137. - REGULATIONS FOR THE COMBINED CHARITY OF COURBOIN

(June 19, 1622)

Purpose for which it will be instituted

The Association of the Charity will be instituted . . . have them taught the catechism every Sunday and receive the sacraments on the first Sunday of every month, feed and provide medical care for the sick poor, help those to die well . . .

Membership

It will be composed of men, wives, and unmarried women, of which the last mentioned . . .

Ministry of the men and, first, how to provide for able-bodied persons

The Directors of the association will place poor children . . .

How the expenses of able-bodied poor persons will be defrayed

In some places, the expenses of the able-bodied will be defrayed by the collections which the Servants of the Poor, each in turn, take up in the churches on Sundays and feast days; in others, by part of the income of hospitals and what each inhabitant gives charitably every week; in still others, by purchasing a few sheep, which those who already have some, have the charity to feed—some one, some two, some more, some less, each according to his or her ability—and from the sale of their wool, with the proceeds going to the association. Several may share in feeding one person, depending on whether there are more or fewer Associates and poor persons, in such a way that they may give each poor person who cannot work one and a half livres of bread a day, along with a piece of cheese or some butter. Those who earn part of their living are given six to

Document 137. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, copy. These regulations closely resemble those of Joigny (Doc. 132a).
eight livres of bread a week. In return, those poor persons are re­
quired to assist at the early Mass daily, attend the catechism lesson 
and learn it, and go to confession and Communion on the first 
Sunday of every month, as stated in the first article.

*Officers*

To govern the men's association the Company will elect three 
Associates by a plurality of votes. Together with a priest who will 
be the Rector of the association, they will have full responsibility 
for it. One of them will be appointed Prior, another Treasurer, and 
another Visitor of the Poor, and will be in office for two years only.

*Rector*

The Rector will be the Superior of the men's ministry and of that 
of . . .

*Prior*

The Prior will do all in his power, together with the Rector . . .

*Treasurer*

The Treasurer will represent the Prior in his absence and act on 
his authority . . . in the presence of the Directors and Associates, 
and of the Judge and *Procureur Fiscal* who will be present, if they 
think it advisable. He may not, however, ask for or expect any sal­
ary for this. The Treasurer will also record in a register he will keep 
for this purpose the resolutions taken at the meetings.

*Visitor of the Poor*

The Visitor of the Poor will make inquiries about the bashful 
poor, widows, orphans, and other persons in distress in order to go 
to visit them . . .
Associate Servant

The Directors will appoint one of the Associates to be an Associate Servant of the Charity, and he will call together the Directors and the Associates whenever the Rector or Prior, or one of the officers, each in order, instructs him to do so. He will likewise be in office for two years only. Should he have to be sent to the country or to spend more than two hours time for the association.

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 and on the advice of the Rector and other officers. 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 on the following day.

Meals for the patients

Each patient will have as much bread as he or she can reasonably eat for dinner.

Order the Ladies of Charity will follow in serving the patients

Each Lady of Charity will take her day to prepare the food for the patients, which they will take to their home and serve them.

Burial of poor persons who die

So that the association may practice fully the works of mercy.

How the expenses of the sick poor will be defrayed

God, in His Divine Providence, has until now made sufficient provision for defraying the expenses of this work, both by the col-
lections the Ladies of Charity, each in turn, take up in the churches, daily in some places and on Sundays and feast days in others.

**Officers in general**

To oversee the women's Charity, there will be three officers: the Prioress, the Treasurer, and the Supervisor of Furnishings. Together with the Rector and a Procurator, they will have full responsibility for the work of the sick poor and what depends on it. They will be in office for two years only and will be elected in the same way as the men.

**Prioress**

The Prioress will do her utmost to see that the present regulations are observed by the Ladies of Charity and that the resolutions taken at the meetings are implemented promptly and charitably. In a word, she will govern this family of Our Lord as a respectable woman governs her household.

