SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

Part III – DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO THE CONFRATERNITY OF CHARITY
Part IV – DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY
Part V – DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO THE LADIES OF CHARITY

VOLUME XIIIb
SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

CORRESPONDENCE
CONFERENCES, DOCUMENTS

III

DOCUMENTS

VOLUME XIIIb

NEWLY TRANSLATED, EDITED, AND ANNOTATED
FROM THE 1924 EDITION
OF
PIERRE COSTE, C.M.
To

BERNARD KOCH, C.M.

whose scholarship
and
passion for accuracy
in the study
of these documents
have enriched our appreciation
of the sanctity and genius
of
Saint Vincent de Paul
# PART III

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124. - GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR CHARITIES OF WOMEN - I

Aim of the Confraternity of Charity

(1) To honor the love Our Lord has for those who are poor.
(2) To assist poor persons corporally and spiritually.

Membership

Wives, widows, and unmarried women.

Direction

There are three officers: the Superioress, the Treasurer, and the Supervisor of Furnishings.

They are appointed the first time by the Pastor, and then every six months by a plurality of votes.

Office of Superioress

To admit poor persons after the physician has seen them, and give them a paper indicating that they are poor, have been members of the parish for three months, and are sick with an illness that is [not] contagious.
Beggars are sent to the Hôtel-Dieu, and the Charity assists the bashful poor.  

She sees that the poor persons are registered the day they are admitted, will then see that their confessions are heard, and will visit them once a week, if she can. 

When they die, she will arrange with one of the Ladies for their burial, if she cannot go herself.

She will often discuss her ministry with her officers, and will take care to see that the Ladies meet at the Pastor’s residence every three months.

Office of Treasurer

She will receive, keep, and use the funds of the confraternity, see that bequests made to the confraternity are paid, have a monthly account given to the Servants of the Poor, serve as an adviser to the Superioress. make no expenditure without her advice, and give an account of her office before she leaves at the end of her eighteen-month term.

Supervisor of Furnishings

She will serve as adviser to the Superioress, will look after the furnishings of the confraternity, of which she will keep a written inventory; she will keep a list of the furniture she lends to the patients, with their names and addresses, give a report on the furnishings at the end of eighteen months, and, once during her term of office, together with the Treasurer, she will take up a collection to buy linen.

Duties of Each Lady

To serve the sick, each on her designated day; rise early for this purpose, hear Mass, go to confession and Communion, or at least make an act of contrition.

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2By the “bashful” poor, Saint Vincent seems to be referring to those persons, impoverished by civil and military disorders of the times or by some catastrophe, who were ashamed or embarrassed to ask for assistance.
They will honor the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin going to visit her cousin cheerfully and promptly, keeping their minds occupied with some good thought.

124a. - FOUNDATION OF THE CHARITY IN CHÂTIGNON-LES-DOMBES

(August 23, 1617)

JESUS, MARIA

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

On this day, August 23, 1617, the Ladies named below have charitably joined forces to take their turn to assist the sick poor of the town of Châtillon, having decided unanimously that, for an entire day only, each will be responsible for all those whom they have decided together to be in need of their help. To do so, they propose two aims, namely, to assist body and soul: the body by nourishing it and tending to its ailments; the soul by preparing those who seem to be tending toward death to die well, and preparing those who will recover to live a good life.

And because, when the Mother of God has been invoked and taken as patroness in important matters, everything can only go well and accrue to the glory of Jesus her Son, the Ladies take her for patroness and protector of the work, most humbly entreating her to take special care of it, as they also entreat Saint Martin and Saint Andrew, true examples of charity and patrons of Châtillon.
Starting tomorrow, the feast of Saint Bartholomew, they will begin, with God's help, to function in this good work in the order in which they are listed here:

First, the chatelaine\(^2\) on her day;
Mlle. de Brie\(^3\) on hers;
Mme. Philiberte,\(^4\) wife of M. des Hugonières;
Benoîte, daughter of M. Ennemond Prost;
Mme. Denise Beynier, wife of M. Claude Bouchour;
One of the daughters of Mme. Perra;
Mme. Colette;
And, lastly, Mlle. de la Chassaigne.

After her the chatelaine will do the same service on another day, and the others will take their turns successively, according to the above order, unless one of them is unable for some justifiable reason to carry out this ministry on her day. In that case, she will notify the person next in line—or have her notified—that she will be unable to take her turn, so that she can replace her on that day in caring for those who are poor. If that Lady can do so, she should not refuse because, in so doing, she will be freed of the responsibility for the following day, which she would have had according to the above order.

They should daily ask our good Jesus to kindly maintain this order and to shower with His divine blessings all those men and women who will work with their hands or contribute from their resources for its support. He will undoubtedly do so, since He Himself is the one who assures us by His own mouth that, on the great, awesome Day of Judgment, those who assist persons who are poor will hear that gentle, pleasing voice of His saying: "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world," and, on the contrary, those who have taken no care of them will be rejected by Him with those other harsh, appalling words: "Out of my sight, you condemned, go into that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

\(^2\)Florence Gomard.
\(^3\)Charlotte de Brie, who became Treasurer of the Charity.
\(^4\)Philiberte Mulger.
\(^5\)Cf. Mt 25:31-42. (NAB)
To the Father the Judge, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

125. - GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR CHARITIES OF WOMEN - II

The Confraternity of Charity¹ was instituted to honor its patron Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Mother, and to assist the sick poor corporally and spiritually in places where it is established: corporally, by giving them their food, drink, and the medications required during the time they are ill; and spiritually, by having the sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist, and Extreme Unction administered to them, seeing that those who are going to die will leave this world in a good state and those who recover will resolve to live well in the future.

The confraternity is composed of a fixed number and limited to wives and unmarried women; the latter with the consent of their parents, and the former with that of their husbands. Every two years, on the day after Pentecost, in the presence of the Pastor, they will elect, by a plurality of votes, three of their members to be their officers. The first will be called Superioress or Directress; the second, Treasurer or First Assistant; and the third, Supervisor of Furnishings or Second Assistant. These three officers will supervise the entire confraternity. On the advice of the Pastor, they will also elect one of the devout, charitable men of the parish to be their Procurator.

¹The Neufchâtel regulations have: "The Confraternity of Ladies of Charity or Mercy."
²Neufchâtel: "by a plurality of votes, which will be collected by the Pastor of the said parish annually on the day after Christmas, and kept for one year only."
The Superioress will see to it that the present regulations are observed and that all the members of the confraternity do their duty well. She will admit the sick poor of the parish who present themselves, and will discharge them on the advice of the other officers.  

The Treasurer will act as an adviser to the Superioress; she will keep the money of the confraternity in a strongbox with two different locks, of which the Superioress will have one key and she the other, except that she can keep one écu on hand for current expenses. At the end of her two years she will render an account to the newly-elected officers and to the other members of the confraternity, in presence of the Pastor and of any members of the parish who wish to be there.

The Supervisor of Furnishings will also act as an adviser to the Superioress. She will keep, launder, and mend the linen of the confraternity, supply the sick poor with it when needed, on the order of the Superioress, and see that it is returned; like the Treasurer, she will render an account at the end of her two years.

The Procurator will keep track of the collections taken up at the church or in the homes, and of the donations made by private individuals; he will distribute the receipts, oversee the operation of the confraternity and the increase of its goods, prepare the accounts of the Treasurer, if need be; keep a register in which he will copy the present regulations and the Act of Establishment, having it verified, if possible. He will write in the same register the list of wives and unmarried women who will be received into the confraternity, the date of their reception and of their death, the elections of officers, the documentation of accounts rendered, the names of the sick poor who are assisted by the confraternity, the date of their admission,

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3Neufchâtel adds: "In a word, she will direct this family of Our Lord as a wise mother directs hers."

4Neufchâtel: "in a strongbox with three different locks, of which the Superioress will have one key, she will have another, and the Supervisor of Furnishings will have the other. She may, however, keep six écus on hand."

5Neufchâtel: "Every year, on the feast of Holy Innocents [December 28]."

6Neufchâtel adds: "the Bailiff and the Town Magistrates."

7Neufchâtel: "on the day after she leaves office."
their death or cure, and, in general, the most noteworthy and outstanding happenings occurring there.

The Sisters\(^8\) of the confraternity will each have their day to serve the sick poor admitted by the Superioress;\(^9\) they will take to them in their homes\(^10\) the food and drink they have prepared; on Sundays and on the principal solemn feast days they will have their turn to take up the collection at the church and in the homes; they will give the donations to the Treasurer and will tell the Procurator what they have taken in; they will have a Mass said at the altar of the confraternity every first and third Sunday of the month,\(^11\) at which they will assist. On that same day, they will go to confession and Holy Communion, if this is convenient for them, and will also participate in the procession that takes place on that day between Vespers and Compline, during which the Litany of Our Lord or of the Blessed Virgin will be chanted. They will do the same each year on January 14, the feast of the Name of Jesus, their patron.

They will cherish one another as persons whom Our Lord has united and bound together by His love; they will visit and console one another in their afflictions and illnesses; will go as a body to the funeral of the members who die, receive Communion for their intention, and have a high Mass sung for each. They will do the same for the Pastor and for their Procurator when they die. Likewise, they will go as a body to the funerals of the sick poor whom they have helped, and have a low Mass\(^12\) said for the repose of their souls. None of this, however, obliges under pain of mortal or venial sin.

For every meal, each sick poor person will be given sufficient bread for him or her to have enough to eat, five ounces of veal or mutton, some soup, and a demi-setier \(^13\) of wine, Paris measure.\(^14\)

\(^8\)The members of the confraternity were sometimes called Sisters.
\(^9\)Neufchâtel adds: “after they have received Communion.”
\(^10\)Neufchâtel adds: “twice a day.”
\(^11\)Neufchâtel: “every second or last Sunday of the month.”
\(^12\)In the liturgy prior to the reforms of Vatican II, a low Mass was one offered without any singing and by one priest alone.
\(^13\)A demi-setier is about a quarter of a liter.
\(^14\)Neufchâtel: “soup and a demion of cider.”
On fast days, in addition to the bread, wine, and soup, they will be given two eggs and a little butter. Those who cannot take solid meat will be given some broth and fresh eggs four times a day. A nurse will be provided for those who are dying and have no one to stay with them.  

126. - CHARITY OF WOMEN (CHÂTILLON-LES-DOMBES)  
(November-December 1617)  

Since charity toward the neighbor is an infallible sign of the true children of God, and since one of its principal acts is to visit and bring food to the sick poor, some devout young women and virtuous inhabitants of the town of Châtillon-les-Dombes, in the Lyons diocese, wishing to obtain from God the mercy of being His true daughters, have decided among themselves to assist spiritually and corporally the people of their town who have sometimes suffered a great deal, more through a lack of organized assistance than from lack of charitable persons. 

Because, however, it is to be feared that this good work, once begun, might die out in a short time if they do not have some union and spiritual bond among themselves to maintain it, they have arranged to form an association that can be set up as a confraternity with the regulations that follow. All of this is, nevertheless, subject to the

15Neufchâtel: "in addition to the bread, cider, and soup, two fresh eggs or some fish for each meal."

16Neufchâtel adds: "Besides the abovementioned practices, the aforesaid officers of the Charity will designate one or two married women or young ladies of the said Confraternity of Mercy to instruct the girls of the said town and faubourgs. These women will agree to instruct poor persons with no other reward than what they will receive from the goodness of God. In the event that no one suitable can be found for this from the membership of the said confraternity, the officers will do whatever they can to find others to do this good work, so important to the glory of God and the salvation of souls, confident that they will have a great reward in this world and in the next for the service they will render to God, both with regard to the sick poor and to the instruction of the aforementioned girls."

Document 126. - Municipal Archives of Châtillon, original autograph document. Documents published this text, but divides it into Docs. 2 (pp. 2-11), 3 (pp. 11-12), 4 (pp. 12-13), and 5 (p. 13).
good pleasure of their most honored Prelate the Archbishop, to whom this work is entirely subject.

The confraternity will be called Confraternity of Charity, in imitation of the Charity Hospital in Rome, and the persons of which it will be mainly composed will be called Servants of the Poor or of the Charity.

Patron and Purpose of the Work

Since, in all confraternities, the holy custom of the Church is to propose a patron, and since the works gain their value and dignity from the purpose for which they are performed, the Servants of the Poor will take for patron Our Lord Jesus and for its aim the accomplishment of His very ardent desire that Christians should practice among themselves the works of charity and mercy. This desire He makes clear to us in His own words: “Be merciful as my Father is merciful,” which in these words: “Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat . . . I was sick and you visited me . . . for what you have done to the least of those, you did to me.”

Members of the Confraternity

The confraternity will be composed of women: widows, wives and unmarried women, whose piety and virtue are known and whose perseverance can be counted on. Nevertheless, the wives and unmarried women must have the permission of their husbands or parents and not otherwise. In addition, to avoid the confusion that comes from too large a number, it should be limited to twenty, until further orders.

And because there is reason to hope that there will be foundations made in aid of the confraternity, and that it is not appropriate for women to handle them on their own, the Servants of the Poor

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1Cf. Lk 6:36. (NAB)
2Cf. Mt 25:34-36, 40. (NAB)
will elect as their Procurator some pious, devout priest or an inhabitant of the town who is virtuous, devoted to the good of persons who are poor, and not too caught up in temporal affairs. He will be considered a member of the confraternity and will participate in the indulgences granted to it, will come to the meetings, and, like the Servants, will have a voice in decisions regarding matters proposed during the time he is in office as Procurator, and no longer.

In addition, the confraternity will choose two respectable, devout poor women, who will be called Nurses of the Sick Poor because their duty will be to watch over those who are alone and cannot move about and to serve them according to the instructions the Prioress will give them. They will pay them decently according to their work; consequently, they, too, will be considered members of the confraternity, will participate in the indulgences, and will come to the meetings but will not have a deliberative vote there.

Offices

One of the Servants of the Poor will be given the status of Prioress of the confraternity. So that everything may proceed in an orderly fashion, the others will love and respect her as their mother and obey her in whatever concerns the property and service of those who are poor, all for the love of Our Lord Jesus, who became obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross. It will be her duty to do her utmost to see that all the poor persons are fed and assisted in accordance with this organization; to admit into the care of the confraternity, during the period between meetings, those sick persons who are truly poor and to discharge those who are better. All this, however, will be done with the advice of her two Assistants, or of one of them. She can, nevertheless, without asking them, instruct the Treasurer to give what she thinks is necessary to do those things that cannot be postponed until the next meeting. When she admits

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3 The first two nurses were Guiclenon . . . and Marie Rey.
4 Françoise Baschet was the first President or Prioress.
5 Cf. Phil 2:8. (NAB)
any patients, she will notify immediately the Servant whose turn it is to be on duty that day.

For the counsel and ordinary assistance of the Prioress, two of the most humble and most discreet members of the Company will be given her to attend to the public good of those who are poor and the management of the confraternity.

One of her Assistants will be named Subprioress and Treasurer of the confraternity; it will be her duty to carry out the functions of the Prioress in her absence, to take in the money and give receipts for it, take care of the linen and other furnishings, buy and store the provisions needed for the assistance of poor persons, give the Servants each day whatever they need for the food of those who are poor, see that their linen is laundered, carry out the instructions of the Prioress, and keep a book in which she will write down whatever she receives and uses.

