission.\textsuperscript{13}

6.—No one should take for himself what has been allotted to others or set aside for community use or abandoned. This goes for books as well. He should not pass on to someone else what has been assigned for his own use, without the Superior’s permission. Nor should he allow such things to deteriorate or get damaged through his own negligence.\textsuperscript{14}

7.—No one should go in for useless or exotic things. Each one, too, should keep his needs within moderate limits, and curb his hankering after such things, so that his life style as regards food, room, and bedding is that of a poor person. And in this connection, and with regard to everything else for that matter, he should be prepared to put up with even the worst facilities in the house, willing to feel the bite of poverty in his life.\textsuperscript{15}

8.—And so that nothing which smacks of ownership to even the slightest degree may be seen among us, our rooms are not to be locked in such a way that they cannot be opened from the outside. And we should not have a safe in our rooms, or anything else locked with a private key, without the Superior’s express permission.\textsuperscript{16}

9.—No one moving from one house to another is to take anything with him, without the Superior’s permission.

\textsuperscript{11}\textsuperscript{11}Sarzana: “No one will have any books without permission. If he does receive the use of any, he will not write anything in them nor make any notes.”

\textsuperscript{12}\textsuperscript{12}Sarzana: “No one will take as his own what is for the use of others. Likewise, he will not accept anything from non-confreres either for himself or for others without the permission of the Superior.”

\textsuperscript{13}\textsuperscript{13}Sarzana incorporates this paragraph into paragraph 1.

\textsuperscript{14}\textsuperscript{14}This paragraph does not appear.

\textsuperscript{15}\textsuperscript{15}This paragraph does not appear.

\textsuperscript{16}\textsuperscript{16}Sarzana: “Our rooms should never be locked; neither should there be a strongbox in them, nor anything else locked, without the Superior’s permission.”
10.—The virtue of poverty can be infringed by even the undisciplined craving for personal belongings. For this reason each one should take particular care that this failing does not get a grip on him; and this includes wanting benefices, as being of spiritual value. No one, therefore, should covet any benefice or honor in the Church, under any pretext whatsoever. 17

CHAPTER IV.—CHASTITY

1.—Our Savior showed clearly how highly He rated chastity, and how anxious He was to get people to accept it, by the fact that He wanted to be born of an Immaculate Virgin through the intervention of the Holy Spirit, outside the normal course of nature. Christ allowed Himself to be accused of the most appalling charges, following His wish to be overwhelmed with disgrace. Yet He loathed unchastity so much that we never read of His having been in even the slightest way suspected of it, much less accused of it, even by His most determined opponents. For this reason it is very important for the Congregation to be strongly determined to possess this virtue. And we must always and everywhere uphold it in a clear and decisive way. This should be more obviously our practice since mission ministry almost all the time brings us into contact with lay men and women. Everyone, therefore, should be careful to take advantage to the best of his ability of every safeguard and precaution for keeping this chastity of body and mind intact.

2.—In order to succeed in this, with the help of God, we should be very careful to control internal and external senses. We are never to speak to women in a one-to-one situation in unbecoming circumstances of either time or place. When speaking or writing to them we should completely avoid using any words, even spiritual terminology, which smack of affectionate feelings toward them. When hearing their confessions, or when speaking to them outside of con-

17Sanzana: "No one will aspire after any benefice nor ever solicit any dignity or office, whether in or out of the Congregation."
fession, we should not go too close to them nor take our chastity for granted.

3.—And since intemperance is, so to speak, the nursing mother of unchastity, each one should be moderate with regard to eating. We should, as far as possible, use ordinary food, and wine diluted with plenty of water. 18

4.—Moreover, each of us needs to convince himself that it is not enough for Missioners to have reached an above-average level in this virtue. We must also try with every means available to prevent anyone from having even the slightest suspicion of the opposite vice in any member of our Community. The mere suspicion of this, even though completely unfounded, would do more damage to the Congregation and its good work than the false accusation of any other wrongdoing, especially since it would result in our missions doing little or no good. Because of this we should use not merely every available ordinary means but even exceptional ones where necessary to prevent or remove this evil. For example, we should at times withdraw from some works, which in other respects are permissible and even good and holy, when in the judgment of the Superior or Director they seem to give reason for fearing such suspicion. 19

5.—And since a lazy life is the enemy of virtues, especially of chastity, each of us is to avoid being idle and should always make good use of his time. 20

CHAPTER V.—OBEEDIENCE

1.—Our Lord Jesus Christ taught us obedience by word and example. He wished to be submissive to the Most Blessed Virgin, Saint Joseph, and other people in positions of authority, whether good or disagreeable. For this reason we should be completely obedient to every one of our Superiors, seeing the Lord in them and them in the

18 With some slight verbal changes, Sarzana reads paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 together in one unit.
19 Sarzana: The final sentence reads: "For example, if it seems good in the Lord, we should withdraw not only from licit but even from pious and holy works."
20 Sarzana: This paragraph does not appear.
Lord. In the first place we should faithfully and sincerely reverence and obey our Holy Father the Pope. We should also humbly and consistently obey the most reverend Bishops of the dioceses where the Congregation has houses. Furthermore we should not take on anything in parish churches without the approval of the parish priests.

2.—Every one of the confreres should also obey the Superior General promptly, without complaining, and unwaveringly in all matters not obviously sinful. This obedience is, to some extent, blind. It implies giving up our own opinion and wishes, not only with regard to what he specifically tells us but even with regard to his intention, since we believe that what he asks us to do is always for the best. We should always leave ourselves open to what he wants, like a file in the hands of a carpenter.

3.—We are also to obey, in the same way, other Superiors, whether local or provincial, as well as lesser office-holders. Each one should also try to answer the call of the bell as Christ's voice, going so far as even to leave a letter unfinished as soon as the bell starts ringing.

4.—The Congregation wants to develop its commitment to this virtue quickly and smoothly. It should therefore try, as best it can, to see to it that the good practice of neither asking for, nor refusing, anything is always kept up among us. Of course when someone knows that something does not agree with him, or that he needs something, he should think about it in the presence of the Lord and make up his mind whether or not to tell the Superior about it, without worrying about which way his answer will go. In this frame of mind he should put the matter to the Superior. He should be con-

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21 Sarzana: The following section is inserted here: "and in all our duties which deal with the neighbor, according to our Rules, we will constantly show to the Bishops that we are those servants in the Gospel. As a result, we will come and go according to their wishes, and whatever they command we will observe, and we will undertake nothing in their dioceses concerning the neighbor without the Bishops' permission. As a result, we will never be able to dispense ourselves or be freed from this obedience under any pretext. Furthermore..."

22 Sarzana has the following paragraphs of the Rules in this order: 11, 12, 4, 7, 15, 16, 8, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14. Further, the following appears as the last paragraph: "No one will hear the confessions of our own confreres or of others, unless he has been assigned to do so by the Superior General, the Visitor, or his own Superior."
vinced that the Superior's response indicates God's Will for him, and when he receives his answer he should accept it as God's Will.

5.—Each week there is to be a meeting, with the day, time, and place agreed, at which all can hear the Superior’s arrangements for the running of the house and put to him any suggestions they may have.

6.—No one is to order anyone else to do something, or to reprove anyone, unless the Superior has asked him to do so or he already has the duty to do so because of his work.

7.—When someone gets a refusal from one Superior he must not go to another Superior about the same matter without mentioning the refusal and the reason for it.

8.—No one is to abandon any work he has been given, even if impeded by other business that needs to be done, without telling one of the Superiors in time, so that someone else can be appointed, if necessary.

9.—No one is to meddle in anyone else's work or ministry. But if asked to help out, especially by someone in charge of something, no matter how minor, he should readily do so, if possible. If the work, however, would take a lot of time, this is not to be done, without the Superior's permission.23

10.—No one is to go into anyone else's place of work without the Superior's permission. If there is some need to do so, however, permission from the confrere in charge of the place is enough.

11.—Letters can cause many problems, and not just minor ones. Because of this, no one is to write, send, or open letters without the Superior's permission. When a letter is written it should be submitted to the Superior, and it will be up to him whether to send it or not.24

12.—Obedience should contribute to physical health. For this reason no one is to eat or drink outside the usual times, without the Superior's permission.25

23Sanara contains only the first sentence.
24Sanara does not contain the first sentence.
25Sanara does not contain the first sentence.
13. — Without the general or special permission of the Superior, no one is to go into anyone else's room, or open the door until he has heard "Come in," and while the two of them are together the door should be left open.

14. — Without the permission of the same Superior, no one is to bring anyone else, especially anyone not a member of the Congregation, into his room.

15. — No one is to write, translate, or publish a book without the explicit approval and permission of the Superior General.

16. — None of our lay Brothers should want to study Latin or wish to become clerics. Their role is that of Martha. If any of them feel such an inclination, they should try to get rid of it at once as something suggested by the evil spirit, who perhaps is aiming at their ruin by disguising pride as zeal. They also need the Superior General’s explicit permission to learn reading and writing.26

CHAPTER VI.—MATTERS CONCERNING THE SICK

1. — One of the principal things Christ did was to visit and care for the sick, and especially persons who were poor. He very often recommended this to those He was sending into His vineyard. For this reason the Congregation should have a special care for helping and visiting the sick, whether outside or inside the house. We should help them physically and spiritually, as far as is practical, especially on missions. As well as this we should pay particular attention to setting up and visiting the Confraternity of Charity.

2. — Wherever we visit a sick person, inside or outside the house, we should look on this person as Christ rather than as just a human being, since Christ said that He regarded any service done to such a person as being done to Himself. For this reason on such occasions we should be considerate and speak in a low voice. And what we

26Sarzana: "None of our lay Brothers should want to study Latin. If any of them feel such an inclination, . . . ."
say ought to console the sick person, put him in good humor, and help anyone else who is there.