**Treasurer or First Assistant**

The Treasurer will represent the Prioress in her absence and will take over her responsibilities. She will receive and keep the money in a strongbox having two keys, of which the Prioress will have one and she the other, but she will be authorized to have control of only enough money to feed the sick poor for a month, and will not be allowed to open the strongbox except in the presence of the Prioress. She will use the money according to the instructions of the Rector, Prioress, and Supervisor of Furnishings. She will give an annual account of it in the presence of the Rector, the Director of the men's association, the Procurator, the Prioress, the Second Assistant, and the Judge and the *Procureur Fiscal*, in the manner mentioned above. They will give full credence to the amounts recorded by her.

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*The text from here to the section *Matters common to men and women Servants of the Poor* corresponds to the missing page referred to in Doc. 132a, n. 2.*
as expenditures, on condition that she not open the collection boxes and the boxes placed in the inns unless one of the aforesaid gentlemen is present. The report of the accounts will be given in the chapel of the Charity after Vespers on the day after the feast of All Saints. Lest those who should be present excuse themselves from this meeting because they were not informed of it, the Rector will announce it from the pulpit the day before. The same will be done for the report of accounts for the men’s group, on the day after Pentecost.

**Supervisor of Furnishings or Second Assistant**

Like the Treasurer, the Supervisor of Furnishings will serve as adviser to the Superioress; she will look after the furnishings of the association, have the linen washed and mended when necessary, and, when she leaves office, give an account of what has been entrusted to her.

**Procurator of the women’s Charity**

The women officers will elect a Procurator, also every two years, on the day after the feast of All Saints. It will be his duty to assist the Rector at all the meetings he will have with the officers and to keep the immovable goods of the women’s association. He may not, however, farm or draw up any contracts unless the Rector and officers are present and give their consent. The money will be entrusted to the Treasurer as soon as he receives it, and she will give him a receipt for it, by means of which he will be legally released from his obligation.

**Nurses of the Sick Poor**

The Ladies of Charity will choose two devout poor women to nurse patients who are destitute and deprived of any other assistance. These nurses will be paid from the common funds of the association and admitted into it. They will be called Nurses of the Sick Poor and will also be of service by informing the Ladies of Charity whenever they should meet.
Matters common to men and women Servants of the Poor.

Election of officers

The male officers will complete their two-year term on the day after Pentecost, and will present new ones to the association assembled in a body after Vespers of the day. The latter will give their approval of them, if they think suitable, by a plurality of votes, and others will be appointed and established. The women officers will do likewise on the day after All Saints’ Day.

Fidelity of the men and women officers in allowing only the truly poor and the truly sick to share in the alms of the association

Because the Charity has been instituted only for persons who are truly poor and truly sick, the officers will allow to share in the alms of the association only those whom they will, in conscience, judge to be truly poor and sick. And so that favoritism, which is the downfall of good works, may not slip into this one, when the officers take up their responsibility they will promise not to use their influence, either directly or indirectly, to have anyone admitted to receive the alms of the association. . . .

Mass, Communion, litany, exhortations, and the reading of the present regulations that should take place every first or third Sunday of the month

So that the members of the Charity may profit from and be strengthened more and more in the spirit of charity, they will come together every first or third Sunday of the month in the chapel designated for the Charity. They will hear Mass there in the morning, and those who wish to go to confession and receive Communion—as all are encouraged to do—will do so. After dinner. . . .

Love of Our Lord

Since one of the principal aims of this association is to honor Our Lord and His Holy Mother, the members of the Charity will be encouraged to show them great honor. . . .
Mutual charity they should have for one another

The men and women Associates 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 the soul of no Associate will leave this world except in a good state. They will be present in a body for the administration of the last sacraments and the burial of the Associates and Nurses of the Sick Poor, for whose souls they will have celebrated. . . .

Zeal the Associates will have for preserving the women's association as well as their own

And because the men's association and that of the women is one same association, having the same 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 infirm to the women—and because Our Lord draws no less. . . .

Formula to be used for the firm resolution of the Servants of the Poor

To make this association more enduring, its Rector . . . and all the men and women Associates will repeat aloud after the Rector: “I . . ., Associate of the Association of the Charity, intend to observe its regulations and to do my utmost to foster the preservation and growth of the association, with the help of God, which I humbly ask of Him for this purpose.”