It will be the duty of the Procurator to manage and negotiate business involving funds for the temporal affairs of the confraternity, with the advice and direction of the Pastor, the Prioress, the Treasurer, and the other Assistant; to explain at each meeting held for this purpose the state of the affairs he is managing; to keep a book in which he will record the decisions that will be made during it; to ask, on behalf of the confraternity, the Lord of the town of Châtillon, one of the Syndics, and the hospital Administrator to be present for the rendering of accounts of the confraternity. It will also be his duty to decorate its chapel, to have the Masses said, to look after the vestments and, with the advice of the above-mentioned persons, to purchase some when necessary.

Admission of the sick and how to assist and feed them

The Prioress will admit to the care of the confraternity those patients who are truly poor, and not those who have the means of tak-

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6Charlotte de Brie was chosen as Treasurer.
7The Procurator was Jean Beynier, who had welcomed Vincent de Paul on his arrival in Châtillon.
8The Second Assistant was Gaspard Puget.
ing care of themselves, with the advice, however, of the Treasurer and the Assistant, or of one of them. When she has admitted someone, she will notify the person whose day it is to be on duty, and the latter will go immediately to see him. The first thing she will do is to see if the patient needs a nightshirt so that, if that is the case, she may bring him one from the confraternity, along with some clean sheets, if they are needed and he is not in the hospital, where there are some. All of this is in the event that there is no way to launder them there.

When this has been done, she will see that the patient goes to confession in order to receive Communion the next morning because it is the intention of the confraternity that those who want to be aided by it go to confession and Communion. Before anything else, she will bring the patient a picture of the Crucifixion, which she will put up in a place where he can see it so that, by looking at it sometimes, he may reflect on what the Son of God suffered for him.

She will also bring him other small items he needs, such as a bed tray, a napkin, a cup, a pitcher, a small plate and a spoon; afterward, she will notify the person whose turn it will be the following day to see that the patient’s house is cleaned and adorned in preparation for him to receive Communion, and to bring him his everyday fare.

Each of the Servants of the Poor will prepare their food and serve them for an entire day. The Prioress will begin, the Treasurer will follow, then the Assistant, and so forth, one after the other, in the order in which they were received, up to the latest arrival. Afterward, the Prioress will start over, and the others will follow, observing the order begun, so that, by this continual rotation, the patients will be served always in line with this organization. Nevertheless, all will be done in such a way that, if one of them falls ill, she will be excused from her service, informing the Prioress so that the latter can continue the succession with the others. If, however, one of them is prevented for some other reason, she will see that someone else takes her place, substituting for her in a similar situation.

When the person whose turn it is has received from the Treasurer whatever is needed on her day for the food of the poor persons, she will prepare the dinner and take it to the patients, greeting them
cheerfully and kindly. She will set up the tray on the bed, place on it a napkin, a cup, a spoon, and some bread, wash the patient’s hands, and then say grace. She will pour the soup into a bowl, and put the meat on a plate. She will arrange everything on the bed tray, then kindly encourage the patient to eat for the love of Jesus and His holy Mother. She will do all this as lovingly as if she were serving her own son—or rather God, who considers as done to Himself the good she does for persons who are poor.

She will say some little word to him about Our Lord, making an effort to cheer him up if he is very downhearted; sometimes she will cut his meat or pour him something to drink. Once she has him beginning to eat she will leave if he has someone with him, and will go to find another patient, acting with him in the same way, remembering to begin always with the person who has someone with him and to end with those who are alone so she can spend more time with them. Then, she will return in the evening to bring them their supper, using the same system and order as above.

Each patient will have as much bread as he needs, with a quarter of a pound of mutton or boiled veal for dinner and the same amount of roast meat for supper, except on Sundays and feast days, when they may be given boiled chicken for their dinner. Two or three times a week, they will be given ground meat for supper. Those who do not have a fever will receive a pint of wine daily, half in the morning, and half in the evening.

On Fridays, Saturdays, and other days of abstinence, they will be given two eggs, along with some soup and a little butter for their dinner, and the same for supper, with their eggs cooked the way they like. If fish can be found at a reasonable price, it will be given to them only at dinner.

Permission will be obtained for the seriously ill to eat meat during Lent and on other days when it is forbidden. Those who cannot eat solid meat will be given, three or four times a day, broth, soup with toast cut up in it, barley water, and fresh eggs.
Spiritual Assistance and Funerals

Because the aim of this organization is not only to assist poor persons corporally, but spiritually as well, the Servants of the Poor will strive and take great pains to dispose those who recuperate to live better, and those who seem to be approaching death, to die well. They will arrange their visit for this purpose and pray often for that, making some little elevation of their hearts to God for this intention.

In addition, they will occasionally read some devotional book that might be useful to those listening who might profit from this, exhorting them to bear their illness patiently for the love of God and to believe that He has sent it to them for their greater good. They will have them make some acts of contrition, consisting in sorrow for having offended God, for love of Him, to ask His forgiveness and resolve never to offend Him again. In the event that their illness [becomes worse], they will see to it that they go to confession as soon as possible. For those who seem to be dying, they will be sure to notify the Pastor to administer Extreme Unction, encouraging them to trust in God, to reflect on the passion and death of Our Lord Jesus, and to commend themselves to the Blessed Virgin, the angels, and the saints, particularly the patron saints of the town and those whose names they bear. They will do all this with great zeal to cooperate in the salvation of souls and, so to speak, to lead them by the hand to God.

The Servants of the Charity will take care to have the dead interred at the expense of the confraternity, providing a shroud for them and having the grave dug if the deceased has no one else to do this, or the hospital Administrator does not take care of it, as he should be asked to do. They will also attend the funerals of those patients whom they have nursed, if they can do so conveniently, taking the place of mothers who accompany their children to the tomb. In this way, they will be practicing to the full and in an edifying manner the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.
Meetings: their purpose and the order to be followed during them

Because it is very useful for all holy communities to come together from time to time in some place intended for discussing the spiritual progress and what concerns the general welfare of the community, the Servants of the Poor will meet every third Sunday of the month in a chapel of the church in the town intended for this purpose, or in that of the hospital, where, on that same day or the next day, at a time agreed upon by them, a low Mass will be offered for the confraternity. In the afternoon, at a time convenient for them, they will meet in the same chapel to listen to a short spiritual exhortation and to discuss matters concerning the welfare of those who are poor and the support of the confraternity.

The order to be followed at the meetings will be to chant the Litany of Our Lord Jesus or of the Blessed Virgin before each work, and then say the prayers that follow. Next, the Pastor or his assistant will give the short exhortation aimed at the spiritual growth of the entire Company and the preservation and progress of the confraternity. After that he will propose what is to be done for the welfare of the sick poor, and will conclude by a plurality of votes, which he will collect for this purpose, beginning with the Servant of the Charity who was the last one received into the confraternity, and continuing by order of reception up to the Procurator, then the Treasurer and the Prioress. Lastly, he will cast his own vote, which will have deliberative weight, as that of the Servants of the Poor will have.

It will then be helpful to have someone read five or six articles of the organization; they will also charitably remind one another of the faults that have arisen in the service of the poor persons. All this, however, will be done without any fuss or disorder and with as few words as possible. Each time, they will devote half an hour after the exhortation for this meeting.

Administration of temporal goods and rendering of accounts

The Pastor, the Prioress, the two Assistants, and the Procurator will be responsible for all the temporal goods of the confraternity,
movable as well as immovable. Consequently, they will have the authority to give orders in its name to the Procurator to do whatever is necessary for the preservation and collection of these goods.

The Treasurer will keep the money, documents, and furnishings, as has been stated, and give an annual report on the day after the holy feast of Pentecost, in presence of the Pastor, the Prioress, the Procurator, and the other Assistant, as well as the Lord, one of the Syndics, and the Administrator of the Châtillon Hospital, provided, however, that he be a member of the Roman Catholic apostolic religion. The latter three will always be requested, on behalf of the confraternity, to be present and will have faith in the declaration the Treasurer will make that her accounts are accurate, not allowing any article in them to be crossed out nor that either her husband or her children may be questioned regarding them because, being completely trustworthy—since only such persons are chosen for that, people may have entire confidence in her. Furthermore, if she were subjected to being questioned in this matter, none of the members would be willing to accept this office.

After his accounts have been reviewed, the Procurator will report to the same gathering the state of the temporal affairs of the confraternity and what he has administered and negotiated during the year so that the Lord, Syndic, Administrator, and Council members of the town may be adequately informed by the report of the management of the temporal welfare of the confraternity. If they find it faulty, they may have recourse to our most honored Prelate the Archbishop to have it put in order since the confraternity is totally subject to him. Should that be the case, the Council members are very humbly requested to do this for the love of God.

The Prioress will keep a book of expenditures, in which she will record the responsibilities of the Treasurer for the documents, money, and furnishings of the confraternity. In the event that neither she nor anyone else is willing to take on this responsibility, except for the furnishings and part of the money that will be needed for a few months for the food of those who are poor, the confraternity will instruct the Procurator to take charge of the rest and to give an account of it. He will be bound to do so, without being able to refuse
the Treasurer anything the confraternity or the Prioress orders, which he will give her for the support and food of the poor persons.

The collection box in the church, placed there for the upkeep of the confraternity and the relief of those who are poor, will be opened every two months in the presence of the Pastor, the Prioress, the Treasurer, the Procurator, and the Assistant. The Treasurer will be given whatever is in it and will record the amount of what will be found there; if she is unwilling, the Procurator will do it, as has been said.

Elections and leaving office

The Prioress, the Treasurer, and the other Assistant will leave office on the Wednesday after the holy feast of Pentecost, and a new election will take place on the same day by a plurality of votes of the entire confraternity. The Prioress, Treasurer, and Assistant may not continue in office so that humility, the true basis of all virtue, may be perfectly honored in this holy institute.

In the event that the Pastor should be non-resident, or that his assistant does not take the responsibility required for the work, it will be permissible for the confraternity to take another Spiritual Father and Director of the work, accepted and approved for this purpose by the Archbishop.

The Prioress, Treasurer, and Assistant may be removed from office before the end of their term by the confraternity, if, in its judgment, they do not carry out their duty well.

The Procurator will remain in office as long as the confraternity sees fit, and no longer.

Those members of the confraternity who commit some public sin or neglect notably the care of those who are poor will be completely dismissed from the confraternity, after the warnings required in the Gospel have first been given to all those whom they wish to remove from office or dismiss from the confraternity.
Common Rules

The entire Company will go to confession and receive Communion four times a year, when they can do so conveniently, namely, on the feast of Pentecost, the feast of Our Lady in August, and the feasts of Saint Andrew and Saint Martin. This is done to honor the ardent desire of Our Lord Jesus that we love the sick poor and help them in their need. In order to fulfill this holy desire, they will ask for His blessings on the confraternity, that it may flourish more and more for His honor and glory, the relief of His members, and the salvation of the souls who serve Him in it or have given of their resources to it.

And so that the Company may be preserved in sincere friendship according to God, when one of the members is ill, the Prioress and the others will take care to visit her, see that she receives the last sacraments of the Church, and pray for her together and privately. When God is pleased to take from this world a member of the group, the others will attend her funeral with the same sentiment as if she were their own sister, whom they hope to see one day in heaven. Each will pray three rosaries for her intention and will have a low Mass celebrated in the chapel of the confraternity for the repose of her soul.

Personal Devotions

Upon awakening they will invoke Our Lord Jesus, making the Sign of the Cross and saying some other prayer to His Holy Mother. Then, having risen and dressed, they will take holy water, kneel at the foot of their bed before some holy picture, and thank God for the gifts, general as well as particular, they have received from His Divine Majesty. They will recite three Our Fathers and three Hail Marys in honor of the Blessed Trinity; one Creed, and one Hail Holy Queen, after which they will hear holy Mass, if convenient for them. They will be mindful of the reserve with which the Son of God car-

9The Assumption, August 15; Saint Andrew, patron of the church in Châtillon, November 30; and Saint Martin, patron of the church in Buenens, of which Châtillon was an annex.
ried out His actions on earth and, in honor of the imitation of these actions, will carry out their own in a reserved and tranquil manner.

Those who know how to read will read unhurriedly and attentively a chapter of the book by the Bishop of Geneva, entitled *Introduction to the Devout Life*. Before the reading, they will raise their minds to God and will implore His great mercy in order to derive the fruit of His love from this devotional practice.

When they have to go into society, they will offer this contact to Jesus Our Lord in honor of His contacts with people on earth; they will entreat Him to keep them from offending Him and will strive especially to give great honor and reverence interiorly to Our Lord Jesus and His Holy Mother, since this is one of the principal requirements this confraternity asks of those who aspire to it.

They will take care in practicing humility, simplicity, and charity, each deferring to her companion and to others, performing all their actions for the charitable intention of persons who are poor and with no human respect.

When the day has been spent in accord with the preceding observations, and the time to retire has come, they will make the examination of conscience and say three Our Fathers, three Hail Marys, and one De Profundis for the deceased. None of this, however, obliges under pain of mortal or venial sin.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONFRATERNITY**

We, Thomas de Méchatin Lafaye, Canon and Comte of the Church of Lyons, Officialis and Judge of the Primatial See, spiritual and temporal Vicar-General of the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Father in God Messire Denis-Simon de Marquemont, by the grace and permission of our Holy Father the Pope Archbishop and Comte de Lyons, Primate of France, Councillor of the King in his Council of State, and his Extraordinary Ambassador in Rome before our Holy Father:

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10Saint Francis de Sales, whose *Introduction to the Devout Life* was published in 1608.
To all those who will read these present letters we make known that we have read the above-written articles of the regulations of the Confraternity of Charity intended to be established and erected in the town of Châtillon-les-Dombes, Lyons diocese, for the spiritual and corporal assistance of the sick poor of their town who, for lack of order in helping them, have sometimes suffered a great deal. These articles were presented to us by the Reverend Messire Vincent de Paul, Bachelor of Theology, Pastor in Châtillon. After having considered them and heard his humble petition asking us to permit the erection of the confraternity, and to approve, sanction, and ratify the articles contained in the regulations, on the authority of the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Archbishop and under his good pleasure, everything to be added or taken out as he pleases, we have allowed and do allow the erection of the confraternity in the format of the articles stated in the regulations, which, on the authority of the Archbishop, we have approved, sanctioned, and ratified by these present letters, on condition that he may add or curtail anything he pleases, as has been stated, and that the confraternity and everything dependent on it will be subject to the immediate authority of the Archbishop as their Superior or, in his absence, of his Vicar-General.

In testimony whereof we have signed these present letters, have had them countersigned by M. Jean Linet, Diocesan Secretary and citizen of Lyons, and have had the seal of the office of the Archbishop of Lyons affixed to them, November 24, 1617.

MÉCHATIN LAFAYE

By order of the Vicar-General.

LINET

ERECTION OF THE CONFRATERNITY

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, on December 8, feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin
Mother of God, 1617, in the hospital chapel of the town of Châtillon-les-Dombes, the people being assembled, we, Vincent de Paul, priest and unworthy Pastor in the town, explained that M. de Lafaye, Vicar-General of our most worthy Prelate the Archbishop of Lyons, approved the articles and regulations contained above, drawn up for the erection and establishment of the Confraternity of Charity in the town and in the chapel.