3.—Members of our own Community who are sick should remind themselves that they are not kept in bed, or in the hospital, just to be nursed and brought back to health by medical help. They are also there, as if in a pulpit, to witness publicly to Christian virtues, especially patience and acceptance of the Divine Will, at least by their example. In this way they can make Christ present to those looking after them and to visitors. And through their sickness they themselves can grow in virtue. Obedience is one of the virtues most needed in the sick. They should be completely obedient to doctors and chaplains, as well as to the nurse and anyone else involved in their care.

4.—To prevent any abuse creeping in, in connection with the sick, all who feel unwell should notify the Superior, the person in charge of health, or the nurse. No one is to take any medicine, call in our doctor, or consult another one, without the Superior’s permission.

CHAPTER VII.—DECORUM

1.—Decorum was such a feature of the appearance, activity, and speech of Christ the Lord that He drew many thousands of people to follow Him, even out into the desert. There they were pleased to be with Him and to listen to the words of eternal life which He taught. They even forgot about the need for food and drink. Missioners should imitate this attractive characteristic of such a great teacher. Since we are obliged by our Institute to deal frequently with the neighbor, we should always fear lest the slightest impropriety on our part, in giving bad example, destroy that which we have built up in the Lord by our work and ministry. For this reason all should carefully carry out what Saint Paul recommended to the first Christians. Let your modesty be known to all. In order to be capable of living up to this, we should be careful to put into practice the special
Rules dealing with decorum drawn up for the Congregation, especially the following:

2.—First of all, we should keep our eyes from all undisciplined roving, especially in church, at table, and in public. We should see to it that there is nothing undignified or childish in our behavior, and nothing affected or mundane in our bearing.27

3.—All should be careful not to touch one another, even in fun, apart from when it is normal to embrace as a sign of friendship or in greeting, for example when someone is leaving on a journey or just back from one, or has just joined the Congregation.

4.—Each one should make an effort to keep neat and clean, especially as regards clothes, completely avoiding, though, anything which is too elegant or stylish.

5.—Each one is to keep clean, and to look after, the modest furniture in his room, minimal though it may be. He should sweep his room every three days. In the morning, when he gets up, he should make his bed properly. In exceptional circumstances due to illness or work, someone else may be appointed to do this by the Superior.

6.—No one should come out of his room without being properly dressed.

7.—So that we can more easily and readily witness to decorum when others are present, each one, when at home, even alone in his room, should pay particular attention to behaving with modesty, realizing that God is present. We should be especially careful not to sleep at night with nothing on or with insufficient bedclothes.28

CHAPTER VIII—GETTING ALONG WITH EACH OTHER

1.—Christ our Savior formed Apostles and disciples into a community and gave them guidelines for getting along with each other.

27Sarzana places the subsequent paragraphs in the following order: 6, 7, 3, 4, 5. After paragraph three, the following appears: “All who enter or leave the house should be careful not to ring the bell too much or too repeatedly.”

28Sarzana: “No one will sleep at night with nothing on, with insufficient bedclothes, or with the window open.”
Here are some of them: love one another; wash each other’s feet; seek reconciliation with a companion immediately after a disagreement; travel in pairs; and finally, anyone who wants to be the more prominent should keep in the background. There were other similar ones. Now our little Congregation wants to follow in the footsteps of Christ and the disciples, so it also should have the following regulations which concern good community living and communicating among us, and each of us should try our best to keep them.

2.—Love, like that between brothers, should always be present among us, as well as the bond of holiness, and these should be safeguarded in every possible way. For this reason there should be great mutual respect, and we should get along as good friends, always living in community. We should particularly avoid exclusive friendships, as well as any sort of ostracism, as experience has shown that these give rise to factions and destroy Congregations. 29

3.—All should show the special respect due to Superiors by uncovering their head to them. We should be careful not to interrupt them while they are speaking or, even more reprehensible, contradict them. All should also uncover their head to priests, and seminarists and students to their Directors and professors. The priests should even try, in the Lord, to anticipate one another in showing this mutual respect. During meals, though, this gesture is to be made only to the Superior or an important visitor. This is to prevent the roving eye and wandering mind.

4.—Scripture tells us that there is a time for speaking and a time for keeping silent, and that in excessive talking sin is not lacking. And there is plenty of evidence from everyday experience that the good work of any Community dedicated to God is unlikely to last long if it has no guidelines about speaking and no provision for silence. We should keep silent, then, except during recreation. At other times no one should speak unnecessarily, apart from a brief passing remark in a low voice. This applies especially in the church, sacristy, sleeping quarters, and dining room, and particularly during meals. If someone at table, though, needs something, the person

29Sarzana arranges the subsequent paragraphs as follows: 9, 3, 15-16, 14, 11, 13, 12, 10, 4b, 8, 5, 6.
beside him should tell whoever is on duty, with a single word if a nod or other sign would not do. But no matter when we are speaking, even during recreation, we should avoid excessive argument and too loud a voice, since this could give bad example among ourselves or to visitors.  

5.—Unless we have the Superior's permission, none of us should speak to the seminarists or students, or to others, even priests, who are less than two years out of the Internal Seminary. Charity, though, may call for a brief passing greeting.

6.—When anyone is in his own room, or is going around the house, especially at night, he should, as far as possible, avoid making noise, particularly when opening or closing doors. This will help in maintaining silence.

7.—During recreation, and in other everyday matters, we should aim at not letting good humor get out of control, mixing the useful with the agreeable. In this way we give good example to all. We will more readily achieve this if our conversation is usually about spirituality or theology for a Missioner.

8.—When together like this, and at other customary meetings which take place from time to time, we should try to bring up for discussion, among other topics of conversation, mainly those which help our commitment to our vocation or our growth in holiness. Thus we might, for example, encourage devotion, mortification, obedience, or humility. Or another time we might, gently and with humility, defend them against people who belittle them. But if we dislike any of these virtues, we should make this fact known only to the Superior or Director, and take care not to reveal it to others either publicly or privately.

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30 Sarzana begins the paragraph thus: "We should keep silent, then." It concludes thus: "But no matter when, all will strive to speak in a low voice."

31 This paragraph does not appear.

32 Sarzana: "In our conversations, we will invite each other to love our vocation and desire our own perfection. We will always praise virtue and mortification, and defend them with humility and gentleness against those who belittle them. But if we dislike any of these, we should make this fact known to the Superior or Director, and take care especially never to reveal it to the others, either publicly or privately."
9.—We should take great care to avoid being in any way stubborn or argumentative in conversation, even if only in fun. We should even try, in the Lord, to prefer, as far as possible, other people's opinions to our own on all matters where freedom of opinion is allowed.\(^{33}\) If someone, though, holds an opposite view to that expressed about something, he can put forward his point of view calmly and with humility. Above all, though, everyone in conversation should try to avoid anger or bad temper, or showing he is annoyed with someone, and no one should hurt another in word or deed, or in any other way.

10.—Everyone must consider it a matter of prime obligation to maintain confidentiality, not only about matters of confession or direction, but also about what is said or done at Chapter with regard to faults and penances. This also applies to other matters when we know confidentiality is requested by the Superiors or is demanded by the nature of the case.\(^{34}\)

11.—No one should damage the reputation of others, especially Superiors, in even the slightest way, or grumble about them, or criticize what is done or said in our Congregation or in other Communities.

12.—No one is to snoop around, prying into how the house is run, or discuss this with others, or criticize explicitly or implicitly the Rules or Constitutions of the Congregation or even its respected customs.

13.—No one should grumble about food, clothing, or sleeping accommodation, or even discuss them unless his assigned work calls for this.

14.—No one should speak deprecatingly about other countries or provinces, as this usually causes no small trouble.

\(^{33}\)Sarzana: "We should diligently avoid being argumentative in conversation, even if only in fun. Instead, we will declare that we understand and agree with the others, and we will prefer the opinion of others where freedom of opinion is allowed."

\(^{34}\)Sarzana: "Everyone . . . confidentiality about what is said at Chapter with regard to faults and penances." Sarzana also has the following paragraph: "The list which contains various items for conversations and topics to be discussed in our recreations and conversations will always be available, as much as possible."
15.—Disagreements and wars can take place between Christian rulers, and on such occasions no one should reveal a preference for either side. This is following the example of Christ, who did not want to adjudicate in a quarrel between brothers or decide about the rights of rulers. All He said was to give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and so forth.

16.—Each one should keep well away from discussions about national or international affairs and other political matters, especially with regard to war and current disputes between rulers and other similar rumors in the world. And each one should take care, as far as possible, not to write anything about all this.35

CHAPTER IX.—GETTING ALONG WITH NON-CONFREES

1.—Besides the guidelines which our Savior gave His Apostles and disciples about getting along with one another, He also gave certain instructions about how to behave toward other people, toward the Scribes and Pharisees and the authorities when brought before their synagogues and courts, how to behave when invited to meals, and so on. Modeling ourselves on Him, then, it is right for us to have some guidelines for our behavior toward non-conferees, and we should try to live up to them.

2.—By the very nature of our Congregation we are bound to come into frequent contact with lay people, especially on missions, but we should not seek such contact unless obedience or necessity calls for it. On such occasions we should keep in mind our Lord's words: You are the light of the world. We should take the sun's light as an example; it gives both light and warmth, and is undiminished even when it beams on what is not clean.

3.—St. Paul wrote: No one in God's army gets involved in secular affairs. Following this advice we should take great care not to be implicated in other people's lawsuits, nor to be executors of wills or involved in matrimonial or business negotiations or anything like that.36

35Sarzana combines paragraphs 15 and 16, with some small alterations.
36Sarzana arranges the subsequent paragraphs in the following order: 5, 6, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14, 7, 8, 15, 16.
4.—No one should take on the administration of even religious business matters, or promise his help in dealing with them, or hint that he is available for them, without the Superior’s permission.

5.—When at home in the house, no one should make himself available to strike up a conversation with strangers or become involved in getting another confrere for this purpose, unless the Superior advises otherwise.

6.—No one should invite non-confreres to a meal, without the Superior’s permission.

7.—No one should deliver messages, letters, or anything else in either direction between confreres and others, without the Superior’s permission.