APPROVAL OF THE CONFRATERNITY

To the Bishop of Soissons or his Vicar-General
Lady Françoise-Marguerite de Silly, Comtesse de Joigny, humbly petitions, stating that, knowing from experience the great good arising from the Association of the Charity established in several of her towns and villages, she would like to have it established in her
villages that are dependent on your diocese and on the barony of Montmirail.

In consideration of this, Excellency, may it please you to permit the establishment of the Charity in these villages according to the regulations given above, and to entrust her chaplain, M. Vincent de Paul, priest and Bachelor of Theology, with making the establishment, and you will be doing a work pleasing to God. You will also greatly oblige the Lady and do great good for the poor.

Drawn up in Montmirail, May 6, 1622.

FRANÇOISE-MARGUERITE DE SILLY

We, Charles de Macqueville, by the grace of God and of the Holy Apostolic See Bishop of Soissons, having read the previously written statutes and ordinances of the Association of the Charity, together with the request that has also been made in writing, have permitted and by these present letters do permit the Lady to have the Association of the Charity established in all the villages belonging to her in our diocese. For this purpose we entrust her chaplain, M. Vincent de Paul, priest and Bachelor of Theology, with making the establishment, and we grant forty days indulgence to all those who enter the association.

Given in Soissons, May 13, 1622.

CHARLES, Bishop of Soissons

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONFRATERNITY

Today, June 19, 1622, in the parish church of Courboin, in the presence of Brother Pierre Dieu, Pastor in Courboin and professed religious of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes; and of Lady Françoise-Marguerite de Silly, Comtesse de Joigny, Baronne de Montmirail, and Lady of the place, Courboin; and of the majority of the inhabitants of Courboin, assembled in the church at the hour for Vespers, I, Vincent de Paul, priest, Bachelor of Theology, and chaplain of the Lady, delegated by His Excellency the Bishop of Soissons to make
the establishment of the Association of the Charity in Courboin and other villages dependent on the Soissons diocese and belonging to the Lady, in accord with what is stated in the permission of the Bishop, transcribed above, of which the original has been given to the officers of the Charity of Chamblon, attest to all those whom it may concern that, by virtue of that permission, I have established and do establish the Association of the Charity in the church of Courboin, in the chapel formerly known as Notre-Dame, which is the one closest to the main altar of the church, and this chapel shall henceforth be called the Jesus chapel or the chapel of the Charity.

After relating in what the association consists and explaining the articles of its regulations given above, I urged those wishing to become members to come forward and be enrolled. Whereupon the undersigned presented themselves and requested me to enroll them in the association, which I did: first, J.-P. Dieu the Pastor of Courboin, then Françoise-Marguerite de Silly, V. Lorain, Jacques Clément, P. Brisson, Jean Lillesson, N. Gutinot, Nicolas Naudé, J. Hiernaut, Ch. Pourié, Cl. Mariquot, J. Guillou, L. Brission, N. Naudé, G. Tizon, E. Dubois, Sarrasin, Denis Dubois, J. Brission, P. de la Noue, and J. Le Jeune.

In addition to the above who signed, others were enrolled in the association, whose names are written on the other side; it should be understood for these that the wives are members of the Charity as well as their husbands.

Proceeding to the election of officers for the men, the following were elected: Pierre Naudé, Prior; Gilbert Merlin, Treasurer; Jacques Clément, Visitor of the Poor; and Claude Conte, Associate Servant. For the women officers: Jeanne Dubois, wife of Pierre Sarrasin, Prioress; Jeanne Roses, wife of Augustin Dubois, Treasurer; Marguerite Naudé, wife of Jean Aymon, Second Assistant; and Pierre Brission, Procurator of the sick.

Drawn up in Courboin the above day and year.