By this means, we, the above-mentioned Pastor, in virtue of this approval, have today erected and established the confraternity in the chapel, having first informed the people in what the confraternity consists and its aim, namely, to assist the sick poor. Having invited those who wished to belong to it to come forward and be enrolled, the following presented themselves:

François Baschet; Charlotte de Brie; Gasparde Puget; Florence Gomard, wife of the Lord; Denise Beynier, wife of Messire Claude Bouchour; Philiberte Mulger, wife of Philibert des Hugonières; Catherine Patissier, widow of the late Philibert Guilloton; Eléonore Burdilliat; Jeanne Perra, daughter of Gui Perra; Florence Gomard, daughter of the late Denis Gomard; Benoîte Prost, daughter of Ennemond Prost; Toinette Guay, widow of the late Pontus; and Guichenon, who applied to be a Nurse of the Poor.

The election to the offices then took place in the manner stated above. Mlle. Baschet was elected Prioress; Mlle. Charlotte de Brie, Treasurer; Mme. Gasparde Puget, Second Assistant; and the honorable Jean, son of the late honorable Jean Beynier, was elected Procurator, by the plurality of votes of the persons named above. This took place in the hospital chapel, with the following present and participating: the honorable Messires Jean Besson, Jean Benonier, and Hugues Rey, members of the Society of Priests at Saint-André Church in Châtillon; M. Antoine Blanchard, royal notary and Lord of the town; and several other persons present as witnesses.

Besson Benonier
Blessard
Blanchard
H. Rey
Beynier, Procurator

V. Depaul, Pastor of Châtillon
MODIFICATION OF THE REGULATIONS
FOR THE OFFICE OF TREASURER

And because the Servants of the Poor, all assembled, felt that the responsibility of the Treasurer was a little too heavy for one person, they directed, by a plurality of votes, I, the Pastor, being present, that the responsibility of Treasurer be shared by two persons, namely, that the Treasurer will keep and distribute the money, give an account of it, and stock the provisions; the Second Assistant will look after the furnishings and linen, and give an account of this at the time she leaves office, all of this subject to the good pleasure of the Most Reverend Archbishop.

Drawn up in Châtillon, December 12, 1617.

V. DEPAUL
FRANÇOISE BASCHET
CHARLOTTE DE BRIE, Treasurer
GASPARDE PUGET, Assistant
BRENNER, Procurator

Marie Rey was admitted that same day as a Nurse of the Poor.

V. DEPAUL, Pastor of Châtillon

NEW ADMISSIONS

On June 7, 1626, the meeting of the Charity took place in the hospital chapel. By the unanimous vote of the Servants of the Poor the following Ladies were enrolled and inscribed among the number of the Servants: Mme. Sarra Girard, widow of the late Jean Gonod; Mme. Jacquemet Bricaud, widow of the late Jean Levy; Mme. Hélène Tillon, widow of the late Jacques Porchol.

GIRARD, Pastor of Châtillon
BRENNER, Procurator
Regulations of the Association of the Charity

The Association of the Charity has been instituted to feed all the sick poor of the place where it will be established; to see that those who are going to die do so in a good state and those who will recover resolve never to offend God again; to honor Our Lord Jesus in the person of his poor members; and, lastly, to fulfill His ardent desire that we be charitable.

This association has as its patron Our Lord Jesus. It will be composed of devout, virtuous women, who are either widows, wives, or unmarried women, but they will be admitted only with permission from their husbands or their parents. In order to avoid confusion, their number will be limited to whatever number the Rector of the association thinks suitable.

They will be called Servants of the Poor. One of them will be elected Prioress or Directress by a plurality of votes, for two years only, and will not be allowed to continue after that under any pretext whatsoever. She will have two members of the Company as her advisers, who will be elected as she was and named her Assistants. One of them will be responsible for the furnishings of the association, and the other for its funds, of which she will give an annual account to the Company on the appointed day, in presence of the Rector of the association, the Judge, the Procureur Fiscal, and the Syndic of the town. They will give entire credence to the amounts she lists as expenses, to avoid the obligation of following the accounting procedure observed in other businesses, on condition, however, of not opening the collection boxes or the boxes placed in churches or other places in aid of the sick persons, except in the presence of the Rector, Bailiff, Procureur Fiscal, or Syndic of the town.

Document 127. - Archives of the Joigny hospital, original.
If some devout soul should donate an estate or annuity to the association, the Rector, Prioress, and Assistants may name a Procurator to receive the arrears of the annuities and administer the revenue from the estate, which the Procurator may not lease nor make any contract for, except in the presence and with the consent of the Rector, Prioress, and Assistants. He will be bound to entrust the money to the person commissioned to receive it, who will issue a receipt for the money to the Procurator, by virtue of which he will remain legally released.

Two devout poor women will be chosen to care for the sick in pressing need and deprived of any other help. They will be paid from the common funds of the association and admitted to membership in it, and will be called Nurses of the Sick Poor.

Patients will be admitted to the care of the association by the Prioress on the recommendation of the Rector and the Assistants, who, having seen that their clothing is laundered, will have them go to confession the same day they are admitted and receive Communion the next day.

Each Servant of the Poor will take her turn preparing the food of those who are poor; take it to them in their homes—or at the hospital if the poor persons judged in need of assistance are there—and serve them for an entire day. In case they should be legitimately prevented from doing so, the Prioress will be notified so she can provide another Lady of the association for this.

Each patient will have as much bread for dinner as he can eat. Those who drink wine will have half a liter, some soup, and four ounces of veal or boiled mutton, and the same for supper, except that the meat will be roasted or ground up. Those who cannot eat meat will have broth and fresh eggs, bread soup, and barley water, according to the instructions that will be given by the Prioress.

The association will furnish shrouds for the poor deceased who have none, and will go as a group to the grave.

And so that the Servants of the Poor may profit and be strengthened all the more in the spirit of charity, they will meet once a month in the chapel designated for the association, where they will hear Mass in the morning, and in the afternoon the Litany of Our Lord or of the Blessed Virgin, and a brief exhortation.
They will be advised to give great honor and reverence interiorly to Our Lord and His Holy Mother, this being one of the principal points of this association; to act humbly and charitably with the sick, sometimes saying a few pious, devout words to them, sometimes also consoling them; to have great charity toward one another; to visit and console one another in their trials and illnesses, giving instructions that the last sacraments be administered to them; to have prayers said in common and privately so that each may leave this world in a good state; and to attend as a body the burial of the Servants and the Nurses of the Poor. They will also have one Mass celebrated for each and will say the Rosary three times in a devout manner.

Upon awakening in the morning they will offer their hearts to God, invoking the Holy Name of Jesus and that of His Holy Mother, and will make their prayer when they get out of bed. They will assist at Mass daily, if possible; during the day they will act humbly, striving to perform their actions in union with those Our Lord performed when He was on earth; every evening, each will make a private examination of conscience, and will go to confession and receive Communion for this intention at least four times a year. None of this, however, obliges under pain of mortal or venial sin.

APPROVAL OF THE CONFRATERNITY

To His Excellency the Archbishop of Sens

Lady Françoise-Marguerite de Silly, Comtesse de Joigny,\(^1\) humbly petitions, stating that, having witnessed the good resulting from the establishment of the Association of the Charity erected in aid of the sick poor in several places in the kingdom, she strongly desires that the association be established in the town of Joigny.

In consideration of this, Excellency, may it please you in your kindness to permit the establishment of the association in the town of Joigny in line with the regulations written below, and also to have

\(^1\)Madame de Gondi.
a collection taken up in the three parishes of the town on Sundays and holy days by the members of the association delegated for this. Each one, in the presence of the Rector of the association, will hand over what she receives to the Assistant, who is to keep the money. She will not, however, open the collection boxes nor the boxes placed in the churches or other places in aid of sick persons, unless the Rector, Bailiff, Procureur Fiscal, or Syndic of the town is present.

If some devout soul should donate an estate or annuity to the association, the Rector, the Prioress, and the Assistants may name a Procurator to receive the arrears and administer the revenue of the estate, which the Procurator may not lease nor make any contract for, except in the presence and with the consent of the Rector, Prioress, and Assistants, and will be bound to entrust the money to the person who will be designated to receive the money. The latter will issue a receipt for the money to the Procurator, by virtue of which he will remain legally released.

Two devout poor women will be chosen to care for those patients in pressing need and deprived of any other help. They will be paid from the common funds of the association and admitted to membership in it, and will be called Nurses of the Sick Poor.

The patients will be admitted to the care of the association, which will be composed of devout, virtuous women, either widows, wives, or unmarried women, but the latter will be admitted only with permission from their husbands or parents. In order to avoid confusion, their number will be limited to whatever number the Rector of the association thinks suitable.

They will be called Servants of the Poor. One of them will be elected Prioress or Directress by a plurality of votes for two years only, and will not be allowed to continue beyond that under any pretext whatsoever. She will have two members of the Company as her advisers, who will be elected as she was and will be named her Assistants. One of them will be responsible for the furnishings of the association, and the other for its funds, of which she will give an annual account to the Company on the appointed day, in the presence of the Rector of the association, the Judge, the Procureur Fiscal,
and Syndic of the town, who will give entire credit to the amounts she lists as expenses in order to avoid being obliged to keep the accounting order observed in other businesses, under the responsibility of the Bailiff, Procureur Fiscal, or Syndic of the town, who should be present for the accounts—or of one of them. And the Lady and sick poor of the town will pray for your health and prosperity.

F. M. De Silly

We have given permission for the establishment of the Association of the Charity in the town of Joigny, in accord with the regulations given above, and to have a collection taken up on Sundays and holy days in the three churches of the town by those persons delegated by the association, on condition of observing the regulations that may be made in our dioceses for confraternities.

Drawn up September 6, 1618.

Jean, Archbishop of Sens

In the name of the Archbishop

De Brouilly

ACT OF ESTABLISHMENT

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, I, Jean Maurice, priest and Pastor of Villecien, certify to all whom it may concern that today, September 9, 1618, the Comtesse de Joigny, accompanied by the most devout and virtuous Ladies of the town, assembled in the Saint-Antoine chapel in Joigny, presented to me the permission given at her request by the Most Reverend Archbishop of Sens, on the sixth of the present month and year, to establish in the town the Association of the Charity instituted in aid of the sick poor of the area, and exhorted, by virtue of that permission, to take over the direction and leadership of the association, according to and in

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1Jean Maurice, Chaplain at Saint-Antoine Hospital in Joigny.
conformity with the articles and regulations made concerning it and
drawn up by authority of the Archbishop, whose permission is given
at the bottom of them. I willingly granted this, both by the desire of
the welfare of poor persons as to satisfy her devotion and charity.

At the same time, by virtue of the approval, I proceeded to the es-
tablishment of the Association of the Charity, having first explained
in what it consists and its aim, and had the above-mentioned articles,
regulations, and approval read publicly, in the presence of the Lady,
her son the Comte, the Bailiff, and the Procureur Fiscal of the county
of Joigny, and several inhabitants of the town. Then I declared that
those who wished to belong to the association and had the consent of
their parents or husbands necessary for this should give their names
in order to be enrolled in it. The following presented themselves:

François-Marguerite de Silly...3

At the same time, the election of officers followed, at which the
Countess was elected Prioress; Mme. Régnier, First Assistant; and
Mme. Bourgeois, Second Assistant.

Drawn up in Joigny, September 9, 1618.

MAURICE J. GIROUST

Today, Sunday, September 16, 1618, Madeleine Guesnot and
Marie Fouchet, widow of the late Jacques Paumier, presented them-
selves to be Nurses of the Sick Poor.

MARIE FOUCHE

MAURICE, Rector of the Association of the Charity

128. - COMBINED CHARITY (JOIGNY)

(Now Doc. 132a.)

3The names of thirty-eight other Ladies follow.
4Jean Jacquinet, customs lawyer in Joigny.
5Julien Giroust, Bailiff in Joigny.
The Association of the Charity has been instituted to . . . to see that those who are coming to the end of their days may leave this world in a good state . . . to honor Our Lord Jesus in the person of those who are poor, who are His members; and lastly . . . .

One of them will be elected by a plurality of votes . . . on the appointed day, in the presence of the Pastor or another priest, who will be the Rector of the association, and of the Judge, the Procureur Fiscal, and the Syndic of the town . . . .

If some devout soul should donate an estate . . . he will be bound to entrust the money to the person commissioned to receive it, who will issue a receipt for the money to the Procurator, by virtue of which he will remain legally released.

Some devout poor women will be chosen . . . will be called Nurses of the Sick Poor, and will also notify the Servants of the Poor when it is necessary for them to meet.

Patients will be admitted to the care of the association by the Prioress . . . .

Each Servant will take her day to prepare the food of the sick poor, take it to them in their homes—or at the hospital if the poor persons judged in need of assistance are there—and serve them for an entire day, in the order in which the blessed bread is distributed. In case they should be legitimately prevented from doing so, the Prioress will be notified so she can provide another Lady of the association for this.

And because the association may be established in places where there is no common purse nor any way to follow the aforesaid order, such as in villages, in that case each Servant on her day may feed the
sick poor at her own expense, observing, however, the manner of feeding and serving them in due time or as closely as possible.

Each patient will have as much bread at dinner as he can eat . . . or ground up; and on days of abstinence two eggs, with a pat of butter, or some fresh fish; those who cannot eat solid meat will have . . .

The association will furnish shrouds for the poor deceased who have none, will go as a group to the grave, and take care to visit the poor prisoners, to give them alms and to see that they have a change of shirt every Saturday.

And so that the Servants of the Sick Poor may profit . . . where they will hear one Mass in the morning, and in the afternoon the Litany of Our Lord or that of the Blessed Virgin and a brief exhortation, making sure, however, that this be outside the hours when the Divine Service is celebrated in the parishes.

They will be advised to give great honor and reverence interiorly to Our Lord Jesus and His Holy Mother, this being one of the principal points that this vocation demands, and say for this purpose five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys. They will act humbly and charitably with the sick . . . go as a group, each carrying a lighted candle, when the Blessed Sacrament is administered, as well as to the burial of the Servants and Nurses of the Poor . . .

Upon awakening in the morning they will offer their hearts to God . . . every evening, each one will make a private examination of conscience, and receive Communion at least on the principal feasts of Our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin. None of this, however, obliges under pain of mortal or venial sin.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONFRATERNITY**

*The Bishop of Soissons* 

Lady Françoise-Marguerite de Silly, Comtesse de Joigny, humbly petitions, stating that, having witnessed the good resulting from

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2Jérôme Hennequin.
the establishment of the Association of the Charity, instituted in aid of the sick poor in several areas of this kingdom, she strongly desires that the association be established in her town of Montmirail and other villages.

In consideration of this, Monsieur, may it please you in your kindness to permit the establishment of the association in the town and other places belonging to the Lady and dependent on your diocese, in line with the regulations written above, and, for those purposes, to entrust the establishment to her chaplain, Maître Vincent de Paul, priest and Bachelor of Theology. The Lady and the sick poor will pray to God for your prosperity and health.

Having read the above, and for the reasons contained in it, along with several other good, pious considerations, we, Jérôme, by the grace of God and of the Holy Apostolic See Bishop of Soissons, have permitted and by these present letters do permit the establishment of the Charity, in line with the regulations written above, both in the town of Montmirail and in other places belonging to the Comtesse de Joigny that are in our diocese. We also permit the members of the association to take up a collection on Sundays and holy days in the parishes of Montmirail and other places dependent on the Countess, on condition of observing the regulations made in our diocese for confraternities established therein.

Drawn up in Soissons, October 1, 1618.

JÉRÔME, Bishop of Soissons

By order of His Excellency the Bishop of Soissons.