8.—No one should show our Rules or Constitutions to non-confreres without the explicit permission of the Superior General or the Provincial. These Common Rules, though, may be shown to aspirants during a retreat, with the permission of the local Superior, and sometimes earlier on if he thinks it would be useful in the Lord.

9.—No one should irresponsibly or pointlessly mention to non-confreres what has been, or is going to be, done in the house, nor should we discuss with them any matters which are not allowed in our own conversation, especially concerning the state or kingdom.37

10.—When anyone is authorized to meet non-confreres, he should speak to them only about what needs to be said, or what can promote the salvation and spiritual development of either party, or of both, and with a sense of what is serious, religious, and moderate, according to circumstances of persons, places and times.38

11.—When anyone goes out of the house, he is to follow the Superior’s wishes as regards manner, time, and companions; it is for the Superior or his delegate to designate a companion. The person designated as a companion should defer to the other and be a willing listener.

12.—When anyone asks permission from the Superior to go somewhere, he should explain where he wants to go, and why, and as soon as he gets back report to him what he did.

37 Sarzana: This paragraph does not appear.
38 Sarzana: This paragraph does not appear.
13.—Everyone should use the usual door for leaving or entering the house, unless either necessity or the Superior’s permission allows otherwise.

14.—When leaving the house, even when it is allowed to go and come by the back door or through the church, we are to mark ourselves “out” and let the doorkeeper know when we will be back so that he can inform callers. We should not go out in the morning before daylight, and should be back before nightfall, and, as soon as we get back, mark ourselves “in.”

15.—Except while traveling, no one is to eat while out of the house, without the Superior’s permission.39

16.—If, while traveling, anyone passes through a place where the Congregation has a house, he should stay in that house rather than anywhere else. While in that house, he is to be answerable to whoever is in charge and should not do anything while there without his advice and direction. This also applies to someone coming to such a house on business.40

CHAPTER X.—SPIRITUAL PRACTICES USED IN THE CONGREGATION

1.—Christ the Lord and His disciples had their spiritual practices, such as going to the temple on certain days, sometimes going off by themselves for a while, giving time to praying, and other such practices. It makes sense, then, for this little Congregation to have its own spiritual practices. It should prefer conscientious fidelity to these rather than to any others, unless necessity or obedience rules this out. Moreover, these spiritual practices help us more effectively to keep the other Rules or Constitutions and to grow in holiness.

2.—According to the Bull which established our Congregation, we are bound to honor in a special way the Most Holy Trinity and

39Sarzana: “Except while traveling, no one is to eat or drink . . . .”

40Sarzana: “If, while traveling, . . . anywhere else. He is to be subject in obedience while there to the Superior. Likewise, anyone who goes there on business will do nothing without the advice and direction of the Superior or Visitor if he is there for some time. Also, the Superior of the other house will retain his responsibility over the companion which the confrere has brought with him to the house, in what pertains to confession and direction.”
the Incarnation, mysteries beyond words. We should therefore try to carry this out most faithfully and, if possible, in every way, but especially in these three ways: (1) frequently honoring these mysteries by a prayer of faith and adoration, coming from our inmost heart; (2) dedicating certain prayers and good works each day to their honor and, above all, celebrating their feast days with special dignity, and the greatest possible personal devotion; (3) trying constantly, by our teaching and example, to get other people to know these mysteries and to honor and worship them. 41

3.—There can be no better way of paying the best honor possible to these mysteries than proper devotion to, and use of, the Blessed Eucharist, sacrament and sacrifice. It includes, as it were, all the other mysteries of faith and, by itself, leads those who receive Communion respectfully or celebrate Mass properly, to holiness and ultimately to everlasting glory. In this way God, Unity and Trinity, and the Incarnate Word, are paid the greatest honor. For these reasons, nothing should be more important to us than showing due honor to this sacrament and sacrifice. We are also to make a great effort to get everyone else to pay it similar honor and reverence. We should try, to the best of our ability, to achieve this by preventing, as far as we can, any lack of reverence in word or act, and by carefully teaching others what to believe about so great a mystery, and how they should honor it. 42

41 Sarzana: "According to the Bull of our institution we are to venerate the Most Holy Trinity, the mystery of the Incarnation, and the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with special worship; the Congregation will fulfill this most faithfully, at least in the following three ways: (1) by celebrating with special dignity and the greatest possible personal devotion the feasts of the Most Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of the Lord, and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary; (2) besides the worship which each one should manifest publicly, by assisting with special attention at the acts of adoration and praise, both in Mass and the Divine Office, as well as in common daily prayers, which are specially directed to honor them; (3) by striving with all our strength to inculcate knowledge, honor, and veneration of them in the minds of the people, wherever we can, by our instructions and example."

42 Sarzana: "Since the most holy sacrament of the altar contains in itself, as it were, the sum of all the mysteries of our faith, and since in some respects our salvation and the entire good of the Church depend on the worship rightly given to it, the Congregation will profess special and timeless honor to it. Nothing will be more important for us than attentively and tirelessly to see that all give due honor and reverence to this sacrament. The following are among the ways by which it is customary to render honor."
4.—Because this Bull also expressly recommends it, and for other reasons as well, we should likewise have special devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. Confreres, therefore, both individually and collectively, should, with God's help, try to carry this out perfectly: (1) by specially honoring every day this preeminent Mother of Christ, who is also our Mother; (2) by putting into practice, as far as possible, the same virtues as she did, particularly humility and chastity; (3) by enthusiastically encouraging others, whenever opportunity and means permit, to show her the greatest reverence and always to serve her loyally.

5.—We should take the greatest care to pray the Divine Office properly. We pray it in the Roman rite and in common, in a middle tone of voice, even when on missions. We do not sing it so as to leave more time for helping others. Exceptions to this would be houses where we are bound to Gregorian Chant because of obligations accepted, or students preparing to receive orders, or seminaries for diocesan students, and other suchlike commitments. No matter in what place or at what time we pray the canonical hours, we should remember the reverence, attention, and devotion with which we should do so, since we know for certain that we are at that moment praising God in our celebration, and therefore sharing in the role of angels.

6.—One of the most important ministries on our missions is to encourage people to receive the sacraments of penance and Eucharist frequently. It is right, then, that we ourselves should, with greater reason, give good example to them in this matter, or even far more than just good example. We should therefore aim at giving good example in the most perfect way possible. And since everything should be done in an orderly way, the priests are to go to confession twice a week, or at least once, to one of the confessors appointed for the house, and not to anyone else, without the Superior's permission. They are to celebrate Mass every day unless

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43 Sarzana: This paragraph does not appear. The subsequent paragraphs appear in this order: 10, 9, 7, 5, 8, 12, 13, 16, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20. Paragraphs 10 and 11 were combined.

44 Sarzana: "All will recite the Divine Office in common, generally even during missions, in a middle tone of voice. Only those places are excepted where, because of foundations or other need, we are obliged to the Gregorian Chant."
something prevents this. Those who are not priests, though, are to go to confession every Saturday and on the eves of the main feast days, to one of the above-mentioned confessors, unless the Superior has appointed someone else, and they are to receive Communion, with the advice of their Director, every Sunday and on the above-mentioned feast days, and are to go to Mass every day. 45

7.—Christ the Lord in addition to His daytime meditations, sometimes used to spend the whole night in prayer to God. We cannot fully follow His example in this, though we should try to do so while making allowance for our weakness. All the confreres, therefore, should conscientiously spend one hour a day in mental prayer, and the custom of the Congregation is that this is to be done together and in the assigned place.

8.—Each one should see to it that he does not let a day pass without reading from some spiritual book suited to his own needs, spending at this whatever length of time the Superior or Director indicates. As well as this, the priests and all the students are to read a chapter of the New Testament, reverencing this book as the norm of Christian holiness. For greater benefit this reading should be done kneeling, with head uncovered, and praying, at least at the end, on these three themes: (1) reverence for the truths contained in the chapter; (2) desire to have the same spirit in which Christ or the saints taught them; (3) determination to put into practice the advice or commands contained in it, as well as the examples of virtues.

9.—All of us are to make two sorts of examination of conscience every day so as to have a clearer understanding of our failings and, by doing so, to make up for them with God’s help and to sharpen our sensitivity in this matter. One is to be made briefly before the midday and evening meals, focusing on some virtue to be acquired or on some failing to be overcome. The other is a general review of all the day’s activity and is to be done shortly before going to bed. 46

45 The following lines do not appear: “One of the most important ministries ... be done in an orderly way.”

46 Sarzana: “All of us are to make two sorts of examination of conscience every day. One, the particular, is to be made before the midday and evening meals, focusing on some virtue to be acquired; and the other, the general, is to be made in the evening on all the actions of the day.”
10.—So that we may show reverence for Christ’s withdrawal from the crowds, especially the forty days which He spent out in the desert, all those entering the Congregation, clerical and lay, are to make a retreat and a general confession of their whole lives up to then, to a priest designated by the Superior. Those already members are to make a similar retreat, with a general confession covering the period since their last one. The seminarists are to do both every six months and the others once a year. 47

11.—It is hardly possible to make progress in the spiritual life without the help of a spiritual director. So, unless a directee sometimes talks about the state of his interior life to his personal director, as he should, it is extremely difficult for him to reach a level of holiness appropriate for him. Each one of us, therefore, should with complete openness and due reverence give an account of his conscience to the Superior, or someone assigned by him, in the manner customary in the Congregation. We should do this every three months, especially when on retreat, and as often as the Superior thinks necessary.

12.—Everyone is to be particularly conscientious about being present at the spiritual conferences which we have once a week. These should usually cover topics like yielding in our own personal wishes and opinions, the practice of following God’s Will in everything, getting along well together like brothers, zeal for personal holiness, and progress in other virtues, especially those which make up the spirit of the mission.