V. DEPAUL, priest
We, Vincent de Paul, priest, Licentiate in Canon Law, and Principal of the Collège des Bons-Enfants, contiguous to the Porte Saint-Victor, by virtue of the authority given us by His Excellency the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris, to erect and establish the Confraternity of Charity in places in his diocese that we will judge appropriate, have, by the aforesaid authority and with the consent of the inhabitants of the parish in Montreuil, along the Bois de Vincennes, erected and established and do erect and establish it in Montreuil. And, to avoid the proliferation of confraternities, we have, with the consent of the members of the Confraternity of Saint-Nom-de-Jésus, united and incorporated and do unite and incorporate the Confraternity of Charity to that of Saint-Nom-de-Jésus established in Montreuil, since the members have promised, and do promise, to perform the following holy exercises, which are customary in the Confraternity of Charity, namely:

To assist, spiritually and corporally, all the sick poor of the parish in Montreuil: spiritually, by helping to die well those who seem close to death and by having those who will recover resolve never to offend God again; and corporally, by giving them everything necessary by way of food and medicine, after they have been to confession and received Communion.

For this purpose, the members will each take their day to serve the sick poor, in the order in which the blessed bread is distributed. They will prepare their dinner and supper, which they will take to their homes. For each meal, they will give the patient as much bread as he or she can eat and a half-pint of wine, Paris measure; for dinner, on days when meat can be eaten, five ounces of mutton or veal and the same for supper; on days of abstinence, two eggs and a little butter in the morning, along with some soup; and the same in the

evening. The sick poor will be admitted to the care of the confraternity and dismissed by the Pastor and those in charge of it.

To cover the expense of food for the patients, the members will each, in turn, take up a collection on Sundays and feast days in the church in Montreuil, and that same day will give the collection money to the Treasurer, who will be one of the officers of the Confraternity of Saint-Nom-de-Jésus, in the presence of the other, who will check the collections.

The money of the confraternity will be kept in a strongbox with three keys, of which each officer will keep one, so that none of them may withdraw the money without the other. For current expenses, the Treasurer, who will be one of the officers, will keep on hand four écus and no more, and will be obliged to give an accounting in the presence of the members of the parish on the day stipulated in the regulations of the Confraternity of Saint-Nom-de-Jésus. And so that each member may know more clearly what he is obliged to do, the present regulations will be read aloud in the church by the Pastor or someone else he will choose, after Vespers every first Sunday of the month for a year; after that, it will be done after Vespers on the feast day of the confraternity. None of this, however, obliges under pain of mortal or venial sin.

Drawn up in Montreuil, April 11, 1627, in the presence of the undersigned.

VINCENT DEPAUL

FRANÇOIS, Archibishop of Paris

139. - REGULATIONS FOR THE CHARITY OF WOMEN (SAINT-SAUVEUR PARISH, PARIS) (1629)

Organization of the confraternity instituted at Saint-Sauveur Church by the Pastor of the place for visits to the sick poor of the parish.

Before the Ladies go to visit the sick poor, the doctor, who is M. Lévesque, a physician of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris, goes to see them and prescribes what is necessary for them, medicine as well as bloodletting. The orders are brought to the Superioress for her to sign and to admit the patients into the confraternity if she sees, after careful investigation, that they meet the requirements, namely:

That they have been living in the parish for at least three months and their illness is not chronic because certain ones sometimes last seven or eight months and longer. This would mean that, because of the length of the illness, many other patients could not be taken care of.

The physician sends the Superioress in writing a certificate indicating that the Ladies can go there without any danger. Or, if he has not yet been able to make a diagnosis because there are some latent illnesses, he may give another note to have food sent to them, as he judges necessary.

All of this is so that the Ladies are not placed in any danger and the confraternity may always remain.

The priest who does this charity must see the patients every day because sick persons have many setbacks.

Three Ladies are elected to take charge of the confraternity, namely, the Superioress, the Treasurer, and the Supervisor of Furnishings of the confraternity. They [are] elected by the votes of several persons gathered together for the institution of the confraternity, each one of whom is given her responsibility.

The Superioress is responsible for visiting the patients she may go to see on the doctor’s orders. She and a companion should visit them twice a week, but they should never go alone nor before meals.

The Treasurer keeps the money, for which a collection is taken up [for] the sick poor of the area every Sunday by the church. The wives and not the unmarried women take up this collection.

The Ladies in charge may do nothing without consulting one another.

The Supervisor of Furnishings will look after the mattresses, sheets, blankets, shirts, and anything else needed for the sick be-
cause it is very necessary that there be someone to take care of the furnishings.