COURTONNE

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONFRATERNITY

In the name of the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Be it known to all whom it may concern that on this day, November 11, 1618, in Saint-Étienne Church in Montmirail, with the people assembled, I, Vincent de Paul, priest and chaplain of Lady
Françoise-Marguerite de Silly, Comtesse de Joigny, etc., and Lady of Montmirail, by virtue of the permission of His Excellency and Reverend Father in God Jérôme, by the grace of God Bishop of Soissons, given to the Lady to have the Association of the Charity established in the town and in other villages of hers dependent on the Soissons diocese, have proceeded to the establishment of the Association of the Charity, with the consent of Jean Delaistre, Prior of Montmirail, absent because of illness, and in the presence of Christophe Bourdelet, his Assistant, having first explained to the people in what the association consists, and having had its regulations and the permission of the Bishop of Soissons read aloud, all of which has been transcribed above.

When this was done, in the chapel formerly called Saint-Nicolas and now chosen by the Prior to be used for the association, I invited the women who wanted to join the association to come forward and be enrolled. The following presented themselves: in the first place, the Countess, who together with the women named below, wished to belong to the association; then Mlle. Barbe le Juge, wife of Lieutenant Bonseré; Mlle. Chambelin... ³ I then proceeded to the election of officers of the association, in accord with the regulations, by a plurality of votes. Those named were: Prioress, the Lieutenant’s wife; First Assistant, Mlle. Chambelin; and Second Assistant, Mme. de la Saulssaye. With the consent of all the Ladies I gave them the priest Nicolas Pullen as Rector of the association.

All this took place in Montmirail, on the day and in the year given above, in presence of the undersigned.

FRANÇOISE-MARGUERITE DE SILLY
DELAISTRE V. DEPAUL B. LE JUGE
JEANNE DE... MARIE DES ESSARTS
MARIE VARLE FRANÇOISE DARTHOIS
CLAUDE VINOJ JULIENNE BROIZOT
ANNE LHERMITTE

³Twenty-three names follow.
ELECTIONS AND RECEPTION

On November 13, when the Ladies who were Servants of the Poor had gathered, Mlle. Chambelin, elected First Assistant, asked the Company to relieve her of that office because of important affairs that had arisen for her; she wished, however, to continue to be a Servant of the Poor. Whereupon the Servants unanimously relieved her of the office but retained her as an adviser. The Countess then volunteered to be First Assistant, for which the Servants thanked her and accepted the offer. Because she is obliged to go to Paris and will have to spend a long time there, the Lady will find someone else to replace her, who will be bound to give an account of whatever is entrusted to her.

Drawn up in Montmirail on the day and in the year mentioned above.

V. DEPAUL

FRANÇOISE-MARGUERITE DE SILLY

The Servants of the Poor agreed that the officers will be changed every two years on the day after All Saints' Day and that the Treasurer will give her report on that same day each year.

Drawn up in Montmirail on the day and in the year mentioned above.

V. DEPAUL  B. LE JULIE

Also, immediately afterward, with the consent of the Servants of the Poor, the Lady asked Mme. Fournier, one of the Servants, to take over the duties of First Assistant in her place, as she would do. Mme. Fournier agreed to this and for that purpose was given responsibility for the money of the present administration, as is stated in the register of the association entrusted to Mme. Fournier.

Drawn up in Montmirail on the day and in the year mentioned above.

V. DEPAUL
Since that time, on December 7 Marie Lefébure, widow of the late Charles Hubrot, was admitted as a Servant of the Poor.

V. DEPAUL

On the first Sunday of the present month of December 1619, in the chapel used by the Charity, after the Litany had been chanted, Madeleine Grizard, widow of Marin Guillemin, having sought and requested admission, was received by the unanimous consent and judgment of the officers and Servants of the Poor assembled there, and she promised to abide by its regulations, which she heard read.

PULLEN

The copy transcribed above was verified word for word against the original, which is written on parchment, blank and free of any handwriting and signatures, by us the undersigned, Pierre Gorlidot and Robert Perrot, residents of Montmirail and hereditary notaries in the bailiwick and provost court of Chanvry. In making this verification, we found the copy to be the same and similar to the original. The priest M. Nicolas Pullen, Rector, named in the original, to whom it has been returned, asked us for an official acknowledgment, which we have given and granted him in this form to serve him and to be valid in time and place as thought proper, and he has signed it today, February 10, 1620.

PERROT  GORLIDOT  PULLEN

At the election of officers which took place on July 26, 1627, Mme. Étiennette Labbé was elected Prioress; Mme. Bonseré, Treasurer; and Madeleine Germon, Linen Keeper. All these officers will carry out these duties for two years, and no longer.

M. BONSERÉ  M. GERMON
E. LABBÉ  MAURY

4Here follow the names of twenty-two members of the Charity.
Office of Rector of the Association of the Charity

It is the duty of the Rector of the Association of the Charity to attend to the welfare and progress of the association.

When the Servants of the Poor meet at 8 a.m. on the third Sunday of the month, the Rector will celebrate Mass and distribute Communion to those who wish, in the chapel of the association, properly decorated and adorned with flowers, which each in turn will furnish. At 1 p.m. he will preach a brief exhortation to them or will give instructions that this be done by some spiritual person. It should aim particularly at impressing on their hearts the spirit of true and solid devotion. After this exhortation, he will have the Litany of Our Lord or of the Blessed Virgin chanted, then will confer briefly and in few words with the officers, in the same chapel, about what there is to be done for the good of the association.

The Rector will act prudently with the Servants of the Poor, striving when he meets them to fire up the lukewarm and spur on the fervent, being careful above all that envy and rivalry—a very dangerous spiritual plague—do not creep in among them, and encouraging them as best he can to have a mutual affection for one another, as Our Lord Jesus loved His spouse the holy Church.

He will admit the sick poor into the care of the association on the judgment of the Prioress and the Assistant, or of one of them, without admitting any who have the means of providing for themselves. He will also discharge, on the advice of the officers, those whose health God will have mercifully restored, having previously exhorted them to lead a better life for the rest of their days.

He will see to it that every spiritual and corporal necessity is charitably administered to the sick poor, in conformity with the institute of the association. In addition, he will visit them every two days, if it is convenient for him.
On the third Sunday of the month, he will, together with the Prioress and the Assistant, empty the collection boxes in the church and the boxes in the guest houses, and will keep a register of what is found in them. The Treasurer or the First Assistant will keep another, as well as of what is collected in the parish on Sunday and holy days. Every month he will settle accounts with the butcher, the baker, and the innkeeper, in the presence of the Prioress and the Assistant.

If anyone bequeaths some moveable goods to the association, he will have them collected and placed in the hands of the Supervisor of Furnishings; if real estate, he will have a Procurator elected to administer it as prescribed by the aforesaid general regulations of the association. And, in general, he will see that all the articles contained in the general regulations are followed point for point. In doing so for the love of Jesus and of His Holy Mother, he should hope for a very great reward on Judgment Day, as one who will have done everything for which God will have him give an account.

*JESUS, MARIA*

*Office of Prioress*

It will be the duty of the Prioress to attend to spiritual and temporal progress on the advice of the Rector and of the two Assistants.

She will often reflect that the office of Prioress obliges her to show the way of perfection to others by her good example. She will strive above all to preserve the spirit of union and charity among themselves, and to nip in the bud the little quarrels, rivalries, and jealousies that only too often creep into the most holy Companies.

She will receive into the care of the association patients who are truly poor and, on the advice of the Rector and the two Assistants—or one of them—will discharge those whose health has improved. As soon as she admits a poor patient, she will notify the person on duty that day so that she can have his clothing laundered, see that he goes to confession and Communion, and bring him the small items given to each patient.
She will have a collection taken up in the parish on Sundays and holy days, give instructions that each Servant take her day in the order indicated, and visit the patients every three days to see if they need anything, so it can be provided on the advice of the above-mentioned persons.

If one of the Servants is ill, she will immediately continue the order with whoever follows her; if she goes to the country or cannot take her turn on her assigned day, she will be responsible for asking one of her neighbors to fill in for her and to come and tell them her name. She will write out the requests that she will give to the Treasurer for purchases for the patients of either small items or food amounting to more than five sous. She will notify the Assistant who will keep the money for supplies of sugar, preserves, prunes, barley, chicken, and other small items needed by the patients. She will see to it that three or four times a day some broth, fresh eggs, bread soup, and hulled barley are given to those who are fragile, weak, and have no appetite for eating solid meat. She will ask the physician, pharmacist, and surgeon to see patients who need them. She will have the dead buried at the expense of the association.

She will visit and have others visit the Servants of the Poor with the same charity as if they were her own [sisters]; she will give orders that all the Servants of the Poor, each carrying a candle, go in a body to the funeral of those who die, and will have one Mass celebrated for each of the deceased the day after their burial—or two days, at the latest. In general, she will do her utmost to see that the regulations of the association are observed for the love of Our Lord Jesus, in whose goodness she should hope to hear as a reward on Judgment Day those merciful and very gentle words: “Come, inherit the kingdom my Father has prepared for you, because I was ill and you visited me and attended to all my needs.”

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1Cf. Mt 25: 31-41. (NAB)
It will be the duty of the First Assistant or Treasurer to act as an adviser to the Prioress, replace her in her absence, and accept, keep, and use the money of those who are poor in line with the instructions given her by the Prioress, except for expenses under five sous, which she can take care of herself, according to the needs that arise.

She will keep a ledger of receipts and another of disbursements, in which she will write what she receives and uses so that she can give an annual accounting, as stated in the regulations of the association.

She will keep the documents and deeds of the association in a strongbox she will have for that purpose. There will be two keys for it; one will be kept by her and the other by the Prioress.

She will procure provisions for the sick in accord with the advice of the Prioress, and keep them to be used as needed, such as preserves, barley, prunes, a few chickens in order to have fresh eggs, and other small necessities for the patients. She will be present with her book of receipts for the opening of the collection boxes and other boxes in order to receive and take responsibility for the money in them. In general, she will comply with all that is stated in the regulations of the association, for which she should hope that our good Jesus will acknowledge her on Judgment Day as one of those who visited and assisted Him when He was ill, and that, consequently, He will give her the kingdom prepared by the eternal Father for those who have practiced the works of mercy.

It is the duty of the Second Assistant to act as adviser to the Prioress and to carry out all her functions and those of the First Assistant in their absence. She will keep the furnishings and utensils of the association in order to be able to supply them when and how she is in-
structed to do so by the Prioress. She will see that the linen is laundered and mended, and ask the Prioress to purchase some when needed. She will receive and inventory the furnishings and hand them over when she leaves office, and will have a strongbox in her house for the list of furnishings. If a shroud is needed for the deceased, she will supply one, or will request one as an alms for the love of God, who on Judgment Day will see that she is rewarded for her work.

**JESUS, MARIA**

*What each Servant of the Poor should do personally*

They should aim especially at acquiring the true spirit of charity and mercy. In order to attain this, they will comply exactly and continuously with the regulations of their association, going to confession and Communion at least on the feasts of Our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin, His Most Holy Mother. And if one of them, motivated by holy fervor, practices this same devotion on the days they are to meet as a body in the chapel designated for it, she may hope even more for the gift of those holy, precious virtues from the liberal hand of the One who never denies what is humbly asked of Him.

They will often reflect that, in order to be good Servants of the Poor, they must help them spiritually and corporally, with tender compassion regarding their misfortune, and that it was with this in mind that they had the happiness of being admitted into the association. They will pray for their Rector, love and honor their Prioress, and respect the two Assistants, believing that those persons have been chosen by God to direct His work.

The third Sunday of the month is their meeting day. They will hold a lighted candle during the Litany that will be said in their chapel, doing likewise while accompanying the Blessed Sacrament when it is being brought to some Servant of the Sick Poor, and also when going to the funeral of Servants who have died.
On the morning of the day they are to serve the sick poor, they will ask God to grant them the grace to conduct themselves during this action with gentleness, humility, and true charity, and above all to be able to be beneficial to the souls of the sick poor. Then, after preparing their dinner, they will take them, at nine o’clock, some soup and meat in a pot, some bread in a clean napkin, and some wine in a bottle. They will do the same for supper around four o’clock in the afternoon.

When they enter the patient’s room, they will greet him in a friendly way; then, drawing near to the bed with a cheerful expression, they will encourage him to eat, raising the head of the bed, arranging the cover, setting up the little tray, napkin, plate, and spoon, rinsing out the glass, pouring some soup on the bread, putting the meat on a small plate, saying grace with him and feeding him the soup. They will cut up the meat and help him to eat it, while saying some little light-hearted, consoling word in an effort to cheer him up. They will also pour him something to drink, inviting him once again to eat. Lastly, when he has finished eating and the dishes have been washed, the napkin folded, and the tray removed, they will say grace with the patient, and leave him right away in order to go serve someone else.

131. - CHARITY OF WOMEN
(FOLLEVILLE, PAILLART, AND SÉREVILLERS)

[September-October 1620]

Regulations for the Association of the Charity of women, founded to assist the sick poor,^ and, first of all, the aim of the association

The Association of the Charity has been founded to feed all the sick poor of the place where it will be established, to see that those who seem to be tending toward death may leave this world in a good

^The phrase “of women, founded to assist the sick poor,” was inserted between the lines.
state and that those who will recover may take the resolution never more to offend God, to honor Our Lord Jesus in the person of the poor, and lastly, to carry out His commandment that we love one another as He has loved us.

**Patron of the association**

Its patron is Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is Charity personified.

**Persons of whom it should be composed**

It will be composed of a priest-Rector, known for his ability and uprightness, and of devout, virtuous women—be they widows, wives, or unmarried—who will be called Servants of the Poor. Those who are married will be accepted only with permission of their husbands, and the unmarried, with that of their parents. To avoid confusion, they will be limited to a fixed number in proportion to the place of the establishment; a devout, charitable layman will be elected as Procurator.

**Admission of patients**

Patients will be admitted to the care of the association by the Prioress, on the advice of the Rector and the Assistants. They will have their clothes washed and go to confession the same day they are admitted to the care of the association, and will receive Communion the next day.

**Food for the patients**

Each patient will have as much bread as he can eat for dinner; those who drink wine will have a half a setier, soup, and four ounces of veal or boiled mutton; the same for supper, except that the meat will be roasted or ground; on days of abstinence, they will have two eggs with a portion of butter, or some fresh fish. Those who cannot eat solid meat will have bouillon and fresh eggs, bread soup, and hulled barley, as the Prioress will direct.
Order the Servants of the Poor will follow in serving the patients

The Servants of the Poor will each, on their day, prepare the food of the sick and take it to their home—or to the hospital if the poor persons who are judged in need of being assisted are there—and will serve them for an entire day, in the order in which the blessed bread is distributed. They will do so in such a way that the person who was of service that day will notify in the evening the one who is supposed to [follow],² bring her the measure of bread, wine, and meat, and tell her the name, place, number, and condition of the patients in order to prepare what they need so that they can eat dinner at ten in the morning and supper at four in the afternoon.

What to do in places where the order given above cannot be observed

And because it is useful to establish the association in some places where there will be neither a common purse nor the means of following the prescribed order, as in poor villages and neighborhoods, in that case each Servant of the Poor can provide food for the sick poor at her own expense on her day, observing nevertheless, as far as possible, the manner of serving and feeding them, as indicated above.

Burial of poor persons who have died

And in order that the association may practice entirely the works of mercy, it will furnish shrouds for the deceased poor persons who will not have any and will accompany them as a group to the grave.

Charity toward the sick

They will act in a humble and charitable manner toward the sick, sometimes saying a few pious, devout words to console and encourage them.