13.—So that we in our weakness can to some extent imitate Christ’s self-humiliation and His willingness to be ranked with sinners, each one every Friday in the presence of the others is to acknowledge his failings to the Superior or to someone replacing him. This applies both at home and on missions. We should take in good part whatever corrections and penances are given. The brotherly custom of asking in Chapter to be publicly admonished about our fail-

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47 Sarzana: Paragraph 10 concludes with the following, which now appears in paragraph 11: “at which time each one will give an account of his conscience in the manner customary in the Congregation. We will also do this every three months, and as often as the Superior thinks necessary.”
ings is to be kept up, and each one therefore should take great care to
give this type of admonition in a spirit of charity and humility.\textsuperscript{48}

14.—As well as this, we should make an effort to accept uncom-
plainingly whatever humiliations come our way, even apart from
Chapter or, for that matter, at any time. In this way we deepen more
quickly a willing acceptance of the experience of rejection, and ac-
cordingly advance more and more along the path to holiness. When,
therefore, at the end of mental prayer or a conference, the Superior
indicates to someone that he wishes to point out to him some failing,
the person concerned should kneel down at once, listen to the admo-
nition willingly, in a spirit of humility, and without comment, ac-
ccept any penance given, and faithfully do it.\textsuperscript{49}

15.—The continuous work of the Missioners is such that we can-
not be obliged by any rule to undertake severe physical mortifica-
tions and austerities. In spite of this, though, each one should value
them highly and always have a leaning toward them and even,
health and important work permitting, make use of them. We have
as example Christ and the early Christians, and even many lay peo-
ple conscious of the need for penance. No one, though, should take
on any such penances without consulting the Superior or Director,
unless they are imposed in confession.

16.—Every Friday each one is to be satisfied with only one
course at the evening meal, a course of vegetables of either leaf or
bean variety. This does not apply on missions or while traveling.

17.—On the Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday we
are to abstain from meat if at home, honoring God by this minimal
self-discipline at a time when many Christians seriously offend
Him by their licentiousness and gluttony.

18.—Moreover, the timetable which is customary in the Cong-
egregation is to be strictly followed by everyone, whether at home or

\textsuperscript{48}Sarzana: The following does not appear: "So that we . . . ranked with sinners."

\textsuperscript{49}Sarzana: The following text does not appear: "As well as this . . . along the path to holiness."

In addition, the following paragraph appears in Sarzana: "Each one will have, for the entire time
of his life, the intention of applying himself to the exercises of the mission in the Congregation
according to our Institute. He will do this on entering and will often renew it." The term
"Institute" was used by the founder to refer to the Foundation Contract dated April 17, 1625 (cf.
Doc. 59).
on missions, particularly as regards the times for getting up and going to bed, prayer, the Divine Office, and meals.

19.—There is to be spiritual reading in the dining room all through the meal, both at home and on missions, so that the mind may be nourished as well as the body.

20.—We should also keep up other worthwhile practices customary in the Congregation, such as to visit the chapel immediately before going out and after coming in, greeting Christ in the Blessed Sacrament; to catechize poor persons, especially beggars, particularly while traveling, if the opportunity occurs; to kneel down on entering and on leaving our rooms in order to invoke God before doing anything and to thank Him afterward.50

21.—If anyone wants to take on any spiritual practices over and above those prescribed in these Rules, he ought to discuss it with the Superior or Director and should do only what they authorize with regard to them. If he were to do otherwise, he might perhaps be doing his own will, or even the devil’s. Thus, as punishment for his imprudence or disobedience, he might be tricked by the devil into something with only the appearance of being worthwhile and, in the long run, do himself spiritual harm.51

CHAPTER XI.—MISSIONS AND OTHER MINISTRIES OF THE CONGREGATION ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE

1.—Our Lord Jesus Christ gave His disciples rules for giving missions. He told them to ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers to His harvest, and He indicated the peoples to go to, how to behave on the way, what houses to stay in, what to preach, what to eat and, finally, how to deal with those who did not welcome them. We want to follow in their footsteps, as far as our limitations allow, so we should be careful to live up to the following Rules, and to the ad-

50Sarzana has a different formulation for the care of the poor: “in front of the door of the house, to prefer spiritual to a corporal alms, that is, by catechizing the poor.”

51Sarzana: The final sentence of the paragraph does not appear.
vice usually given in the Congregation. These indicate the proper program and method for our missions and other ministries.\footnote{Sarzana: The subsequent paragraphs appear in the following order: 10, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 3. Paragraphs 4, 11, 12 do not appear in Sarzana.}

2.—Each one should try, as the occasion arises, to help people by advice and correction and to encourage them in good works. No one, though, should become anyone’s director, except during retreats, on missions, in houses where we have pastoral ministry, or on other occasions when appointed by the Superior. But even in these circumstances no one is ever to give any instructions or rule of life in writing, without the Superior’s permission and approval.

3.—To avoid our Missioners having Saint Paul’s words justly quoted against them, \textit{How can they preach unless they are sent?} no one is to preach in public or catechize from a pulpit without both approval from the Provincial and appointment to it by either the same Provincial or the local Superior. On missions, though, the Director of the mission may make temporary changes of preachers and catechists by substituting others when he judges in the Lord that it is necessary, and when waiting for a written answer from the Superior would cause problems. He is, however, to tell the Superior as soon as possible why he made such changes.\footnote{Sarzana: “No one is to preach on the missions or catechize without being named to it by the provincial. The Director, however, when it seems necessary, can substitute others who are properly prepared, provided he tell the Superior as soon as possible in writing why he made such changes.”}

4.—None of us is allowed to hear confessions, either of members of the Congregation or of others, without approval by the Ordinary. To avoid any abuse, though, those who have such approval should not engage in this ministry unless they have been designated for it by the Provincial and appointed to it by the same Provincial or local Superior.

5.—Those who are going on missions are always to bring with them the mandate of the most reverend Bishops in whose dioceses the missions are being given, and should show it to the Pastor or whoever is in charge of the churches to which they are going. Before they go home at the end of the missions they should report to the Bishops on what they did, if the latter wish this. But the Superior
is first to be consulted so that he can indicate how this is to be done and who is to do it.\textsuperscript{54}

6.—At the beginning and end of each mission all should ask for the blessing of the Pastor or, if he is absent, of the Assistant, and they should not do anything of importance without first mentioning it to him, and be careful not to proceed with anything to which he objects.

7.—St. Paul and his co-workers used to do manual work night and day so as not to impose on the people to whom they were ministering. Following their example we are not to impose on anyone during our missions, and all our ministry is to be done gratuitously. We do not accept any money as stipend or for food. There is nothing wrong, though, in accepting an offer of furnished lodgings.\textsuperscript{55}

8.—Everyone should sincerely wish to be appointed to visiting the sick, or settling quarrels and disputes, especially on missions and even, when the situation calls for it, ask, with humility, to be appointed to this. Charity, however, should be properly regulated by obedience, so no one is to take on this sort of caring ministry, without the Superior's permission.\textsuperscript{56}

9.—Much prudence and care are called for when problems about cases of conscience from confession are discussed, in order that the person concerned may never be identified. To avoid the harm which can be caused by this no one should bring up for discussion problems arising from any case of conscience of any importance heard in confession without first consulting the Director of the mission.

10.—The name Missioners, or Priests of the Mission, clearly indicates that the work of missions is the primary and most important of all ministries to people. And we did not invent this name for ourselves, but popular usage, reflecting Divine Providence, gave it to us. For this reason the Congregation should never replace missions

\textsuperscript{54}Sarzana: The final sentence does not appear.

\textsuperscript{55}Sarzana: The paragraph begins thus: "According to the counsel which Our Lord Jesus Christ gave to His Apostles when He sent them to preach to every creature, 'As you have received freely, give freely,' and also since St. Paul . . . ."

\textsuperscript{56}Sarzana: "No one during his sick calls should work to settle quarrels and disputes unless he has the permission of the Director."
with other ministries apparently more effective. Each one, rather, should have a deep commitment to them and be always ready to go on missions when obedience calls.57

11.—The direction of nuns could interfere quite a lot with missions and other ministries of our Congregation, so each one of us should abstain completely from directing them. No one should call on them or preach in their convents, even during missions, without previous explicit permission from at least the local Superior. And although our Congregation was appointed to direct the Daughters of Charity right from their foundation, no confrere is to take on their direction, or go to them, or even talk to them, without the same Superior’s permission.

12.—Finally, confreres, individually and collectively, are to understand that the plea of missions should not mean neglect of the ministry to the clergy who are not members of our Congregation, especially ordinands and seminarians, as well as to other people on retreat, carried on in our houses. Though our preference is for missions, giving them should not mean omitting our work for the clergy whenever we are asked to do this by Bishops or Superiors. The reason is that by the nature of our Congregation we are bound almost equally to both. Also, everyday experience shows that no matter how effective these missions may be there will be no lasting effect without the help of the Pastors, to whose holiness the above-mentioned ministries contribute quite a lot. Each one should therefore give himself ungrudgingly to God in such ministry, bringing care and devotion to it. And to do this more easily and effectively we should make an effort to follow out exactly the instructions usually given by our Superiors about this.

57 Sarzana: The paragraph concludes thus: “To fulfill better this mystery of ours, the plan drawn up for missions will be religiously observed, in addition to those matters contained in this chapter.”
CHAPTER XII—SOME USEFUL MEANS NEEDED FOR PROPERLY AND EFFECTIVELY CARRYING OUT THE MINISTRIES JUST MENTIONED

1. In the beginning of these Rules or Constitutions the Congregation took Christ the Lord as a model, as someone who did not begin by teaching but by doing. In this last chapter, therefore, it is equally necessary to point out that He is a model also for doing all things well, because whatever good we may do deserves blame rather than praise if it is not done well. For this reason it is right to add these few guidelines and means helpful for properly carrying out the ministries just mentioned. All our Missioners should make a real effort to put them into practice.58

2. Each one, in every single thing he does, especially in preaching or other ministries of the Congregation, should make an effort to have, to the best of his ability, as pure an intention as possible of pleasing God alone. We should renew this intention many times, particularly as we begin more important activities. We should be careful above all not to indulge any wish for human approval or self-gratification. Such a wish can infect or spoil the holiest action, as Christ taught it: If your eye is evil your whole body will be full of darkness.