Before a Confraternity of Charity is erected, people could have said: “We have no furnishings for the poor;” however, once the group is formed, after the election all the Ladies enrolled in it are asked what they would like to donate. One will say, “I am giving two or three sheets,” and others, “some shirts,” and so on. At the same time someone writes all this down for fear that it may be forgotten, and that is how supplies for the sick poor are built up.

The Lady who keeps the furnishings takes the trouble, for the love of God, to be careful in lending them to patients and of getting them back, so that nothing gets lost.

The Ladies of this confraternity should have the charity to visit one another when they are ill or in distress and to be present when they die. They should also have a Mass offered for one another when one dies and should receive Communion for the intention of the deceased.

140. - REGULATIONS FOR THE CHARITY (SAINT-SAUVEUR PARISH, PARIS) - CONCLUSION

(1629)

... Therefore, it is necessary to contact the druggist for enemas and medicines, and the surgeon for bloodletting, cauterizing, and applying leeches.

When the Treasurer pays for them each month, she should get the receipts signed by the doctor and the Superioress.

For the butcher, the baker, and the innkeeper, a set price should be determined for the entire year for one livre of veal and mutton, a dozen loaves of bread, and a pint of wine.
With regard to the rule of visiting poor persons, both for the confraternity that has been instituted and for the Ladies enrolled in it, they will go in obedience to their Superioress.

Some have the visits made in the order in which the blessed bread is distributed. This visit should be made twice a day, bringing the sick dinner and supper at the expense of the confraternity, and they themselves should feed them without expecting anyone else to do it.

The first day of this Institute, the three Superiors will begin to prepare the stew. Two Ladies will make the visits together; one will make the stew one day, and another the next, and will continue one after the other.

They will give each soldier [sic] two or three servings of broth, ten ounces of meat—veal or mutton—and a loaf of bread. This will depend on the attention of those who will visit them because it is hard to say how much, for there are some patients to whom nothing should be given because they are unable to eat. Eggs are given to those who cannot eat meat.

Half a setier of wine should be given to each patient for the day, provided the doctor judges this advisable.

Care should be taken to give them the proper amount of bread, wine, and meat and to find good food.

On days of abstinence, those who are abstaining are given soup with some greens in it, three eggs with a small portion of butter, and two apples.

As for visits to the sick poor, they are very worthwhile for their salvation and for our own, for during these visits, we can instruct parents and their children, inquire after them—which is helpful for their conversion—and encourage them to go to confession and Communion once a month, to live in peace in their families, and to instruct them as Christians.

The Superioress is to observe when the patients are able to do without the visit, and tell them two or three days beforehand that they will be saying good-bye to them and that they should praise God for restoring them to health, not to spend any time living in sin, and set matters aright by a good confession.
The Company of women of the Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet Charity will be established in Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet parish, united to the Confraternity of the Most Blessed Sacrament, to honor Our Lord Jesus Christ its patron and His Holy Mother, in order to assist persons in the parish who are poor: spiritually, by obtaining that those who seem to be close to death leave this world in a good state and that those who will recover resolve not to offend God again; and corporally, by giving them food and medicines.

The Company will be composed of a limited number of wives and unmarried women. By a plurality of votes collected by the Pastor, they will elect three of their members, one of whom will be the Superioress, another the Treasurer, and the other the Supervisor of Furnishings. These three women will have full responsibility for the Company, together with the Pastor and a devout parishioner appointed by him. The officers will have an eighteen-month term, some leaving office the day after the feast of Saint John and others the day following New Year's Day. On those days a new election will be held, beginning with the Supervisor of Furnishings, then the Treasurer, and lastly the Superioress. They may, however, continue for another eighteen months, for one more term only, if it is deemed expedient.

The Superioress will see that the present regulations are observed and that each member of the Company performs her ministry well. She will also accept into the care of the Company the sick poor, being sure that they go to confession and Communion promptly and, as far as possible, that they are assisted by a priest at the hour of death. She will discharge the others, on the advice of the other officers, after receiving that of the doctor.