²The original had servir [serve] instead of suivre [follow].
How the expenses of this work will be defrayed

God in His Divine Providence has until now provided sufficiently for the expense incurred in this work, both by the collections the Servants of the Poor take up in turn in the churches—daily in some places, and on Sunday and holy days only in others—as well as what is donated in the boxes placed in the inns, where the landladies do the charity of asking their guests for something for the sick poor of the area.

Visits to prisoners

They will take care to visit poor prisoners to give them some alms, console them, and see that they have a change of shirt every Sunday.

Offices: first, the Rector

The Rector will be in charge of the association, together with the Prioress and the two Assistants. In addition, the Rector will have the Procurator of the confraternity serve as a witness when he collects the votes that will be cast for the election of the Prioress, as well as for other times he will want to handle business with the Sisters of the confraternity.

Prioress

One of the Servants of the Poor will be elected Prioress or Directress by a plurality of votes, for two years only with no possibility of continuing, under any pretext whatsoever, and, together with the Rector and Assistants, will be responsible for the association.

First Assistant or Treasurer

To serve as Councillors to the Prioress, two Assistants will also be elected; the first will keep the money and will give an account of it to the Company on the day after All Saints’ Day, in the presence
of the Rector, the Judge, the Procureur Fiscal, and the local Syndic, who will give entire credence to the amounts recorded by them as expenses; they may not open the collection boxes and the boxes placed in the inns or other places for the relief of the sick persons [unless one of those gentlemen is present].

Second Assistant or Supervisor of Furnishings

The Second Assistant will look after the furnishings of the association, will have the linen washed and mended when necessary, and, when leaving office, will give an account of what has been entrusted to her.

Procurator of the association

If any devout person donates an estate or annuity to the association, the Rector, Prioress, or Assistants will appoint as Procurator some capable person who they know is reliable. He will have charge of taking in the arrears of the annuities and of administering the income of the estate, provided, however, that he does not lease or draw up any contract unless it is in the presence of the Rector, the Prioress, and the Assistants. He will turn over the money he has on hand to the First Assistant, who will issue a receipt for it, by virtue of which he will remain validly released.

Nurses of the Sick Poor

Two devout poor women will be chosen to watch over patients in pressing need and deprived of any other help. They will be paid from the common funds of the association and admitted as members; they will be called Nurses of the Sick Poor. They will also be of service to the Servants of the Poor by notifying them whenever they have to meet.
Mass, Communion, litany, and exhortations that should take place once a month in the chapel of the association

And so that it may be of benefit to the Servants of the Poor and that they may be preserved more and more in the spirit of charity, they will meet on the first or third Sunday of the month in the chapel designated for the association, where they will hear Mass in the morning. Those who are inclined to go to confession and Communion, as they are all encouraged to do, will do so; after dinner they will be present for the Litany of Our Lord or of the Blessed Virgin, following which a short exhortation will be given them. All of this will take place outside the times when the Divine Service is celebrated in the parishes.

Love for Our Lord Jesus, Patron of the association, and for His Holy Mother

They are encouraged to have great interior honor and reverence for Our Lord and His Holy Mother, this being one of the principal points required by the association, and to say five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys daily for this purpose.

Mutual love of the Servants of the Poor

The Servants of the Poor will have great charity for one another, will visit and console one another in their trials, give instructions that the Last Sacraments be administered to them in due time and place, see that prayers—both in common and privately—are offered that each of them may leave this world in a good state. They will also be present in a group, each holding a candle, when the Blessed Sacrament is administered, as well as for the burial of the Rector, the Procurator, the Servants, and the Nurses of the Poor, for whom they will have one Mass celebrated and, at their convenience, will say devoutly three rosaries for them.
Daily spiritual practices

Upon awakening they will offer their hearts to God, invoking the Holy Name of Jesus and that of His Holy Mother; when they get out of bed, they will say their prayers; if possible, they will assist at Mass daily; they will always act humbly and strive throughout the day to perform their actions in union with those Our Lord practiced when He was on earth. Every day they will make individually the examination of conscience. All the above, however, does not oblige under pain of mortal or venial sin.

Ceremonies observed until now on the day the Charity is established

When the Pastor of the place where this association is to be established has the number of women he judges suitable, from among the most devout and, if possible, from among the leading citizens in order to give greater importance to the undertaking, having had all of them go to confession and receive Communion together on the day of this establishment, then, after Vespers on the same day, wearing his surplice, he goes to the chapel designated for this, where all the women are present, each carrying a lighted candle. He chants the *Veni, Creator* and the Litany of Jesus, gives them a brief exhortation on this subject, explains to those present the aim of the work and the spiritual benefits that those who act in a worthy manner in it will receive, and has the regulations that are to be observed read to them. Next, he goes to those wishing to be received into this holy association, takes their names, and then proceeds to the election of officers, taking the votes of each individual, who whispers them to him, and announces the ones elected by a plurality of votes. At the end, he chants the *Salve Regina* to thank God for this through His Holy Mother. The following day he meets with the officers to draw up the order in which the Servants of the Poor will have to take their turn to serve the patients and to take up the collection.

3This is the text of the document we are using; on another copy, with corrections in Saint Vincent's handwriting, the text reads: "... established, having the permission of his diocesan Bishop, and having settled upon certain persons, both men and women, whom he judges suitable."
APPROVAL OF THE CONFRATERNITY

We, François, by divine mercy Bishop of Amiens,\(^4\) make it known that, after having read and diligently examined all of the above, have approved and do approve the Association of the Charity, whose regulations are transcribed in the present notebook, and have permitted Lady Françoise-Marguerite de Silly, Comtesse de Joigny, to have the association established by Messire Vincent de Paul, her chaplain, in her villages of Folleville, Sérévillers, and Paillart, in our Amiens diocese.

Drawn up in Amiens under our seal and signed by our regular Secretary, September 20, 1620.

Signed by His Excellency.

PICARD

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONFRATERNITY

I, Vincent de Paul, Royal Chaplain of the Galleys of France and chaplain of the Comtesse de Joigny, attest to all whom it may concern that, by the authority of His Excellency François, by divine mercy Bishop of Amiens, and by virtue of the approval he has given of the regulations for the Association of the Charity transcribed above, and by the permission he has granted to the Lady to have the association established by me in her villages in the Amiens diocese, namely, Folleville, Paillart, and Sérévillers, I proceeded to the aforementioned establishment after Vespers today, Sunday, October 11, 1620, also the feast of Saint Francis. The people were assembled in the church of Paillart in the chapel designated for the association—the one on the right hand side on entering the church, and formerly called Notre-Dame-de-Pitié chapel. After having given an exhortation aimed at explaining in what the association consists and the great fruit that will come from it, I exhorted those

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\(^4\)François Lefèvre de Caumartin (1618-52).
who wished to belong to it to come forward and give their names. The following persons presented themselves and asked to be admitted into the association: Madame Françoise-Marguerite de Silly, Comtesse de Joigny, Françoise Bourlier, Marie Collée, Claude Lendormie, Antoinette Collée, Marie Mazessat, Antoinette Desquenoy, Louise Tavernier, Françoise Bacourt, Louise Meurisse, Toussanine Guillemin, Bénigne Coullaré, Jeanne Le Bret, Marie Truffar, Toussanine Coullaré, Marguerite Desmarest, and Claude Godefroy.

All requested me to receive them into the association, which I did. Having proceeded to the election of officers, they elected by a plurality of votes: Prioress, Françoise Bourlier, wife of Eustache Collée; First Assistant, Marie Collée; Second Assistant, Toussanine Guillemin; and Procurator of the association, Antoine Menoiste.

Drawn up in Paillart, in the presence of Messire Roland Vuarin, the local Pastor and Rector of the association, and of the majority of the people, on the day and in the year given above.

132. - CHARITY OF MEN (FOLLEVILLE, PAILLART, AND SÉRÉVILLERS)
(October 23, 1620)

Regulations for the men who will be received into the Association of the Charity, and, in the first place, the aim of their reception

The men will be received into the Association of the Charity established by authority of His Excellency the Bishop of Amiens in the villages of Folleville, Paillart, and Sérévillers to assist the able-bodied poor of either sex who are living in those places, and for the purpose of practicing and having others practice the exercises of piety mentioned below. The association is accustomed to practice these to honor Our Lord Jesus its patron and His Holy

Mother and to fulfill their great desire that we love one another as they have loved us.

*How to meet the needs of the able-bodied poor*

The children will be placed in a trade as soon as they are old enough. Each week the disabled and the elderly who are unable to work will be given what is necessary for their subsistence. As for those who earn only part of what they need, the association will provide the rest.

They will keep some sheep to be given to the Associates, who will have the charity to feed them for the benefit of the association—some more, some less, according to their possibilities. The young of these sheep will be sold annually by the Visitor around the feast of Saint John, according to the order given him by the Rectors of the association. The money accruing from this will be given to the Treasurer, in the presence of the Commander and the Rector. The sheep will be marked with the mark of the association and renewed every five years.

*Offices in general*

The members, who will be called Servants of the Poor, will elect twelve men from their number, who will be named Assistants of the Charity. For the greater continuity of this association, they will take a firm resolution in the manner given below, which they will renew annually, to observe the present regulations and to foster the preservation and growth of the association. Every two years, on the day after Pentecost, these twelve will choose three men from their number, one to be the Commander, another the Treasurer, and the other the Visitor. Together with the Rector of the association, who is a priest, they will have full responsibility for what concerns only the able-bodied poor persons. In the event of the death of one of the Assistants, the members as a body will name another.
Commander

The Commander will preside at the meeting together with the Rector. Jointly they will see that the present regulations, along with all the resolutions that will be taken at the meeting, are observed and carried out with fidelity, charity, and diligence.

Treasurer

The Treasurer will represent the Commander and act on his authority in his absence; he will receive and keep the money in a strongbox with two keys, of which the Commander will have one and he the other, but he will be authorized to take only what is necessary to distribute to the able-bodied poor in a month, and will be allowed to open the strongbox only in the presence of the Commander or the Rector. He will use the money according to the instructions of the Directors and will give an annual account of it on the day he is told to do so, in the presence of the Directors and the Assistants, and the Judge and Procureur Fiscal of the place. In addition, he will record, in a register he will keep for this purpose, the resolutions taken at the meetings.

Visitor

The Visitor will give notice of any bashful poor persons, widows, orphans, prisoners, and other persons who are in distress, so that someone will go to visit and console them, and he will give a report of this at the meetings so as to help them as he will be instructed. In cases of urgent need, however, he will discuss matters with the Rector or Commander, and will follow the orders given him. He will likewise see that all the poor persons attend the catechism lessons the Rector will give, or have someone give, every other Sunday and see that those who are old enough receive Communion.
Meetings

As a rule, the Directors will meet after Vespers on the first Sunday of the month, and more often, if it is advisable. They will consider the temporal and spiritual needs of the association, which will be resolved by a plurality of votes, collected by the Rector and, in his absence, by the Commander. It will be unlawful for anyone whomsoever, once he has cast his vote, to reply to someone who contradicts him and is of the contrary opinion. In the case where the Directors are divided in their opinions, the other nine Assistants, or those of them—at least five in number—who can be there, will settle the difference of opinion by a plurality of votes, which will be collected by the oldest man among them.

Mass, Communion, litany, exhortation, and reading of the present regulations, which should take place on the first Sunday of the month

So that the Servants of the Poor may benefit and be strengthened more and more in the spirit of charity, they will meet on the first Sunday of the month in the chapel of the Charity, where they will hear Mass in the morning, and those who wish to go to confession and Communion, as all are encouraged to do, will do so. After dinner, they will participate in the Litany of Our Lord or of the Blessed Virgin, following which a short exhortation will be given them or a reading of the regulations. When that has been done, the Directors will discuss the business of the association.

Love for Our Lord Jesus, Patron of the association, and for His Holy Mother

Since one of the principal requirements of this association is to honor Our Lord Jesus and His Holy Mother, the Servants of the Poor will be encouraged to have great interior honor and reverence for them and to say five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys daily for this purpose.
Mutual charity the Servants of the Poor will have for one another

The Servants of the Poor will have great charity for one another, visit and console one another in their trials, give instructions that the Last Sacraments be administered to them in due time and place, and have prayers said in common and privately that each of them may leave this world in a good state. They will be present as a group both for the administration of the Last Sacraments and the burial of the men and women Servants of the Poor, for whose souls they will have one Mass celebrated. At their convenience, each member individually will say the rosary for their intention, and it is to be noted that this observance, like all the others that are part of the present regulations, is voluntary and does not oblige under pain of either mortal or venial sin.

Zeal the Servants of the Poor will have for preserving the women’s association as well as their own

Because the men’s association and that of the women is one same association, having the same patron, purpose, and spiritual exercises, and only the ministries are divided—the care of the able-bodied being assigned to the men and that of the sick to the women—and because Our Lord draws no less glory from the ministry of women than from that of men, and the care of the sick even seems preferable to that of the healthy, the male Servants of the Poor will therefore show as much concern for the preservation and growth of the women’s association as for their own. To this effect, they will give the Treasurer, who keeps the money for the women, one-fourth of the annual income—and more, if need be, if the income from the collections taken up by the women does not suffice. This can be ascertained through the Rector, since he is the Superior of both associations. And so that the Directors might know the state of affairs of the women’s association, they will be present for the rendering of their accounts on the day after All Saints’ Day.
Formula to be used for the firm resolution of the Servants of the Poor

To make this association more enduring, the Assistants, as has been said, will make and pronounce the following firm resolution in the presence of the Rector, after Vespers on Pentecost or on the next day, in the chapel of the Charity, saying it in the following manner: “I . . . Servant of the Poor of the Association of the Charity, elected as one of its Assistants, take the firm resolution, in the presence of the Rector of the association, to observe its regulations and to do my utmost to foster its preservation and growth, with the help of God, which I ask of Him for this purpose.

“Made in . . ., on . . .”

APPROVAL OF THE CONFRATERNITY

We, François, by divine mercy Bishop of Amiens, on the explanation given us that the Association of the Charity established by our authority in the villages of Folleville, Paillart, and Sérévillers in our Amiens diocese, is composed only of [women]¹ and to help only the sick poor, and that several devout, charitable men wished to be received in and become members of the association in order to take care of the sick poor, and to have the opportunity to practice the other good works of the association, have approved and do approve the zeal of the gentlemen and the regulations given above that have been drawn up for them, and we have permitted and do permit that they be received into the association by its Rector, on condition that they will commit themselves to observe the regulations. In addition, we exhort the Pastors, Rectors of the association, and the others concerned, to support and give full assistance to the execution of the present letter, since this is a work extremely important for the common good of the faithful.

Drawn up in Amiens, October 23, 1620.

¹Text of the original: personnes [persons].
132a. - COMBINED CHARITY OF JOIGNY

(May 1621)

Regulations for the Confraternity or Association of the Charity, and, in the first place, the aim for which it will be established

The Association of the Charity shall be established to honor Our Lord Jesus its patron and His Holy Mother, to provide for the needs of able-bodied and disabled poor persons, to have them taught the catechism and to receive the sacraments, to feed and give medicines to the sick poor, to help those who are nearing death to die well and those who will recover to resolve never more to offend God, and lastly, to practice the exercises of piety specified below.

Membership

It will be composed of men and wives and unmarried women, but the women will be admitted only with the consent of their husbands or parents. The men will take care of the able-bodied and helpless, and the women only of the sick.