3. St. Paul says that it can sometimes happen that though we begin in the Spirit we end up in the unspiritual. This usually happens when our activity leads to a certain foolish self-congratulation which we are stupid enough to feed on if it went off well with people praising us. Or it can happen when we feel so downhearted and distressed that we cannot in any way find peace, if our activity has not gone well. We should, therefore, take every care never to fall into either of these faults. In order to counteract the first we should keep in mind this truth, that all the glory is to be given to God and nothing to ourselves but embarrassment. On top of this, if we were vainly gratified with that sort of praise, we should be very much afraid of hearing these words of Christ: I tell you, you have received your reward. The cure for the second is this: to turn at once to genuine hu-

58Sarzana: A special heading for chapter XII does not appear. Further, paragraph 1 does not appear. The subsequent paragraphs follow this order: 5, 7, 4, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14.
mility and the willing acceptance of the experience of rejection, which is what God asks of us in such circumstances. After that, to reflect carefully on the fact that very often we can hope for as much glory for God’s name and usefulness for others from this type of disappointment, patiently put up with, as from sermons which please people and are apparently beneficial.

4.—Since these two evils, foolish self-congratulation and disproportionate disappointment, which corrupt preachers, usually stem from praise on the one hand and criticism on the other about this type of public activity, no one should praise any confere, especially in his presence, for exceptional natural gifts or talents, above all with regard to eloquent sermons which have attracted public attention. On the other hand, no one should unfavorably criticize anyone for lack of eloquence or knowledge or any similar shortcomings noticed in his preaching. But if anyone needs a bit of encouragement to boost his lack of confidence, or a warning to curb his itching vanity, it is up to the Superior to give it, or to delegate someone to do so, with prudence and in private. It is not wrong, though, to praise others for acts of humility, mortification, simplicity, or other such virtues, even with regard to preaching, provided that this is done in their absence, with restraint and discernment, and with God in mind.59

5.—As simplicity is the principal and most characteristic virtue of Missioners, we should show it at all times and in all circumstances. We should be more careful to practice it during missions, especially when we proclaim the Word of God to country people, to whom, because they are simple, God speaks through us. For this reason our style of preaching and catechizing should be simple and suited to the people, and in line with the simple method the Congregation has used up to now. Each one, therefore, is to avoid com-

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59Sarzana: "Since human recognition is often the cause of intellectual pride, no one should praise any conferees because of their preaching or catechizing, or because they carry on external works amid human applause. Yet they can be prudently commended, in their absence, for their humility, mortification and other virtues." Sarzana also has the following paragraph: "All will take diligent care not to censure or condemn the sermons of others, nor other public activities. If it is necessary to warn someone about these, it belongs to the Superior to do so, or to depute someone else. He will do so in private and with due moderation."
pletely speaking with too much tenderness or with affection. We should take care not to preach any far-fetched or too subtly contrived ideas, or pointless distinctions, from the pulpit of truth. We should remember that Christ the Lord and His disciples made use of a simple way of speaking and, because of this, reaped a much better harvest with a most abundant yield.  

6.—Those who are appointed to seminaries for students not of our Congregation, to direction of ordinands, to conferences with Pastors and other clergy, and similar ministries should also use this simple, ordinary way of speaking. And they should take special care, by word and example, to urge all those to whom they minister to develop their spiritual lives as well as their learning. Our Missioners should try especially to behave with great humility, gentleness, respect, and cordiality toward them. Those who are giving retreats should, as far as possible, do the same.

7.—Since novel or merely personal opinions usually harm both their originators and their followers, all confreres should be careful to avoid such novelties and personal opinions. In fact, we should always be in agreement, as far as possible, on doctrine and in what we say and write so that we can, as Saint Paul says, be united in spirit and ideals, and even in speech.

8.—Saint Zeno says, Curiosity makes a person guilty, not learned, and Saint Paul says: Learning puffs up. This is especially so when his other advice is overlooked: Not to think more highly of oneself than one ought, but to estimate oneself soberly. All of us, therefore, but especially the students, should always be alert in case undisciplined craving for learning insidiously invades our heart. We are not, though, to neglect the dedicated study which is needed for the proper carrying out of the work of a Missioner, as long as our primary aim is to acquire the learning of the saints, which is taught in the school of the cross, so that we may preach only Jesus Christ.

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60 Sarzana: The following text does not appear: “As simplicity...”
61 Sarzana: The text “should also use this simple, ordinary way of speaking. And they should...” does not appear.
62 Sarzana: The text “Since novel... and their followers” does not appear.
63 From a sermon of Zeno of Verona in PL 11:398. It is not known how Vincent became acquainted with this citation, the only one in the Rules not taken from the Bible.
following the example of Saint Paul, who also admitted frankly, when writing to the Corinthians, that he had decided that, when among them, he would speak of nothing except Jesus Christ, and of Him crucified.64

9.—Of all the guidelines in the Gospel needed by those who work in the Lord's vineyard, this is the one that should appeal most to us: Whoever wishes to be the greatest among you, let him be like the least and the servant of the others. For, the moment the Congregation gives up following this advice, with uncurbed ambition taking over, it will be completely ruined. It is because this desire, slipping easily into minds which by nature are inclined toward ambition, urges them on to many evils. In particular it urges them to hope for appointments of distinction, to envy those who receive them, or to congratulate themselves if they have received such appointments. And so, lured on and deluded by the false glamor of superficial fame, which is the only thing they set their eyes on, they do not notice the nearby cliff and end up disastrously by falling over it. That is why it should be a prime concern of ours to get away from the monstrosity of pride. But if it already has a place in our hearts, then a suitable way to get rid of it immediately, following the Lord's advice already quoted, would be to try, through genuine humility, to have a less inflated opinion of ourselves and to want always to have the lowest place. If it should happen that we notice traces of foolish self-congratulation in ourselves because of the prominent duties or works we carry out, the remedy is to ask the Superior immediately, though with respect for his authority, to relieve us of these duties and to appoint us to some unremarkable work of his choice.65

64Sarzana: The following text does not appear: "as long as our primary aim ... and of Him crucified."

65Sarzana: The following text appears after "by falling over it": "Hence, when this nascent monster is encountered, each and every one will employ whatever means they can think of. The first of these is to become more humble in our own estimation by making an act of deep humility. Second, to seek the lowest place. Third, to request from God and the Superior that we be removed from our superior position, even from the duty of preaching or of leading others, by which we might have seemed to be someone special. Instead, the Superior could assign us to some lowly position on the mission according to his pleasure."
10.—All of us should as well make a particular effort to repress the first feelings of envy which can arise when the reputation, public estimation, and prominent works of other Congregations are better than ours. We must definitely convince ourselves that it does not matter by whom Christ is preached, as long as He is preached, and that as much—sometimes even more—grace and merit come to us when we are pleased at other people's good work as would come if we had done it ourselves with self-congratulation or from a less worthy motive. For this reason everyone should try to have Moses' way of thinking. When He was asked to stop some people from prophesying, He retorted: Would that all the people were prophets. Would that the Lord might bestow His Spirit on them all. As well as this we should think of other Congregations as being far worthier than our own, though we should have greater affection for ours, just as a well-brought-up child will have far greater love for his own mother, poor and unattractive as she may be, than for any others, even if they are outstanding for wealth and beauty. All should realize, of course, that this feeling of affection is only for the persons, virtues, and grace found in the Congregation, and not for anything it has which is attractive and brings public acclaim; that is something we should make a special effort not to give in to and to shun. And this is not just for the individual with regard to himself, but applies to the Congregation as a whole. This means that not only do we not seek publicity or applause for it, but even that we want it disdained and kept unobtrusive in the Lord, remembering that it is the mustard seed, which cannot grow and bear fruit unless it is sown, hidden underground.

11.—In the same way, all should be on their guard against two further vices, from opposite extremes, both militating against the whole purpose of the mission. They are all the more dangerous because it is not immediately apparent that they are vices, as they insidiously assume so different an appearance that they are very often taken to be real virtues. This pair are laziness and undisciplined enthusiasm. The first vice, under the guise of the prudent care of health needed for better worshiping God and helping others, gradually infiltrates our way of thinking and makes us look for bodily
comforts and excuse ourselves from the effort which virtue demands. Laziness suggests to us that this effort is far greater than it really is, so that virtue, which in itself should be universally loved, strikes us as repugnant. This vice draws down upon us the curse fulminated by the Holy Spirit against the sort of workers who do God's work carelessly or fraudulently. The second vice, on the other hand, masking our self-love or anger, impels us to act harshly toward both sinners and ourselves, and to take on more work than we can manage, even against obedience, resulting in damage to physical and mental health, involving us later in a frantic search for cures, so that we end up sluggish and sensual. For these reasons all of us should make every effort to shun these two extremes, always steering a middle course. And there is no doubt that we will find this middle course by carefully keeping our Rules and Constitutions, properly understood, and by listening to those guardians of wisdom in whose hands God's special providence has placed us, but only if, when necessary, we humbly and trustingly look for a ruling from them and accept their direction totally and unreservedly.

12.—We must remember, above all, that although we are always to be guided by those virtues which make up the spirit of the mission, we should be armed with them to the fullest possible extent when the time comes for us to minister to the country people. At that time we should look on them as the five smooth stones with which, even at the first assault, we will defeat the Goliath from hell in the name of the Lord of Armies and will bring the Philistines, that is, sinners, under God's rule. But this will happen only if we first lay aside Saul's armor and make use of David's sling. In other words, we must go out preaching the Gospel like Saint Paul, not with a show of oratory or philosophy, but grounded in doctrine, and in the power of the Spirit, even if eloquence is lacking. We should remember that since, as the same Apostle says, God chose those who, by human standards, are weak, foolish, and contemptible in order to rout and destroy those who, by the same standards, are learned and powerful, we can hope that in His boundless goodness He will give us the grace to cooperate in our own way in His work of saving peo-
people, especially poor persons in country areas, even though we are the least deserving of workers.66

13.—All should foster a special respect and love for our Rules or Constitutions, even including the ones which do not seem to be all that important, regarding all of them as means given to us by God Himself for growing in the holiness which our vocation calls for, leading to our working with greater ease and efficacy for people’s salvation. All should therefore fervently make a deeply felt self-giving commitment to living according to them. As regards any points we find intellectually or psychologically distasteful, we should keep on trying to overcome self-centeredness and to defeat the merely natural, remembering that, according to Christ’s words, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent bear it away.