The Treasurer will act as adviser to the Superioress. She will keep the money in a strongbox with two separate locks, to which the
Superioress will have one key and she the other. She may, however, keep ten écus on hand for current expenses, and will record all donations and expenditures in écus, of which she will give an account the day after she leaves office, in the presence of the Pastor, the parishioner appointed by him, and the other two officers.

The Supervisor of Furnishings will also act as adviser to the Superioress. She will maintain the furnishings, have the linen washed and mended, take care that they are given to and returned from the patients, and do whatever else is needed to arrange the bedrooms of the sick poor properly when the Blessed Sacrament is brought to them, at which the Ladies of the Company may be present, if they are informed of this and can do so conveniently. The Supervisor of Furnishings will also give an account the day after she leaves office.

The Ladies of Charity will consider themselves blessed for having been chosen by God as Servants of the Poor, who represent Him so efficaciously. And, in order to become capable of serving them worthily, they will do their utmost to learn how to live as good Christians, which will be easy for them by being present as often as they can—both they and their families—at sermons, catechism, and Mass in their parishes. They will receive Communion at least on the first Sunday of the month; before going to bed and as soon as they have risen, they will kneel down to adore God. In every way they can, they will show honor to the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar, going as often as possible to the Mass celebrated in the parish. They will always show respect for churches, where they should behave with the decorum of a Christian.

The Ladies of the Company will take their turns, two by two, to serve the sick poor. They will also take up the collection in turn at church on solemn feast days and will attend low Mass on the first Thursday of the month—or the second one, when a feast day falls on the first one. This Mass will be offered from the alms of the Ladies of Charity for the poor persons who die each month and to give them renewed strength and courage to serve the sick, being ever more strongly united by the merits of the Holy Sacrifice; if convenient, they will also receive Communion on this day. They will
cherish one another as sisters whom Our Lord has united by the bond of His holy love and will visit and console one another in their trials and illnesses. They will do their utmost to prepare someone to replace them before their death; as far as possible, they will go in a body to the funeral of those who die. A certain number of them will also attend the funerals of the sick poor whom they will have served when they were ill, and see that the poor who die are always brought to the church and some prayer chanted over their remains before the burial. They will have one Mass celebrated at their own expense for each Lady of the Company after her death, going to confession and receiving Communion for her on the day she dies, or as soon as they can. They will do the same for the Pastor and the person appointed by him, when they die.

They will take care to have a physician or surgeon visit the sick poor before admitting them to the care of the Charity, who will warn them whenever there is danger of contagion.

And because Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet parish is full of all kinds of poor people, after supplying the provisions of the sick and paying the doctor, druggist, and nurse, if there is still money left over amounting to more than eleven hundred livres, the surplus will be distributed to other poor persons, always giving preference to any sickly bashful poor before those who can earn their own living.

The Ladies who are officers of the Charity will choose a woman to nurse the sick poor in case of need, to carry the soup pot, give enemas, and notify the Company of meetings, when necessary. These meetings will be held at least every three months.

Each poor person will be given as much bread as he or she can eat and five ounces of veal or mutton at each meal, along with some soup; except that, for supper, they will be attentive to what the sick poor may like to eat, provided it is not harmful to their health. When the doctor orders them to have some wine, they will be given a further half-setier a day. And, when the patients can no longer tolerate solid meat, they will be given more broth and four eggs for the day.

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1The Pastor at the time was Georges Froger (cf. II, 68, n. 4).
and as much on days of abstinence, and some butter soup with a little egg yolk added to it.

Lastly, the Ladies of Charity will be very solicitous for and desirous of the salvation of the souls of the poor persons, assisting them both by their prayers and by brief instructions. If possible, they will do what they can to see that God is honored in the families of the parish and try to find a schoolteacher there for the future, who will teach the poor thoroughly.

They will take the name of Servants of the Poor.

They will hold the election of officers by a plurality of votes and, after the officers are elected, ask the Pastor for a parishioner to act as adviser to them when needed.

They will decide when the Ladies of Charity will visit the sick and whether it might not be advisable that this be at an earlier time rather than later, provided they do not enter houses where there has been plague since Easter but leave the regular meals at the door.