Ministry of the men and, in the first place, the manner of providing for the able-bodied

The Directors of the association will place the children who are poor in a trade, as soon as they are old enough. They will make a weekly distribution, to the disabled poor and the elderly who cannot work, of what they need to live on; for those who earn only part of what they need, the association will provide for the rest.

Document 132a. - Archives of the Joigny Hospital, general documents, chap. 5, file 16, no. 2, original on parchment.

The editors have repositioned Doc. 128 of Coste to this location for two reasons: (1) chronologically, it is more accurate here; and (2) it is the first set of regulations for a combined Charity of both sexes and more appropriately follows the regulations for confraternities of women and the regulations for a confraternity of men.
How the expenses of this work will be defrayed

The expenses of this work will be met from five hundred livres tournois that the Comte de Joigny will donate annually, from eighty bichets of wheat that the Prior of Joigny will also donate every year, and from a certain amount of money set aside from the revenue of the Hôtel-Dieu of the town.

Officers in general

The men, who will be called Associates, will elect thirty men from among their number, who will be called Servants of the Poor and will be the pillars supporting the body of this association. These men will elect a priest, who will be called Rector or Spiritual Father of the association, and he will remain in this ministry of Rector as long as they judge suitable. They will likewise hold an election every two years on the day after Pentecost for three of their number, one of whom will be the Prior and the other two the Assistants. They will have full responsibility for what concerns only the able-bodied poor persons; when one of the thirty Servants of the Poor dies, the Associates as a body will name another. In addition, there will be an Associate Servant, who will be elected every two years by the Directors, the Servants of the Poor, and the Associates, whenever it is advisable.

Rector

The Rector will be the Superior of the ministries of both the men and the women, will do his utmost to promote the exact observance of these regulations and the preservation and growth of the association, will preside over the meetings, and will collect the votes.

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1 A measure of wheat varying from ½ bushel to one bushel.
Prior

The Prior will also do his utmost, together with the Rector, to see that the present regulations are observed and that the decisions taken at the meetings are carried out with fidelity, charity, and diligence; he will preside over the meetings and will collect the votes in the absence of the Rector.

First Assistant

The First Assistant will be called the Treasurer, and will represent the Prior and act on his authority in his absence. He will take in and keep the money in a strongbox with two keys, of which the Prior will have one and he the other. He will have under his control only as much money as will be needed for one month’s distribution to the able-bodied poor persons and will open the strongbox only in the presence of the Rector and the Prior. He will use the money according to the instructions of the Directors and will give an annual account of it on the day after Pentecost, in the presence of the Directors, the Servants of the Poor, the Judge, and the Procureur Fiscal, who will be present if they think it advisable. He may not, however, ask for nor expect any reward, fee, or salary for this. The Treasurer will also record, in a register he will keep for this purpose, the resolutions taken at the meetings.

Second Assistant

The Second Assistant, who will be called Visitor of the Poor, will make inquiries about the bashful poor, widows, orphans, and other persons in distress so he can go to visit and console them, and will make a report at the meetings in order to assist them as he will be instructed, except in cases of pressing need, when he will simply discuss this with the Rector or Prior and follow the order given him. He will likewise see that all the poor persons come to the catechism lessons that the Rector will give or have someone give every other Sunday, and see that those who are old enough go to Communion. Furthermore, he will keep the accessories for the chapel of the
Charity and will decorate it on the third Sunday of the month and solemn feast days.

*Associate Servant*

To convoke the Directors, Servants of the Poor, and Associates when the Rector, Prior, or one of the Assistants, each in turn, so directs, the Directors will appoint an Associate to be an Associate Servant of the association, who will likewise be in office for two years only. Should it happen that he has to be sent to the country, or has to spend more than two hours’ time for the association, the Directors will pay him from its funds, if he is poor and so wishes.

*Women’s supervision of the sick poor and, in the first place, admission of the latter.*

The sick poor will be admitted to the care of the association by the Prioress on the advice of the Rector and Assistants, have their clothes washed, go to confession the same day they have been admitted to the care of the association, and receive Communion the next day.

*Food for the patients*

Each patient will have as much bread as he can reasonably eat for dinner; those who drink wine will have half a setier each meal, some soup, four ounces of veal or boiled mutton, and the same for supper, except that the meat will be roasted or ground. On days of abstinence, he will have two eggs with a portion of butter, or some fresh fish. Those who cannot eat solid meat will have broth, fresh eggs, bread soup, and hulled barley, according to the orders the doctor will give the Prioress, if need be.

*Order the Servants of the Poor will follow in serving the sick*

Each Servant of the Poor will prepare the patients’ food on her day, take it to their homes, and serve them for an entire day in the or-
der in which the blessed bread is distributed. That evening the Lady who serves them will notify the one who is to come after her, bringing her the quantity or requirements of bread, wine, and meat, and telling her the names, location, number, and condition of the patients so as to prepare what is needed in order for them to be able to eat dinner at ten in the morning and supper at four in the afternoon.

_Burial of poor persons who have died_

And in order that the association may practice entirely the works of mercy, it will furnish shrouds for the deceased poor persons who do not have any, and, as a group, will accompany them to the grave.

_How the expenses of the sick will be defrayed_

Until now, God in His Divine Providence has provided sufficiently for the expenses of this work, both from the collections the Servants of the Poor take up in turn in the churches—in some places every day and in others on Sundays and holy days—as also from what is donated in the boxes placed in the inns, where the landladies ask their guests for something for the sick poor of the area.

_Officers in general_

All the women who wish to belong to this association will be received into it and will be named Associates; but to avoid confusion, they will elect from among themselves a certain number proportionate to the place where it will be established, such as twelve in a place where there are fifty homes and so forth, as is in keeping with it. They will be like the pillars who support the association and will be called Servants of the Poor because they are the ones who will actually be serving the poor according to the order given above, and not the others, who will be content with practicing the other good works included in these regulations. And the Servants of the Poor will choose three women from their number, who will be in charge for only two years, namely, a Prioress and two Assistants. These will be fully responsible for what concerns the sick, together with
the Rector and a Procurator, whom they will elect and who will be one of the thirty Servants of the Poor of the association. In the event of the death of one of these Servants of the Poor, the Associates as a body will appoint another.

**Prioress**

The Prioress will do her utmost to see that the present ... ² every two years the day after Pentecost to elect new Directors, and the Directors every year, also on the day after Pentecost, to hear the accounts of the First Assistant, and after Vespers on the first Sunday of the month to handle ordinary business, and more often, if there is a need. The Associates will also meet as a body whenever a Servant of the Poor has to be elected; the Servants of the Poor will do so every two years on the day after All Saints’ Day to create new officers. The three Officers will meet annually on the same day to hear the accounts of the Treasurer, and after Vespers on the first Sunday of the month shortly after the men so that the Rector, who should be present at the men’s meeting, may also be present for the women’s meeting to discuss briefly the ordinary business affairs that will be proposed. They will settle matters by a plurality of votes, collected by the Rector; but once someone has given her opinion, she may not reply to those who have a contrary opinion.

**Election of Officers**

When the Servants of the Poor have heard the accounts of the Treasurer in the chapel of the Charity after Vespers on the day after Pentecost, they will chant the *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, and then choose a secretary by voice vote; she will be the one elected by the Company to help the Rector for the election. Once this has been done, the Rector will receive the oath of the Servants of the Poor that they will elect as officers those whom they know in conscience.

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²The following page is missing. The resulting hiatus can be filled by the corresponding passage in the Regulations for Courboin (cf. Doc. 137, from the section entitled Prioress to the section Matters common to men and women Servants of the Poor).
to be the most devout and capable; then they will give the [Rector] three pieces of paper, one of which will have the name of the man for whom they are casting their vote for Prior, another with their vote for Treasurer, and the other for Visitor of the Poor. The Rector will give these to the Servant, who will place them on a table or on the altar, where the Rector and the Secretary will read the ballots in the presence of the group, before whom they will certify and declare aloud those who have the greatest number of votes for each office. When this has been done, the new officers [will take] the places of the old ones, then the Salve Regina will be chanted to thank Our Lord through His Holy Mother for the choice He has made of the persons elected and to ask Him for the grace for them to be able to lead the association and to be ever more attached to His glory, for the salvation of the Associates. It is to be noted that the same will be done for the election of a new Rector and new officers for the women.

_Fidelity of the officers in admitting only the truly poor and truly sick to share in the alms of the association_

Because the association has been established only for persons who are truly poor and truly sick, the male officers will give the alms of the association only to those men and women whom they judge in conscience to be truly poor. The women officers will do the same only for those whom they judge in conscience to be truly poor and sick. And so that favoritism, which is the ruin of good works, does not slip into this one, when the men and women officers begin their term of office they will promise in the presence of the Rector not to use the alms of the association, neither directly nor indirectly, for any of their relatives, in-laws, personal friends, or persons recommended to them. And, if another member of the Company proposes one of the aforementioned on his own, they will refrain from doing so, saying that they cannot give their opinion on that point, and leave it to the judgment of the others.
And so that the Associates may benefit and be strengthened more and more in the spirit of charity, they will meet every first or third Sunday of the month in the chapel designated for the association, where they will hear Mass in the morning, and those who are inclined to go to confession and Communion, as all will be encouraged to do, will do so. After dinner they will participate in the Litany of Our Lord or of the Blessed Virgin, and some brief exhortation will then be given them or a reading from the present regulations; all this, however, outside of the times when the Divine Service is celebrated in the parish.

Love for Our Lord

Since one of the principal points of this association is to honor Our Lord and His holy Mother, the men and women Associates will be strongly encouraged to show them great honor and reverence and to say five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys every day for this purpose.

Mutual charity they should have for one another

The men and women Associates will have great charity, visit and console one another in their trials, give instructions that the Last Sacraments be administered in due time and place, and have prayers offered in common and privately that each Associate may leave this world in a good state. They will also be present as a group for the administration of the Last Sacraments and at the burial of the men and women Officers, Associates, and Nurses of the Sick Poor, for whose souls they will have one Mass celebrated, and each will say devoutly and in private, at her convenience, one rosary for them. It is to be noted that this observance, like all the others that are part of the present regulations, is voluntary and does not oblige under pain of mortal or venial sin.
Zeal the Servants of the Poor will have for the preservation of the women's association as well as that of the men.

Because both the men's and the women's associations are only one and the same association, having the same patron and purpose and even the same spiritual practice; and since only the ministry is divided, with the care of the able-bodied assigned to the men and that of the sick to the women; and because Our Lord receives as much glory from the women's ministry as from that of the men, and it even seems that the care of the sick is preferable to that of the healthy; for these reasons the Servants of the Poor will show as much concern for the preservation and growth of the women's association as for their own. For that purpose, they will entrust to the First Assistant, who keeps the women's money, one-fourth of the annual revenue—and more, if need be, if the income from the collections taken up by the women does not suffice. This can be determined through the Rector, since he is Superior of both associations. And so that the Directors may know the state of affairs of the women's association, they will be present for the presentation of their accounts.

Formula for the firm resolution of the Men and Women Servants of the Poor

To make this association more enduring, its Rector will pronounce aloud the following firm resolution after the Communion Mass or at the end of Vespers on Pentecost in the chapel of the Charity, and the Servants of the Poor will do the same after him. The Rector will say: “I... Servant of the Poor of the Association of the Charity, intend to observe its regulations and to do my utmost to promote its preservation and growth, with the help of God, which I humbly ask of Him for this purpose.”
APPROVAL OF THE CONFRATERNITY

To His Excellency the Archbishop of Sens, or to his Vicar-General.

Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, Comte de Joigny and General of the Galleys of France, humbly petitions, stating that about three years ago you kindly allowed to be established in the town of Joigny the Association of the Charity, composed of women and instituted for the relief of the sick poor. Great benefits have accrued and accrue daily from it; now, knowing the benefit arising from the men’s association established in certain places in this kingdom for the welfare of able-bodied poor persons, he desires by the same means that it might please you to permit the establishment of the association of men in the town of Joigny and the villages dependent on it and to unite the association of men to that of the women in the manner stated in the regulations written above.

In consideration of this, may it please you in your kindness to unite the men’s association to that of the women in accord with the regulations, and to allow it to be established in Joigny and the villages dependent on it, and, for this purpose, to allow our chaplain, M. Vincent de Paul, to make the establishment. And you will be performing a work pleasing to God and will greatly oblige us.

Drawn up in Joigny, May 4, 1621.

P.-E. DE GONDY

We, Pierre de Marcq, priest and Doctor of Theology, Canon of the metropolitan Church of Sens, Prior of Oisey, Officialis and Vicar-General in spiritual and temporal matters of His Excellency the Most Reverend Archbishop of Sens, Primate of the Gauls and of Germania, in view of the request of the Comte de Joigny written above, and after having carefully considered the regulations of the aforementioned Confraternity or Association of the Charity, have approved and do approve, by the authority of the Archbishop, the establishment of the association in the town of Joigny and the villages dependent on it. To avoid a multiplicity of confraternities and associations in the same place, and taking into account that the women’s as-
sociation established in Joigny by the authority of the Archbishop has the same patron, who is Our Lord Jesus, the same purpose, and the same practices as that of the men, and that only the ministry is divided, with the care of able-bodied poor persons entrusted to the men and that of the disabled poor to the women, we have united and do unite the confraternity of men to that of the women in Joigny, authorizing the priest M. Vincent de Paul, Bachelor of Theology and chaplain of the Comte, to make the establishment of the confraternity or association in Joigny and the villages dependent on it, and the union of the men's association to that of the women in the same town.

All this is on condition that, when the Archbishop or his Vicar-General, generally residing and ministering in Sens, is in Joigny or the villages and wants to be informed of the spiritual and temporal administration of the association, its Directors will be bound to reply to them and show them the accounts. This will be done without cost, and the Bishop or his Vicar-General will also be informed of all differences of opinion that will arise regarding both spiritual and temporal affairs of the association.

And because charity toward the neighbor is a work pleasing to God and on Judgment Day we will be judged on that, and because the intention of the association is, in fact, to practice in a special manner this commandment of charity toward the neighbor, for this reason we exhort the faithful Christians of Joigny and the other places dependent on it to enroll in the association and to practice the works it includes.

In testimony whereof we have signed these present letters and have had them signed by M. Gabriel Sarsement, acting Registrar in this case.

Sens, May 8, 1621.

We have also had them sealed with the crest and seal of the Archbishop.

P. de MARCQ

By order of the Vicar-General.

SARSEMENT
ACT OF ESTABLISHMENT

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Be it known to all whom it may concern that today, May 30, 1621, feast of Pentecost, in the chapel of Saint-Antoine Hospital in this town of Joigny, in the presence of the noble and powerful Lord Messire Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, Chevalier of the Two Orders of the King, Councillor in his State and Private Councils, Comte de Joigny, and General of the Galleys of France; of the priest Messire François Courtiller, Pastor of Saint-Thibault; of the priest Messire Antoine Louvet, Pastor of Saint-André; of the priest M. Guillaume Leboeuf, Pastor of Saint-Jean; of Maître Julien Giroust, Bailliff and Judge in Ordinary for Joigny; of Louis de Guidoly,3 Sieur d’Ouessey, Lieutenant and Captain of Joigny and local head of the Forestry Commission of the Count, of Maître Savinien de la Mare, Lieutenant of Joigny, of Messire Jean Jacquinet, lawyer and Procureur Fiscal of Joigny; of M. Cholet, M. Laurent, and M. Symard, Magistrates of Joigny; and of several others named and signed below; we, Vincent de Paul, priest and Bachelor of Theology, by virtue of the permission issued by the Officialis of Sens on May 8, 1621, given here above, signed Pierre de Marcq, Officialis; and Sarsement, acting Secretary; and sealed with the seal of the Archbishop of Sens, whereby he allows and instructs us to establish in Joigny the men’s Confraternity and Association of the Charity for the relief of able-bodied poor persons of the town, to unite the men’s association to that of the women, already established in Joigny and in Saint-Antoine chapel, we, by the aforesaid authority, have established and do establish the said Confraternity or Association of the Charity in Joigny and in the chapel, and have united and do unite it to the women’s association, in accord with the regulations given above. When this was done, we explained to the Assistants what is involved in the ministry of Associates in the association, had the regulations read, and encouraged those wishing to become members to come forward and be enrolled.