14.—Each one is to have his own copy of these Rules or Common Constitutions, and also of the particular ones concerning his own duties, and should read them through, or hear them read, every three months. That is so they will be more deeply rooted in our memory and mind, and therefore more completely lived up to. We should try to understand them correctly, and on a few occasions during the year we should each humbly ask the Superior to impose some penance for faults against them. By this humbling of ourselves we will more easily obtain forgiveness from the Lord for our faults, and be strengthened against further ones in the future. The fidelity with which we do this will, in fact, be an indication of our fidelity in following these Rules or Constitutions, and of our commitment to growth in holiness. However, if anyone notices that he has made some progress in living up to them, he is to thank Christ the Lord for it and should ask Him to give him, and the whole Congregation, the grace to live up to them even more completely in the future. As well as this, we must get it firmly into our heads that when we have carried out all we have been asked to do, we should, following Christ’s advice, say to ourselves that we are useless ser-

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66Sarzana: After “Saul’s armor” the following text appears: “that is, confidence in human means which fight directly against the teachings of the Gospel, since experience teaches us that such weaponry not only cannot be overcome, but also cannot be assailed.”
vants, that we have done what we were supposed to do, and that, in fact, we could not have done anything without Him.67

118. • FOUNDATION AND CLOSURE OF THE MAJOR SEMINARY IN MONTPELLIER

(1659)

In the year 1659, the Bishop of Montpellier1 requested some of our priests for the direction of an ecclesiastical seminary in his diocese and city of Montpellier. M. Vincent, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, sent there M. Get,2 Superior of this Marseilles house, and M. Parisy, priest of the same Congregation. They presented themselves to the Bishop for the direction of his seminary, where they spent about a year and a half, in charge of the clerics of the seminary. They lived there with a Brother and one servant on the money the Bishop gave them, namely, one hundred livres a month. Since, however, the Bishop did not find the means of providing them with permanent funds, M. Vincent felt it advisable to withdraw them after a year, so they returned to this Marseilles house, to the regret of that good Prelate, who wanted to keep them.

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67Sanzana: The first sentence reads: “Each one is to have his own copy of these Common Rules . . . and should read them through, or hear them read, every month.”


1François de Bosquet (cf. VIII, 19, n. 5).
2Firmin Get (cf. VIII, 3, n. 1).
To all those who will see these letters, I, Nicolas Porcher, priest, Doctor of Theology of the Sorbonne, Viceregent in the office of the Officialis of Paris, and representative delegated for this case by our Holy Father Pope Alexander VII, now reigning, greetings.

Be it known that, in view of the request presented to us by Messire Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, stating that, having negotiated by a contract of January 7, 1632, with Brother Adrien Le Bon, Prior of the Saint Lazare-lez-Paris House, and the religious of the house and properties dependent on it to be united to the Congregation of the Mission and to belong to the priests of the Congregation established in it with the duties and conditions included in the contract, the Provosts of Merchants and the Magistrates of this city of Paris gave their agreement to implement this by an Act of March 24, 1632. Because, however, the religious, Abbot, and convent of Saint-Victor Abbey, as well as the Pastors in this city and the faubourgs of Paris, opposed the union, the Parlement, without taking account of the oppositions, ordained, by its decision of the following August 21, that it would examine the agreement and the letters patent.

By another decision, on the following September 7, it ordained that the contract and letters patent should be recorded in the registers of the Parlement so that the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission could enjoy the consequences of them, and that they should go to the Archbishop of Paris to obtain letters of union and perpetual establishment of their Congregation in the Saint-Lazare House, according to the conditions of the contract, with the obligation of receiving lepers and of meeting the terms of the foundations. Those letters of union were granted by the Archbishop on the last day of December of the same year, and confirmed and approved by
the late King Louis XIII by other letters patent of January 1633. They were recorded in the registers of the Parlement the following March 21, and in the Chambre des Comptes and the Cour des Aides, along with the first letters patent, on October 18 of the same year 1633, and on January 9, 1634.

M. Vincent, desiring the contract to be approved in the Court of Rome, and to obtain there confirmation of the letters of union from the Archbishop and approval of the introduction and establishment of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission in the Saint-Lazare House, had the necessary procedures followed in the Court of Rome. After the affair had been examined in the Congregation of Cardinals in charge of the affairs of Regulars, Pope Urban VIII, of happy memory, on their advice signed the petition, dated at Saint Peter's in Rome, March 15, in the twelfth year of his pontificate. The Bulls for this were not sent in his time, nor during the time of his successor Innocent X, of happy memory. M. Vincent obtained them from our Holy Father Pope Alexander VII, now reigning, in the form called Rationi congruit, dated at Saint Peter’s in Rome, April 18, in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord 1655, in the first year of his pontificate.

By these Bulls, His Holiness wills that the favor granted by his predecessor Urban VIII take effect from the day of its issue, March 15, 1635, as if the Bulls had been sent on that date. He asks us, through the apostolic authority granted us, to ratify those Bulls and, in so doing, to approve and reconfirm in perpetuity the union and concession already made of the Saint-Lazare House and Priory, its appurtenances, and its dependencies to the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission. Our ordinance was at the bottom of the request of last April 8, stating that it would be communicated to the Promoter;

The Promoter's conclusions required that, before acting on the request, information should be sought on the advantages and usefulness of the union and on the execution and completion of the obligations contained in the contract, and that those who claim to have

\[^{2}\text{Cf. Doc. 112.}\]
an interest be subpoenaed by way of public notices, which should be posted for this purpose on the doors of the Saint-Lazare House;

At our ordinary session of April 23, we ordained that, before taking action on the petition and fulmination of the Bull of union at the request of the Promoter, all persons claiming rights and interests in the union would be subpoenaed by public notices, which would be posted on the doors of the office of the Officialis and of the Saint-Lazare House, so that, together with them—or in their absence—as it would be deemed advisable, we would ask the Promoter to give proof of the facts contained in the petition and Bulls of confirmation of union, by means of letters or witnesses. This would be done in order to give information *super commodo vel incommodo* of the union and implementation of the agreements laid down in the petitions, and on the responsibilities, clauses, and conditions stated in the letters of union granted formerly by the late Archbishop. For that reason, we would go to the place to take an inventory and make a visitation, listen to the witnesses, have the minutes of all that drawn up, and, after everything had been examined and communicated to the Promoter, have it ordained as thought proper;

The warrant obtained by our authority on the last day of the month of April to subpoena before us on the day specified, through public notices posted on the doors of the Paris office of the Officialis and the Saint-Lazare House, all those who would claim to have rights or interests in the fulmination of those Bulls of confirmation and union, so as to proceed as thought proper;

The report of the public notices announcing the summons made last May 2 by Angibaut the Beadle;

The declaration of absence given by us on the tenth of the following month of May, by which we ordained that those claiming rights would be summoned again by similar public notices, as previously stated in Angibaut’s report of the twelfth of the month of May, made in consequence of the declaration of absence, wherein it

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3On the suitability or unsuitability.
is clear that the subpoenas were issued through public notices at the request of the Promoter on the declaration of absence;

Our decision of Wednesday, May 21, by which we made two declarations of absence against persons who could have, or might claim to have, interest in the fulmination of the Bulls, in consequence of which we arranged to go to the place, assisted by the Promoter and the court clerk delegated by us in this affair, to make our report of the state of the Saint-Lazare House and Priory and dependencies and to ascertain the contents of the petition in order to communicate everything to the Promoter, to be ordained as thought proper;

The report of Angibaut, in which, in consequence of our aforementioned decision, the witnesses who could testify on the content of the petition presented in order to obtain fulmination and approval of the Bulls, and the persons who might have an interest in it, were summoned to appear before us at 10 a.m. on Friday, June 27, in the Saint-Lazare House and Priory to draw up the information and report on the state of the place, the feasibility and usefulness or the impracticality of the union, and the implementation of the clauses and conditions fully described in the Acts of contract and union;

The report prepared by us on the state of the site and buildings of the Saint-Lazare House and dependencies;

The information given by us containing the declarations of five witnesses, by which it is clear that the union is not only useful and necessary, but that everything stated in the contract between the Prior of Saint-Lazare and the religious of the priory, and in the Act of union drawn up as a result by the late Archbishop, has been, and is, executed day by day and point for point with no transgression made therein by the Priests of the Mission;

Another decision handed down by us on Saturday, June 28, whereby we ordained that all the above-mentioned proceedings, together with the Bulls of union and other Acts quoted in the petition and other documents justifying the content of the petition, that would have been collected by Messire Vincent, should be given to us to be communicated to the Promoter, to be ordained as thought proper.
Considering the Bulls addressed to us and empowering us, together with the contract signed before Desnotz and Païsant, notaries at the Châtelet of Paris, on January 7, 1632, between the priest Brother Adrien Le Bon, who, when living, was a professed religious and Prior of the conventual priory, leprosarium, and administration of the Canons Regular of Saint-Lazare, and other religious named in it, on the one hand; and M. Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, acting in his own name and in the name of all the other priests of the Congregation, containing the agreement made between them, and its clauses and conditions for attaining the union and incorporation;

A power of attorney signed before the notaries Desnotz and Païsant on January 7, 1632, by Brother Adrien Le Bon, Prior and Administrator of Saint-Lazare Priory and Leprosarium, and other religious named in it, who, in view of the above-mentioned contract and in execution of it, by means of this power of attorney constituted as their Procurator the bearer of the document, to appear for them and in their names before our Holy Father the Pope and elsewhere, wherever necessary, and to consent there to the implementation of all the Bulls necessary to unite the Saint-Lazare House and Priory, with its benefits, profits, income, and emoluments, to the Congregation of the Mission, as well as the fulmination of the Bulls and their approval that it would be suitable to give;