They will ask the Pastor to name a physician and will determine, with the officers, what will be given to him and to the surgeon as well.

They will notify the Ladies when there is no linen for the poor persons, not requesting any, however, but referring them to the Supervisor of Furnishings, to whom they can give whatever they wish, regardless of how little. If some Ladies want to donate something for burying the dead, they should specify this in giving it.

They will not name the persons who donate something to the association, so as not to hurt the others.

They will strongly recommend that, when each visits on her day, she gives no money and puts nothing extra in the pot other than the ordinary fare. It is, however, permissible for them to donate something to cover the needs they observe, if they wish to do so, but this should be done on another day.
142. - CHARITY OF WOMEN (ARGENTEUIL)

(1634)

To His Excellency the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Archbishop of Paris or to his Vicar-General.

Messire Pierre Blaise, priest, Bachelor of Canon Law, and Pastor in Argenteuil, humbly states that, having learned of the great benefits accruing to the establishment of the Charity of the Sick Poor in the places where it is instituted, he would like to have it set up in the Argenteuil parish, according to the regulations given below. In consideration of this, Excellency, may it please you to permit the establishment of the confraternity in Argenteuil, to approve the regulations, and to authorize Maître Vincent de Paul, Superior of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, to form the establishment; and the petitioner and his parishioners will pray to God for your long and happy life.

Purpose for which the confraternity will be instituted

The Confraternity of Charity will be erected in the parish church of Argenteuil to honor Our Lord Jesus its patron and His Holy Mother, and to assist the sick poor of Argenteuil spiritually and corporally: spiritually, by obtaining that those who seem to be close to death leave this world in a good state and that those who will recover make the resolution never to offend God in the future; corporally, by giving them the food they need; and, lastly, to fulfill Our Lord’s ardent desire that we love one another.

Patron

The patron of the confraternity will be Our Lord Jesus Christ.
Membership

It will be composed of a certain number of respectable, pious wives and unmarried women. The former will be admitted only with the consent of their husbands, and the latter with that of their parents. They will be called Servants of the Poor and will have a respectable townsperson as their Procurator.

Officers

The Servants of the Poor will elect three of their members to be in charge of the confraternity, on the advice of the Pastor and the Procurator. One of the Directresses or officers will be the Prioress; another, First Assistant; and the other, Second Assistant.

Superioress

The Superioress will do her utmost to see that all the elements of the present regulations are observed, that each Servant of the Poor performs her ministry, and that the poor are well assisted. She will also do what she can to increase the revenue of the confraternity, will keep one of the keys to the strongbox where the money is kept, and will refer the sick poor to the care of the confraternity, after they have been to confession and Communion.

First Assistant

The First Assistant will act as adviser to the Prioress, will keep the money for current expenses and one of the keys of the strongbox, in which surplus funds will be kept, and will give an account of them annually on the feast of Saint Louis.¹

¹August 25.
Second Assistant

The Second Assistant will also act as adviser to the Prioress, maintain the furnishings of the Charity, and see that the linen is washed.

Duty of each Servant of the Poor

They will regard the sick poor as their own children, of whom God has made them their mothers. They will serve them in the manner given below, each having her day, and they will take up the collection in turn at the church on Sunday and will attend the Mass of the confraternity, which they will have celebrated on the first Sunday of the month at the expense of the confraternity. They will also participate in the litany that will be chanted after Vespers on Sundays. Those who are able to do so conveniently will go to confession on the first Sunday of the month; they will say three rosaries at the time of the death of each Servant of the Poor, one rosary for each poor person who dies and whom they have helped, and one Our Father and one Hail Mary, morning and evening, for the spiritual and temporal preservation of the confraternity and its benefactors.

How the Servants of the Poor will proceed in serving the patients

Each will take her turn to serve the sick poor, as has been stated, in such a way that the Lady whose day it is will go to the butcher for the meat, to the baker for the bread, and to the innkeeper for the wine, with the list of prices agreed upon, on which it will be noted what she will buy. She will prepare the dinner, take it to the patients, have them eat at nine in the morning, and do the same for supper at about five in the evening. When she has finished her day, she will notify the one who comes after her that it is her turn to serve the patients the next day, give her the lists, and tell her the number and condition of the patients.
Manner of feeding the patients

Each patient will receive four or five ounces of mutton or veal for each meal, as much bread as he or she can reasonably eat, and a half-setier of wine, Paris measure. On days of abstinence, two eggs will be given for each meal in the place of meat.