3Louis de Guidotti.
Whereupon the undersigned persons whose names are given below presented themselves. All declared that they wished to belong to the association and asked that we enroll them in it, which we did. First, the Comte de Joigny; then the priest Messire Antoine Louvet, Pastor of Saint-André in Joigny; the priest Messire Jean Maurice, chaplain of Saint-Antoine in Joigny; the priest Messire Edme Meslin; Maître Julien Giroust, Bailiff and Procurator of Joigny; Louis de Guidoly, Sieur d'Ouessey, Lieutenant and Captain, local head of the Forestry Commission of the county of Joigny; Maître Jean Jacquinet, lawyer and Procureur Fiscal General of the county; Maître Savinien de la Mare, Lieutenant in Joigny; M. Cholet, M. Symard, and M. Desjours, principal county magistrates of Joigny....

And proceeding to the election of the Servants of the Poor, the following were named: in the first place, the priest Maître Antoine Louvet, Pastor of Saint-André in Joigny; the priest Messire Edme Meslin; Maître Julien Giroust, Bailiff and Provost of Joigny; Louis de Guidoly d’Ouessey, Lieutenant and Captain of Joigny and local head of the Forestry Commission of the county of Joigny; Maître Jean Jacquinet, lawyer and Procureur Fiscal Général of the county; M. Laurent Desjours; M. Symard; M. Branché; M. Nardeux; M. Biot, lawyer; M. Delon, lawyer; M. Leboeuf, Auditor; M. Marchant; M. Roucelin; M. Penot, Registrar; M. Gaultier; M. Thulon; M. Murot, Procurator; M. Jean Leboeuf, substitute; Ferraud, Attorney; M. Guillaume Camard; M. Chereau, ...; M. Vaddé; M. Grassin; and M. Marot.

Proceeding immediately to the election of the officers and Directors of the Charity, the votes of the Servants of the Poor were collected, and the following were elected: in the first place, as Rector of the association, the priest Messire Jean Maurice, chaplain of Saint-Antoine Hospital; Prior, M. Julien Giroust, Councillor in the Parlement and Bailiff and Judge in Ordinary of Joigny; First Assistant, M. Biot, lawyer in Joigny; and Second Assistant, the priest Messire Antoine Louvet, Pastor of Saint-André in Joigny. These of-

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4Twenty-six other names and signatures follow.
ficers and Directors named as Associate Servant Jean Chappelle, weaver in Joigny.

Drawn up on the day and in the year given above.

V. DEPAUL

The same day and time, the aforementioned men decided that, in the event that not all the Servants of the Poor are present for the election of new officers, at least twelve [Associates] will suffice to hold the election, just as if it [the Company] were acting as a body.

V. DEPAUL

133. - REPORT OF ABBÉ LAPLATTE ON THE COMBINED CHARITY OF MÂCON

(September 1621)

The following year, 1623,¹ was noteworthy because of a second establishment, much more useful than the preceding one, since its aim was to provide relief for all the poor people in the town, healthy and sick, beggars as well as the bashful poor. It was M. Vincent de Paul, Pastor of Châtillon-les-Dombes, who began that good work there. Despite the attention A. Gaspard Dinet might have given to renewing the face of the diocese during his nineteen years as Bishop, it was impossible for him to bring that important work to completion; there were still many abuses that had to be rectified after his death. One of the greatest was the helpless situation of the poor people of the town. They were living in such utter ignorance of the truths of religion and sunk in such criminal habits that one could not see them without being astonished.

While M. Vincent, whose virtues have justly placed him in the catalogue of the saints, was passing through Mâcon, he himself wit-

¹Abbé Laplatte is mistaken here; the Charity of Mâcon was established in 1621 (cf. Docs. 134 and 135).
nessed this sad spectacle. His charity was moved by it, and his zeal caused him to seek the means to remedy it. Since it was his custom to ask the poor persons he was helping a few questions on the elements of religion, he was surprised to find elderly persons sixty years and older who did not even know Jesus Christ and His mysteries. The price of these poor souls who were being lost made such a vivid impression on his heart that he resolved at that very moment to do something about it, regardless of the cost.

His charity was ingenious; he soon found some means that he felt could be used to carry out his project. Presuming, however, that many obstacles would be put in the way of this good work, he armed himself with firmness. What he had foreseen, happened. When he had shared his plans with some persons in the town, some considered it impossible to carry them out; others treated him as a rash, proud man, who was trying to meddle in what was no concern of his. Still others, held back by human respect, told him that it would be a good work, but they did not see how to go about putting it into effect. Far from becoming discouraged by so many obstacles, the saintly Vincent de Paul recognized that being contradicted was characteristic of the works of God, but that patience and determination would make him victorious.

In fact, he knew so well how to handle those persons governing the town that they finally approved his plan and went along with its execution. So, a group of charitable persons was formed, who took responsibility for helping in an orderly and tactful way all the poor persons in the town, beggars and bashful poor, able-bodied and sick. To cover the cost of this good work, the rich committed themselves in writing to donate annually wheat, wine, meat, wood, and linen, according to their possibilities.

This organization of charitable persons agreed to meet every Wednesday in Saint-Nizier to take there all they had collected and to report the persons in their district who had fallen ill or were in need so they could be assisted the following week and to remove from the list of poor persons those whose situation had improved or who, because they behaved badly during the week, merited being deprived of alms the following Sunday.
The leading women of the town and a large number of the bourgeoisie considered it an honor to belong to this devout assembly, to visit the sick in their neighborhood twice a week, to furnish them with what they needed for their recovery, and, lastly, to provide for their burial if God called them to Himself. The capital needed for these various acts of charity was drawn from the fund for which the rich gave their alms every month.

Bishop Louis Dinet,² Messieurs Chambon, Dean of the Cathedral, de Rhébé, Provost of Saint-Pierre, and Hugues Foillard, Lieutenant General, energized and supported this burgeoning good work by their care and solicitous attention. They even formed a board, composed of ten Rectors, namely, two priests, one of whom presided in the absence of the Bishop, two Bailiffs, two officers of the élection,³ a lawyer, a Procurator, and two merchants, one of whom was the Receveur. Its guidelines were adopted on September 26, 1623.⁴

Following is the order M. Vincent established with regard to those who were poor:

1. He had a list drawn up of all the poor persons living in the town, which came to about 300.
2. He required that they come together every Sunday in Saint-Nizier, where they would hear Mass and the instruction, go to confession monthly, and receive Communion when they were found capable of doing so.
3. After the service, all the poor persons who had attended would receive bread and money corresponding to their need and the number of children for whom they were responsible; in winter some wood was added to this.
4. All those who were found begging in the streets and at the churches during the week, or about whom the Ladies had made justifiable complaints, would receive nothing the following Sunday.
5. Poor passers-by would be put up for one night and sent off the next day with two sous.

²Nephew of the late Gaspard Dinet, Bishop of Mâcon.
³An administrative district for the purpose of levying taxes.
⁴The correct date is September 16, 1621.
(6) The bashful poor identified by the Ladies or other upright persons were to be assisted discreetly and provided in their illnesses with adequate food and remedies to expedite their recovery, if possible.

(7) Lastly, since the assembly did not want to encourage laziness among the able-bodied poor or their families, they were to be given only what was necessary to supplement the modest salaries from their work.

When this good work began, there were almost no funds for its operation, but M. Vincent spoke very strongly and touchingly on the need and advantages of almsgiving and how easily it could be done, either by cutting back on luxuries, meals, furnishings, clothing, and recreation or, if a person had no money, by donating grain, furniture, old clothes, or linen. He did such a fine job explaining the good order that could result from this in Mâcon if people were willing to take his advice, that everyone was eager to emulate his enthusiasm. Grain, bread, vegetables, linen, wood, household utensils, clothing, beds, etc., were brought to the place assigned to deposit the alms, and people were soon ready to support this nascent good work. M. Vincent, says his biographer, seeing his efforts result in an undreamed of success, was the first to give his alms, and then went on his way.

Fr. Desmoulins, an Oratorian priest who was then Superior of the Mâcon Seminary established by M. Gaspard Dinet, saw for himself all that took place at the time of this establishment and wrote it down so simply and truthfully that, in order to confirm what I have reported here about this holy establishment, I thought I should copy the account he left of it.

If the reader thinks I have gone on too long about this, I must confess that I am surpassing the normal limits, but I ask him to excuse me for wanting to do so. For such a long time I have desired to see this holy assembly reestablished in Mâcon that I gladly seize opportunities to make known the means of achieving it, since it suffices to follow the plan left us by M. Vincent, simply making a few changes with regard to the times in which we are living and the circumstances in which we find ourselves so as not to irritate certain people.
"No one," said Fr. Desmoulins, "informed me of the state of the poor people in Mâcon; I recognized it myself; for, when this charitable organization was begun, since it was ordered that, on the first of each month, all the poor persons who were to receive alms should go to confession, the other confessors along with me found elderly persons, sixty years of age and older, who told us frankly that they had never been to confession; and when someone spoke to them of God, the Trinity, or the Incarnation, it was a language they did not understand. However, through this devout Confraternity of Charity that M. Vincent established, these disorders were remedied, and in a short time the physical and spiritual needs of this throng of poor persons were taken care of. More than three hundred of them were very reasonably housed, fed, clothed, and kept warm. People were no longer badgered either at church or in the streets by those able-bodied beggars who were doing nothing all day long except to pursue their livelihood, with no respect for the churches, no regard for persons who merit it, and no consideration for those who were unwilling to give in to their demands."

The town registers inform us of several other circumstances concerning this establishment, allowing us to see even more clearly the good direction and benefit resulting from it. They state, then, that to bring some relief to the two hundred poor families who were in

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5According to Abelly (op. cit., bk. I, chap. XV, p. 61), Fr. Desmoulins is supposed to have added at this point: "Now, by means of this Confraternity; these disorders were remedied, and in a short time the poor were relieved of their spiritual and bodily miseries. Louis Dinet, Bishop of Mâcon at the time, approved this plan of M. Vincent; the members of the Cathedral Chapter and the members of the Saint-Pierre Chapter, who are Canons of four generations of nobility, supported him.

"M. Chambon, Dean of the Cathedral, and M. de Rhébé, Provost of Saint-Pierre, were asked to be its Directors, together with M. Fallart, Lieutenant General. They followed the regulations given by M. Vincent, namely, to draw up a directory of all the poor persons in the town who wanted to remain there; to distribute alms to them on certain days, and if they were caught begging in the church or at people's homes, they would be penalized and it would be forbidden to give them anything; to lodge itinerants for one night and to send them off the next day with two sous; to assist the bashful poor of the town during their illnesses and provide them with proper nourishment, as in the other places where the Charity had been established.

"This arrangement began with no common funds, but M. Vincent had so much experience in dealing with important people as well as ordinary ones that everyone was willing to contribute voluntarily to such a good work, some with money, others with wheat or other provisions, according to their possibilities. In this way nearly three hundred poor persons were housed, fed, and maintained very reasonably. M. Vincent donated the first alms, and then withdrew."
Mâcon, not counting the beggars, a fund had been established consisting of: (1) what the clergy and well-to-do citizens promised to give annually in money, wheat, wine, wood, and clothing; (2) certain fines that were applied to that good work; (3) entrance fees from all town officials; (4) the collections taken up every Sunday by the young women of the town.

These four sources of revenue together created a considerable fund, since the registers add that, every Sunday after the Mass said in Saint-Nizier, twelve hundred livres of bread were distributed there, as well as eighteen to twenty silver francs, twelve or fifteen francs to the Ladies for the bashful poor, not counting the linen, wood, and coal that came to a considerable amount, one hundred or one hundred twenty francs in wages to the pharmacists for medicines, twenty francs to the surgeon, four francs a month to two women who looked after the sick, and twenty francs to the beadles, who prevented beggars who were strangers from staying in the town.

From these details one can imagine the good this establishment did in the town; however, the wars that took place twelve years later, and the plague in 1629 and 1630, made the inhabitants unable to furnish sufficient funds to continue the almsgiving to the same extent. They left their property to heirs who did not imitate the charity of those who had gone before them. From 1639-40 on this decrease was quite obvious. To make up for it, the town magistrates asked Louis XIII to allow a five-franc tax to be levied on each cask of wine for the benefit of the poor, who were beginning to suffer a great deal. The reply of the Court is unknown, but, since French history informs us that the poor people in the provinces suffered terribly from 1640 to 1659 because of the civil wars brought on by the minority of Louis XIV, it is presumed that Mâcon endured the same fate.

I did not find any other informative report on this organization of Charity until 1680, when two reputable citizens were looking for a way to provide bread for some former artisans, now elderly, who had worked for the town for thirty or forty years but were in pressing need because of the pittance they were receiving from the lim-
ited work they were able to do. They felt that the best way to succeed in this pious endeavor was to bring them all together in the same building so they could assist them more easily.

Consequently, in 1680, M. Étienne Mathoud, President of the élection, who was the first to think of this worthy plan, bought several adjacent houses on rue Bourgneuf, costing him one hundred thousand livres. He had communicating doors installed to facilitate service and began to take in several disabled elderly persons. This beautiful example of charity inspired several other reputable persons to imitate him. The second was Joseph Bernard, called “The Handsome,” who also donated one hundred thousand livres to continue the good work.

That was the origin in our town of the Charity Hospital that serves as a shelter for a large number of distressed or neglected persons.

134. - THE CHARITY OF MÁCON AS RECORDED IN THE TOWN HALL REGISTERS

(September 1621)

On September 16, 1621, the following persons met in the town hall of Mâcon: M. Foillard, the Lieutenant General, Provost, and Royal Judge of the town; M. Chandon, Dean of the Cathedral of Mâcon; M. Demeaulx, Lieutenant for Criminal Affairs; M. Chandon, former Lieutenant for Criminal Affairs; Messire Benoît Buchet, The King’s Procurator in the bailiwick; Messire Nicolas Moisson, King’s Counsel; Maître Pierre Desagie; the Honorable Claude Hugand; the Honorable Jean Desvignes; the Honorable Antoine de la Fonteyne and Maître Nicolas Bayard, Town Magistrates; Maître Pierre Bruys, Procurator Syndic; M. Antonin de Moras and M. Antonin Fevron, Chevaliers and co-chaplains of

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Saint-Pierre Church; M. Antoine de Pise, President of the élection and Captain of the town; M. François de Rymon, Lieutenant in the élection; M. Alexandre Arcelin, Provost of the Merchants of France in the Mâcon area and tax judge in the élection; M. Salomon Chesnard, royal Receveur and Lieutenant to the first Captain of the town; M. Pierre Desbois, Counsel in the bailiwick; Maîtres Philibert Mathoud and Jean Bourchanin, Procurators in the bailiwick; and several other honorable townspeople and merchants: Valentin Sirauldin, Henri Olivier, Philibert Préau, Jean Molard, Étienne Perceval, Nicolas Aubel, Hugues Syon, Paul Grangier, Thibaut Correlier, Laurent Boivin, Henri Doudin, Simon Rossat, Claude de Veylle, Jean Renard, Jean Cochouol, Nicolas Soldat, and Antoine Trambly.