Another Act of power of attorney signed January 8, 1632, before Desnotz and Païsant, notaries at the Châtelet, by Brother Adrien Le Bon, Prior, by which he gives authority to the bearer of the document to hand over, in his name, the priory, leprosarium, or administration of Saint-Lazare, and even to place his administration of it in the hands of our Holy Father the Pope or another holding this power, in order to bring about the union and incorporation to the Congregation of the Mission, instituted and established in Paris, with the reservations, clauses, and conditions contained in it;

Another power of attorney passed before the notaries on January . . ., 1632, by the Prior Brother Adrien Le Bon, in which he gives the bearer of the document the authority to appear in his name both in the court of the Paris Parlement, as well as in any other place
where needed, and there to agree to the verification and approval of the transactions and Act of union when they are executed and received;

The letters patent obtained by Vincent de Paul and other priests of the Congregation from the late Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris, containing the union of the Saint-Lazare Priory to the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, with the reservations, clauses, conditions, and duties included;

The Act of the taking possession and installation of Vincent de Paul and other priests of the Mission in the Saint-Lazare Priory in consequence of the letters and contract drawn up by the Archbishop in the presence of Brother Adrien Le Bon, at the time Prior and Administrator of the priory, and of its other religious, with their consent, on January 8;

Another Act, of March 14, 1632, containing the agreement of the Provost of Merchants and the Magistrates of the city of Paris, all having given their consent to the union and incorporation;

The letters patent from the King, signed Louis, and on the fold: In the name of the King, de Lomenie, and sealed with the Great Seal in red and green silk thread, containing the confirmation and approval of the contract established between the Prior and religious of Saint-Lazare and the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission, in order to have the contract implemented according to its form and content;

Together with the union made by the Archbishop as a result, and the clauses, obligations, and conditions contained in it, on the fold of the letters are the rulings for registering it in the Parlement, the Chambre des Comptes, and the Cour des Aides in Paris, dated September 7, 1632, and signed du Tillet; October 11, 1633, signed Gobellin; and January 9, 1634, signed Richer, with their paraphs;

A decision of the Parlement Court given between the General, Superior, and religious of the Congregation of Saint-Victor-lez-Paris, the plaintiffs; Messire Louis de Mersigny, Abbot of Quincy, Order of Citeaux; the Pastors of the city, faubourgs, and outskirts of Paris, all being opposed to the request and acting with the religious of Saint-Victor, opponents of the ratification of the let-
ters patent obtained from the King by the Priests of the Mission in the month of January 1632; and the Prior and religious of Saint-Lazare and the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission, the defendants, on August 21, 1632. By which Act the Court ordained, without considering the oppositions and interventions, that it would examine the contract and letters obtained by the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission, in order to make a proper judgment, everything being first sent to the Attorney General of the King:

Another ruling, of September 7, 1632, after the contract and letters had been examined by the Court, ordained that the documents be recorded in the registers of the Court so that the defendants could enjoy their effect and, in order to have them implemented, they would go to the Archbishop to obtain his letters of establishment in perpetuity for the Saint-Lazare House, on the conditions contained in the contract and others stated in the ruling:

An Act signed before the notaries Coustart and Païsant on December 20, 1632, by the Prior, Brother Adrien Le Bon, containing his declaration and consent, which he again gives to the union to the Congregation of the Mission;

The other letters patent from the King obtained by the Priests of the Mission in January 1633, with the signature Louis, and, on the fold, De Lomémie, and sealed with the Great Seal, by which His Majesty confirms and approves the union and perpetual incorporation made in conformity with the contract, on the fold of which letters are the decisions of registration in the Court of the Parlement, the Chambre des Comptes, and the Cour des Aides, dated March 21 and October 11, 1633, and January 9, 1634;

The report of notification given to the Prior and religious of Saint-Lazare of the letters of union by de Sainte-Beuve, bailiff of the court, on April 26, 1633;

An ancient deed written on parchment, dated May 20, 1375, signed Poupet and sealed, in which it is declared that the Saint-Lazare Priory has always been dependent upon the Bishops of Paris for both spiritual and temporal matters;

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4Cf. Doc. 80.
Eight extracts from the registers of the diocesan Secretariat of Paris dated March 14, 1505; November 17, 1518; September 23, 1520; August 2, 1525; October 3, 1558; September 15, 1563; the last day of May 1565; and May 11, 1592, from which it is clear that the house was previously administered and governed by secular priests;

A copy of a deed of May 20, 1375, from which it is clear that, at that time, the Saint-Lazare House and Priory was administered by secular priests;

Another ancient deed on paper, of February 20, 1518, drawn up by Messire Étienne Poncher, then Bishop of Paris, and signed by M. d'Orléans, whereby it is evident that, having introduced the reformed Canons Regular into the Saint-Lazare Priory at the time, among several statutes he is drawing up for them as well as for the care of the lepers, he promises in his own name and in that of his successor Bishops to appoint to the Saint-Lazare Hospice and Priory a religious of the Congregation of Saint-Victor, as long as it abides by the reform, and, in the event that the reform should become lax, the Bishops of Paris would then recover their rights to establish there, as before, any other priests they choose;

An Act from the Chapter of Saint-Victor Abbey, dated Friday, December 5, 1625, whereby they surrendered to the Congregation all claims to the union that existed between them and the other houses of the Order, and separate from them;

Four different attestations from the Pastors of Pantin, Belleville-sur-Sablon, Romainville, and Livry, in the Paris diocese, wherein it is declared that the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission of the Saint-Lazare House have given missions, free of charge, in those parishes in the present year 1659.

Definitive conclusions of the Promoter:

Having considered everything, we, Vicegerent and the above-mentioned representative, by apostolic authority, in fulminating and executing the Bulls of our Holy Fathers Pope Urban VIII and Alexander VII, dated March 15, 1635, and April 18, 1655, have confirmed the union of the house and hospital or leprosarium of Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris to this Congregation of the Priests of the
Mission, made by the late Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris, of happy memory; consequently, by the same authority, we have united, annexed, and incorporated it to the Congregation of the Mission so that this Congregation may enjoy in perpetuity the Saint-Lazare Leprosarium or Priory, with all profits, rights, incomes, and emoluments whatsoever, belonging to or dependent on them under any title or manner, as they have already enjoyed them peaceably since the union. All of this, in keeping with the responsibilities, clauses, and conditions laid down in the Bulls, the contract, and the letters of union of the late Archbishop, will be implemented by the Congregation according to their form and content.

Today, we ask the chief apostolic attorney that, in so far as it might be necessary, he once again place the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission in the material, real, and actual possession of the Saint-Lazare Priory and hospital or leprosarium, with all benefits, rights, profits, revenues, and emoluments, observing in that case the required customary procedures.

In testimony whereof, we have signed the present letters, countersigned also by M. Jean Roger, apostolic notary, taken as our bailiff in this affair, and we have sealed these letters with the seal of our court.

Given in Paris, July 21, 1659.

ROGER
PORCHER

120. - ALIAS NOS. BRIEF ON THE VOW OF POVERTY TAKEN IN THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

(August 12, 1659)

Pope Alexander VII, for the future remembrance of the matter.

Document 120. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Vow Register, written in Latin, copy authenticated on May 17, 1660. The translation of this document is the one given in the 1989 English edition of Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission. A few minor changes in translation and style have been made.
On a former occasion, in willing response to the petitions of our beloved son, Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, We approved the Congregation, according to the manner and form then expressly confirmed by Us, and also the pronouncing of simple vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience as well as stability in the Congregation with the object of devoting oneself for his entire life to the salvation of poor country people, these vows to be made after two years of probation.

When these vows are pronounced no one shall assist by way of accepting them in the name of the Congregation, or of Ourselves, or of the Roman Pontiff at the time. Only the Roman Pontiff, and the Superior General of the Congregation in the act of dismissal from the Congregation, may dispense from these vows. The Congregation is not, however, on this account to be considered of the number of Religious Orders, but is of the body of the secular clergy.

We have written more fully about this on a former occasion in a letter in the form of a Brief like this one, which was issued on September 22, 1655. The tenor of that former Brief we wish to be considered as properly and sufficiently expressed herein.

More recently, the aforesaid Vincent has represented to us that many difficulties could arise concerning the observance of the simple vow of poverty in the Congregation, difficulties which might disturb the Congregation unless opportunely provided for by Us. Wherefore, the aforesaid Vincent earnestly desires that the Fundamental Statute on Poverty of the Congregation be strengthened by Our apostolic confirmation, the text of the Statute being as follows:

“All and everyone received into our Congregation, having pronounced the four vows, who possess immovable goods or simple benefices or will possess them in the future, though they retain dominion of all of them, shall not have free use of them; therefore, they may neither retain the fruits of such goods or benefices, nor turn them to their own use, without the permission of the Superior, but are held to dispense these fruits in pious works, with the permission and according to the judgment of the Superior. If, however,

\[1\text{Cf. Doc. 113.}\]
they have parents or relatives in need, the Superior shall see to it in
the Lord that their needs are relieved from these fruits before all
else."

We wish to treat Vincent, the Superior General, with special fa-
vors and kindness, absolving him and declaring him to be absolved
from any ecclesiastical sentences, censures, and penalties of ex-
communication, suspension, and interdict a jure vel ab homine,
whatever the occasion or cause of imposition, if he be in any way
bound by any of these, but only for the purpose of obtaining the ef-
fect of this letter.

We, in willing response to the petitions humbly presented to Us
in his name, and with the counsel of our venerable Brothers, the
Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, interpreters of the Sacred
Council of Trent, by means of the apostolic authority of this letter,
confirm and approve the Statute quoted above, applying to it the
force of an inviolable apostolic stability and supplying for every de-
fect of law or fact should they in any way arise.