M. Moisson declared that the reason for this meeting was exceptional in character, since it was concerned more with piety than with policy.

The first point is to provide for the poor persons of this town, as God commands; a charitable work that can be done by the means mentioned, obviating the importunate solicitations of those poor persons at the churches and at the doors of people’s homes, where they receive alms liberally. That is the reason why most of the poor persons, even the able-bodied, are unwilling to do anything. A few years ago people wanted to remedy this with a hospice where they would be enclosed; when a visitation was made, only half of the poor persons there were willing to admit that they were poor, for fear lest they be kept locked up. Nevertheless, when people realized that the measure was unsuitable, especially because of the misconduct of the enclosed poor in towns where these hospices were established, they did not follow suit in Mâcon.

There is at this time a very pious, devout priest, chaplain of the General of the Galleys, who has shared the methods whereby assistance and food have been provided for the poor persons in Trévoux and other neighboring towns. The first one is to take an accurate census to determine the number of poor persons, able-bodied as well as disabled, who are in this town.
The second point is that M. de Trémon, the magistrate in charge of this town, has made it known that Carmelite nuns want to be established in the town, and all they need is the consent of the inhabitants, with no expense to the people. The assembly is asked to consider these matters.

The Lieutenant General said that both proposals are quite laudable and should be adopted because they are charitable, pious, and commendable, and that, if possible—since it is easy to do—this Charity should be established. It will obviate the importunate solicitations of the poor, assuring that, if everyone voluntarily donates something, it will be much less than what they usually give at their own doors and at church to the poor persons, who must be instructed, made to fear with an awe founded on love, which is to catechize them and have them receive Communion in order to have them obey willingly, with no need for a building because they cannot be detained in an enclosed hospice. However, capable persons must be carefully chosen to take care of this and to collect the donations and alms to be distributed to them as judged best. To carry this out, an extensive, accurate investigation of the poor must be done to determine the number of the able-bodied as well as the disabled. This is necessary in order to provide for them, show them the kind of behavior and way of living that is desired for their good and salvation, see that a fund of voluntary alms is set up for a granary and storeroom, and have the young children learn some trades in order to give them the means of earning their own living. The clergy will be asked to contribute to this, together with every group in the town in general and personally. Collectors and poor boxes will have to be assigned for the churches, shops, and inns, along with the assurance that some pious, devout Ladies will devote themselves to visit and serve the sick poor. All these things, however, will be voluntary. In addition, one or two persons from each group in the town should take turns as Directors and Administrators for one year.

The Dean of Saint-Vincent stated that it is an immense consolation to see an increase and continuation of the piety and devotion that the late Bishop of Mâcon first desired to establish, and a sure sign of God's special care for us, considering particularly that poor
persons are so praiseworthy in the Gospel. Even though this may seem difficult, it must be believed that God will make everything easy, since not only is it a question of the material food of those who are poor but also of the spiritual. They will contribute very willingly to this, even from their church revenues intended for almsgiving.

M. Chandon, the former Lieutenant for Criminal Affairs, said that everyone not only accepts but embraces wholeheartedly and zealously what has been proposed; and since it is a question of charity and the service of God being put into action, nothing will be impossible.

Messieurs Fevron and de Moras were asked to explain to the Provost and Canons of Saint-Pierre Church the project of this very commendable Charity, and they promised to do so.

The King’s Procurator said that the undertaking is so charitable and pious that he now thinks that this group is not as large as he would desire. Everyone is in accord with this and willingly contributes to the almsgiving, joined to the instruction the poor will receive about praying and serving God as well as for the trades in which they will be employed.

He also thinks the Carmelite nuns should be welcomed.

President de Pise stated that both proposals are so holy and laudable that they should be adopted, and he will willingly contribute to the Charity.

M. Sirauldin said that this is an inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so the proposals should be adopted and work begun for the poor.

All the other aforementioned persons present were of the same opinion.

After the resolution to continue such a holy, praiseworthy Charity, it was also decided unanimously that the Carmelite nuns will be welcome in the town of Mâcon. The clergy are asked, beginning now, to appoint one member of each of their Chapters who, together with those chosen after this, will bring to ten the number of Directors and Administrators of the Charity, namely, the two who will be named by the representatives of the church, in addition to the Dean, if he so wishes; the King’s Procurator; Messieurs Desagie and de la Fonteyne, Town Magistrates; M. Arcelin, Provost; M. Desboys,
Six of these men may deliberate upon an issue in the absence of the others. The work will begin with a general census, to be taken to ascertain the number of able-bodied and disabled poor persons. The gentlemen will meet at noon every Sunday and will ask the Administrators of the hospital to help them. All the poor persons will go to Saint-Nizier Church to hear Holy Mass, the exhortation, and the catechism lesson on the days they will be instructed to do so.

PERRIER

On Friday, September 17, 1621, there met in the town hall of Mâcon, the Lieutenant General; Chandon, the Dean; M. Moisson, the King’s Counsel; M. Arcelin, the Provost; M. Desboys, lawyer; M. Salomon Chesnard, royal Receveur; M. Pierre Desagie; the Honorable Antoine de la Fonteyne; Messire Philibert Mathoud, Procurator; and the Honorable Valentin Sirauldin.

It was proposed that, to inaugurate the establishment of Christian charity, in conformity with the consent and resolutions of yesterday, money needed to be found—at least two hundred écus—to provide for the poor persons of this town, while awaiting the alms and donations of respectable people.

Having considered that point, it was resolved that all the income, pensions, and foundations designated for l’Aumône¹ should be collected and pooled in order to accomplish this, and that the general census would begin immediately to ascertain the number of poor persons. The Bishop of Mâcon will be notified and asked to authorize and bless the work.

The gentlemen went immediately to see the Bishop of Mâcon. When they explained to him what had taken place, he said that he praises God for such a holy plan and, beginning now, authorizes all that has been and will be done, asking all the gentlemen to kindly continue such a good work, to which he himself desires to contribute.

PERRIER

¹L’Aumône ("charity" or "alms") was the name by which the Charity of Mâcon was known.
On Friday, September 17, 1621, at the Chapter meeting in the Chapter hall of the Mâcon church, at the sound of the clock, met in session in the usual manner the venerable and distinguished gentlemen Messires Nicolas Chandon, Dean; François de Pise, Cantor; Noël Denaups of Mâcon; Daniel Laurent of Rousset; Gratien Bernard of Verissey; and Jean de Nobles of Vaux-Renard, Archdeacons; François de Mouthaudry, Pierre Jouchet, Jean Pommier, Philibert Allegré, Aimé Demeaulx, Antoine Bergier, Philibert Morel, Louis Denaups, and Jean Dinet, Capitular Canons; assisted by Messire François Broyer, Procurator General of these gentlemen.

The Dean explained that yesterday he was called to the town hall, where this proposal was made to him by a priest, claiming to be the chaplain of the General of the Galleys, to provide food and sustenance for the poor people who are begging both throughout the town and at the churches. The proposal was made to remedy the abuse of many persons who are begging without necessity. The priests at Saint-Pierre were notified to go to the meeting in the place where it was held; since, however, none of those gentlemen was in town, M. Fevron and M. Deucoras were asked to attend so they could report to the gentlemen the substance of the meeting. It was decided there to appoint one or two members of the said Company to assist the Lieutenants General of Civil and Criminal Affairs, together with the aldermen and commissioners delegated to take inventory of the number of poor persons in the town. Then they were to find a way to feed those who cannot work because of illness or old age, and to require those who can work to do so. They also decided to name certain persons to instruct the young people and some priests to say Mass for them on the Sundays and holy days of the year. To cover the maintenance, each will give whatever he wishes.

in alms, and a box or container will be placed in all the churches to collect what each person chooses to donate.

After this explanation, the members appointed the Dean to find out about the institution, on condition that he make no promises nor give any revenue from their alms until they are first fully informed about it. The Dean accepted, declaring that he would grant nothing without apprising the gentlemen of everything they will ask them, and that he accepted that responsibility for this year only.

136. - REGULATIONS FOR A COMBINED CHARITY

JESUS, MARIA

Regulations of the Company of the Charity

The Company of the Charity shall be established in the town of . . . to assist, corporally and spiritually, the poor persons of the town and the villages dependent on it: spiritually by seeing that they are instructed in doctrine and Christian piety; corporally, by seeing that those who are able to work learn a trade and earn their own living, and by giving others the means of subsistence. It also aims to assist the sick poor of the town, according to the order of the Association of the Charity established in M. . . . By this means, it will be united to the company, but in such a way that, to avoid confusion, the ministry will be divided: the men will have the care of healthy persons, and the women will have the care of the sick and everything related to this.

The officers of the Company committed to this may not take any decisions regarding what depends on the association, since the Rector and the officers of the association are, and will be, responsible for this, as it has been until now, in line with the regulations written below. The union will have one and the same patron and the same spiritual exercises for the first Sunday of the month, according to


1Probably Mâcon.
the regulations of the association written below. In this it will carry out the command God gives us in the fifteenth [chapter] of Deuteronomy, namely, to act in such a way that we do not have among us any poor persons who are begging, and to fulfill His desire that we love one another and procure the spiritual and corporal salvation of one another, as His Son Jesus has loved us and constantly procures for us.

Patron

The patron of this Company will be Our Lord Jesus, who is Charity personified.

Membership

It will be composed of men and women known for their virtue and integrity, who will be called Servants of the Poor. The women will be received only with the consent of their husbands or parents and, to avoid confusion, both men and women will be limited to a certain number.

Offices, and first, that of Commander

First, a Commander will be elected, who will preside at the meetings together with the Pastor. Together they will see that the present regulations and the directives given at the meetings are observed and carried out with fidelity, charity, and diligence.

Assistants or Advisers

Two members of the Company will be elected to act as advisers of the Pastor who is the Prior and the Commander. One of them will represent the Commander and take over his responsibilities in his absence.
Treasurer

The Company will also elect a Treasurer, who will receive and keep the money of the Company, using it according to its directions. He will also give an annual account of it; in addition, he will record the resolutions of the Company in a register he will keep for this purpose.

Visitor

Lastly, a Visitor will be elected, whose duty will be to inquire about the bashful poor, widows, orphans, poor civil and criminal prisoners, and all other persons in distress in order to visit and console them, and to help them as the case will require and the assembly directs. He will also take care to see that all the poor persons attend catechism sessions twice a week and go to confession and Communion on the first Sunday of the month.

Election of Officers

The officers will be elected by the Company by a plurality of votes and will be in office for two years only.

Duty of the Servants of the Poor

The Servants of the Poor will each take their day in order and will visit the workshop set up to assist those who are poor. They will see that the poor persons do their duty and that everything goes according to the regulations, informing the Prior and Commander of what is needed so that they may arrange matters. They will take up the collection on Sundays and feast days, each in turn, and perform the spiritual exercises mentioned below.

How to meet the needs of persons who are poor and to help them earn their own living

All the poor . . . are either little children from four to seven or eight years of age, or youths between eight and fifteen to twenty
years old, or who are older but disabled, or elderly persons who can earn only part of their living or are unable to do anything. The little children, the disabled, and those who are aged and infirm will be given weekly what they need to get by; to those who will earn part of their own living the Company will give the other part. The youths will be placed in some modest trade, such as that of a weaver, which costs only three or four écus per apprentice; or a workshop will be set up for some simple work such as making worsted stockings, as described below:

Workshop

All the youths will be brought together in some suitable rented house, where they will be helped to live and work under the direction of a priest and the leadership of a master workman, in accord with the present regulations.

Office of the priest in charge of the workshop

It will be the duty of the priest to teach the apprentices and all the other poor persons doctrine and Christian piety. This will be done in the church after Vespers on feast days; and on Tuesdays and Fridays, in the workshop at 1 o’clock; he will spend about half an hour at this. On Sundays and feast days, he will lead the apprentices in line, two by two, to Mass and Vespers; on Saturdays and the eves of great feasts, he will do so for Vespers only, taking them home in the same manner. He will have the apprentices, as well as the other poor persons living on alms, go to confession and Communion on the first Sunday of every month and on solemn feast days. He will be present at dinner and supper with the apprentices and will not be allowed to go to the country or to take any poor person into the workshop without the consent of the officers of the Charity.

Duty of the master workman of the workshop

It will be the duty of the master workman to teach his trade to the children whom the officers of the Charity will place at the work-
shop in line with the instructions given here, and he will not be allowed to accept or dismiss any apprentice for any reason whatsoever, without the orders of the officers of the Charity, who have full responsibility for the workshop.

Apprentices of the workshop

The poor apprentices, together with their parents, will give their word on oath to teach their trade, free of charge, to the poor children of the town who will come after them, whenever the officers of the Charity direct them to do so, and the apprentices whom they will teach will be fed by the Company.

Daily schedule of the workshop

The said poor persons will rise at 4 a.m., be dressed by 4:30 a.m., pray until 5:00 a.m., and work until the bell rings for the first Mass, which they will hear, going in line, two by two, and returning in the same way. They will have breakfast at 8:00 a.m.; at noon, they will eat lunch in silence, with reading, stop for a snack at 3:30 p.m., eat supper at 7:00 p.m., then have recreation until 7:45 p.m., say their prayers, and examine their consciences; after which they will go to bed at 8:00 p.m.

Practice of the first Sunday of the month

So that the men and women Servants of the Poor may acquire more and more the true spirit of charity, on the first Sunday of the month they will go to the chapel of the Charity to hear Holy Mass, which will be celebrated for the Company immediately after Lauds. They will go to confession and receive Communion if their affairs allow; after Vespers they will participate in the Litany of Jesus or of the Blessed Virgin, a lighted candle in hand, and listen to the exhortation that will be given. Then the officers will meet to discuss the spiritual and temporal needs of the poor and the needs of the workshop, each giving a report of what he did by virtue of his office, and all will decide, by a plurality of votes, on some means of remedying
them. The votes will be collected by the priest who is Prior or, in his absence, by the Commander; and no one, after having cast his vote, will be allowed to dispute with others who were of the contrary opinion.

*Daily practices and mutual charity of the men and women Servants of the Poor*

They will say five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys daily to honor Our Lord Jesus and His Holy Mother and to obtain their blessings on the work. Moreover, to foster mutual love and to preserve the spirit of Jesus among themselves, they will visit one another when they are sick, comforting those in distress, and will be present for the administration of the last sacraments and the burial. One Mass will be said for every Servant of the Poor immediately after their death. None of this, however, obliges under pain of mortal or venial sin.

*Means of defraying this expense*

The means of defraying this expense is based partly on the annual revenue of the hospital, partly on the collections that the Servants of the Poor, each in turn, take up in the churches on Sundays and feast days, and partly on the boxes placed in inns, where the landladies do the charity of asking something of those who go there. Be that as it may, God in His goodness has provided so well for this until now that nothing has been lacking for the support of the work. It is fitting, therefore, that He be thanked and praised forever, since, by this means, His desire that we take care of the poor is fulfilled; the rich receive a million blessings in this world and eternal life in the next; the poor are instructed in the fear of God, taught how to earn their own living, and helped in their need; and lastly, the towns are freed of many depraved idlers and profit from the sale of the work done by the poor.