We decree that this present letter is and always shall be firm,
valid, and efficacious, and that it shall be inviolably observed by
those whom it concerns and will concern in the future; that it must
be judged and defined by all judges, whether ordinary or delegated,
even by auditors of the cases of the Apostolic Palace, according to
what is stated above; and that any action to the contrary, whether
done knowingly or in ignorance, by anyone or on any authority, is
null and void, former provisions and all prescriptions of Our former
letters and anything else to the contrary notwithstanding.

We wish further that the same acceptance, both in and outside of
court, be everywhere granted to transcripts and printed copies of
this letter, if signed in the hand of a public notary and stamped with
the seal of the Superior General of the same Congregation or of
some other person constituted in ecclesiastical dignity, as would be
granted to the present letter itself if it were exhibited or presented.

Given at Rome, at Saint Mary Major, under the ring of the Fish-
erman, August 12, 1659, the fifth year of our pontificate.

\[2\text{Cf. Dec. 112, n. 4.}\]
121. - DECLARATION FOR THE ELECTION
OF THE VICAR-GENERAL

(October 7, 1659)

I, the undersigned, Vincent de Paul, most unworthy priest and
Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, declare that
since one of the Constitutions of our Congregation obliges me to
name a Vicar-General before my death, to govern the Congregation
after it until the election of my successor, I have named and do name
M. Alméras, priest of our Congregation, who, I think before God,
has the requisite qualities for it. I have reflected upon this during my
retreat, which I began on October 2 of this year 1659, and am still in
the process of making, and which I hope to finish on the tenth, with
God’s help. I have done so after celebrating Holy Mass, as I did sev­
eral times before for this intention, placing myself in the state to
choose from among the priests of our Congregation the person
whom I would wish to have named at the moment I will go to re­
ceive the judgment God will pronounce on my poor soul at the hour
of my death. I hope that M. Alméras will carry out well this duty of
Vicar-General, with the help of Our Lord, which I ask of Him for
this purpose.

In testimony whereof, I have written and signed the present doc­
ument with my own hand, affixed my seal to it, and put it in a
strongbox with two different locks. I have given one of the keys to
M. Portail, my First Assistant, and have kept the other myself,
which will be given, immediately after my death, to the oldest priest
of the house where I die. The strongbox will be opened as soon as
possible after that in the presence of my Assistants and most of the
priests who are in the house where I will die. All of the above is in
accordance with our Constitution, which I exhort M. Alméras to ob­
serve exactly.

Given at Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, October 7, 1659.

VINCENT DEPAUL, unworthy priest,
Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission

Document 121. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Register of Assemblies, copy inserted into the
minutes of the assembly following the death of Saint Vincent.
I, the undersigned, Vincent de Paul, most unworthy priest and Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, declare that, since one of our Constitutions, concerning the election of the Superior General of our Congregation who is to succeed me, obliges me to propose, before my death, two of our priests who seem to me to have the requisite qualities, one to be chosen by the Congregation, or, as the case may be, by those elected by the Provincial Assemblies to be present at the General Assembly after my death, unless it prefers to elect someone else from the same Congregation; I declare, then, that I think M. Alméras and M. Berthe, priests of the Congregation, have the requisite qualities for this, with all due deference to the electors. I hope also that the one who will be elected will correct the mistakes I have made in this office, for which I most humbly ask pardon of God and of the Congregation, prostrate in spirit at its feet, and I thank it most humbly for its charity in bearing with me in view of the abominable things in my life and my poor leadership.

I attest furthermore that I have observed exactly what the Constitution indicates that the Superior General should observe regarding the choice he makes of the two persons he is to name to the Congregation. I did so during my retreat, which I began on the second day of this month and hope to conclude on the tenth of the same month of October 1659 in our Saint-Lazare House, after my annual confession. I attest also that I have celebrated Holy Mass for this intention, immediately after which I affirmed, in the presence of M. Portail, my First Assistant, that I am naming those two members of the Company, Messieurs Alméras and Berthe, for the above-mentioned purpose. I have done so with God alone in view and with no inclination nor particular affection whatsoever that I may feel toward them, and have acted in this as I would wish to have
done at the moment of the awesome judgment Our Lord will make of me as I depart this life.

In testimony whereof, I have written and signed the present document with my own hand, affixed our seal to it, and put it into a strongbox with two different locks, which I have sealed with four of our seals on the four corners of a sheet of paper, which indicate that it is the strongbox in which I have placed this declaration, and the strongbox has been placed inside a larger one. I have given one of the keys to M. Portail and have kept the other myself, to be placed, immediately after my death, in the hands of the oldest priest of the house where I die, and the strongbox opened in the presence of the Congregation, assembled to carry out the election.

Given at Saint-Lazare, October 9, 1659.

VINCENT DEPAUL, unworthy priest,
Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission

123. - LETTERS PATENT CONFIRMING THE UNION
OF SAINT-LAZARE PRIORY TO THE MISSION

(March 1660)

Louis, by the grace of God King of France and of Navarre, to all present and to come, greetings.

Our dearly beloved Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission, has humbly pointed out to us that our most honored Lord and father King Louis XIII, of happy memory, had done them the favor of granting them his letters patent, dated January 1632,1 confirming the contract and agreement of union of the Saint-Lazare House and Priory, situated in the faubourg Saint-Denis-lez-Paris, with the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, for the implementation of which the Provost of Merchants and the Magistrates of this same city of Paris gave their consent by an Act of March 24 of the said year.

1Cf. Doc. 80.
The religious, Abbot, and convent of Saint-Victor, together with the Pastors of the city and faubourgs of Paris, opposed the union, but the Parlement Court, by its decree of August 21 of the said year, ordered that, despite the oppositions, it would examine the contract, letters patent, and municipal consent, and by a decree of the following September 7, ordered that the contract, letters, and Acts be recorded in the registers of the Court so that the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission might enjoy their effect and contents, and that they were to go to the Archbishop of Paris to obtain letters of union and establishment in perpetuity of their Congregation to the Saint-Lazare House, with the responsibilities and conditions mentioned therein. The letters of union were granted by the Archbishop, dated last December, confirmed by other letters patent of the late King, dated January 1633, and recorded in the registers of the Parlement the following March 21 in the Chambre des Comptes and the Cour des Aides, on October 11, 1633, and January 9, 1634.

Since the petitioner wanted the contract and Act to be approved in the Court of Rome and to obtain from His Holiness confirmation of the union and establishment in perpetuity of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission in the Saint-Lazare House, he hastened the proceedings in the Court of Rome. After the affair had been carefully examined by the Congregation of Cardinals, Pope Urban VIII, on their report and advice, signed the petition, dated in Rome on the Ides of March, in the twelfth year of his pontificate, which is, according to our calculation, March 15, 1635. Since, however, the Bulls were not sent in his time nor in the time of his successor, Innocent X, the petitioner obtained new Bulls from Our Holy Father Pope Alexander VII, now reigning, transcribed and dated at Saint Peter’s in Rome, the fourteenth day before the Kalends of May, in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord 1655, the first year of his pontificate, which, according to our calculation, is April 18, 1655. By these Bulls His Holiness, willing that the favor granted by his predecessor Urban VIII have its full and entire effect from the

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2 Cf. Doc. 83.
3 Cf. Doc. 84.
4 Cf. Doc. 112.
day of its date, informs and orders the Officialis of Paris, delegated
for this office, to approve, substitute, corroborate, and confirm the
union; to unite, annex, and incorporate even once again the
Saint-Lazare House and Priory with the Congregation of the Priests
of the Mission, with the responsibilities and conditions mentioned
therein, humbly requesting our letters patent necessary for this.

For these reasons, being fully informed of the uprightness, ability,
life, good morals, and fidelity of the Priests of the Congregation
of the Mission; considering the great benefits and outstanding ser­
vices they have rendered and continually render to the Church and
to the people by the instructions they give to young men in the semi­
naries and during retreats and ordination retreats, and the special
blessings God is bestowing on their work during the missions they
give in the rural areas, going from village to village, to distant coun­
tries, even as far as the Indies, spending themselves, their income
and revenues, their health and their lives, without receiving any sal­
ary for this nor expecting any other recompense than from God; de­
siring to assure and perpetuate the continuation of so many holy
exercises, so useful and necessary to the Church and the people, and
in order to indicate to our beloved Vincent de Paul, Superior Gen­
eral, and the other Priests of the Congregation of the Mission, our
intention to maintain and preserve them, and to add to the favors
and privileges granted and conceded to them by us or our predeces­
sor Kings in favor of their Congregation; after having shown to our
Council the Bulls, verdict, and official report of fulmination of
them, dated July 21, 1659, made by the priest Nicolas Porcher,
Doctor of the Sorbonne, Vicegerent in the office of the Officialis of
Paris, the representative delegated in this office by our Holy Father
the Pope Alexander VII, now reigning, and having found nothing in
them contrary to the holy decrees, sacred Councils, rights, and lib­
erties of the Gallican Church and the customs of our kingdom;

We, by our special favor, full power, and royal authority, have
praised, accepted, approved, and confirmed, and by these present
letters signed in our own hand, do praise, accept, and approve the

[Cf. Doc. 119.]
union and confirmation of this union and incorporation formerly made of the Saint-Lazare House and Priory to the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, with the responsibilities and conditions stated therein; we will, and it pleases us, that the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission and their successors should enjoy in perpetuity the rights, benefits, profits, income, emoluments, and dependencies of the Saint-Lazare House, in accord with and conformably to the Bulls.

Today, we give our beloved and loyal Councillors, the persons holding our Parlement Court in Paris, the command that they register these present letters with the Bulls and official report of fulmination and of all that is contained in them, to be enjoyed fully and peacefully and in perpetuity by the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission and their successors, without causing or allowing any disturbance or impediment whatsoever to be done to them.

And, so that this matter may be firm and stable, we have had our seal affixed to these present letters.

Given in Aix, in March 1660, the seventeenth year of our reign.

LOUIS

In the name of the King.

DE LOMÉNIE