Mutual charity among themselves

They will cherish one another as sisters who profess to honor Our Lord in the same spirit by the virtue He practiced the most perfectly and which He loved and recommended the most, namely, charity. To this effect, they will visit and help one another, in sickness and in health, and pray for one another, especially in times of illness or death, as has been stated. In a word, they will do their utmost so that they may leave this world in a good state, and will have two Masses offered for those who die. None of this, however, obliges under pain of either mortal or venial sin.

Election of Officers and accounting by the Treasurer

The election of the officers and of their Prioress will be held by the Servants of the Poor, by a plurality of votes, every two years on the day following the feast of Saint Louis. A report of the accounts will be given on the same day in the presence of the Pastor and of each member in the chapel of the Charity. At the same time, the Treasurer will be obliged to hand over to the one who succeeds her the remaining funds she has. The Second Assistant will likewise be obliged at the same time to give over the furnishings to the one who succeeds her.

We, Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris, Councillor of the King in his Council of State, Prince and Grand Master of his chapel, after having examined the request and the regulations of the aforesaid Confraternity of Charity, have approved and do approve its regulations, and have permitted M. Vincent de Paul or some other priest of the above-mentioned Mission to establish the Confraternity of Charity in the parish of Argenteuil, on condition that
the exercises that are to be performed on the first Sunday of the month take place outside the time it is customary to have the Divine Service in the parish. Furthermore, we have granted forty days indulgence, for the first Sunday of the month, to those who enter the confraternity.

Drawn up in Paris, March 17, 1634.

D. E. Gérard, Vicar-General

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONFRATERNITY

We, Vincent de Paul, priest, Superior of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission, attest to all those whom it may concern that, by virtue of the aforesaid permission of His Excellency the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Archbishop of Paris, whereby we have been commissioned for the establishment of the Confraternity of Charity in the church in Argenteuil, we, by the aforementioned authority, when the people had assembled, after explaining to them in what this Confraternity consists and accepting the names of those listed and signed below, who declared that they wished to become members of the Confraternity, established and do establish it in the said Argenteuil. This having been done, we proceeded to the election of officers and of a Procurator and named the following officers by a plurality of votes: Lady Louise Imard, wife of M. Jean Dubois the cloth merchant, Superior; Anne Feron, wife of Macé the butcher, Treasurer; Marguerite Labilon, widow of Antoine David, Supervisor of Furnishings; and Macé the butcher, Procurator.

Drawn up in Argenteuil on the feast of Saint Bartholomew, August 24, 1634.

Vincent de Paul
PART IV

DOCUMENTS PERTAINING
TO THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY

143. - REGULATIONS FOR THE SISTERS OF THE ANGERS
HOSPITAL

(1641)

The Daughters of Charity of the Sick Poor are going to Angers to
honor Our Lord, Father of the Poor, and His Holy Mother, in order
to assist, corporally and spiritually, the sick poor of the Hôtel-Dieu
of the town: corporally, by serving them and giving them food and
medicine; spiritually, by instructing the patients in things necessary
for salvation and seeing that they make a general confession of their
entire past life so that, by this means, those who will die may leave
this world in a good state, and those who will recover may take the
resolution never more to offend God.

The first thing Our Lord asks of them is to love Him supremely
and to perform all their actions for love of Him. The second is to
cherish one another as sisters whom He has bound together by the

Document 143. - In the Archives of the Daughters of Charity there are two drafts of the
Regulations for Angers; the second, in which there is much crossing out and many additions, is in
Saint Vincent's own handwriting. The one used here is the corrected copy of the first draft; the
differences, however, are few and of minor importance. In her notes in Documents, for Doc. 270,
pp. 247-52, Sister Elisabeth Charpy, D.C., indicates the changes that were made. These
Regulations were attached to the contract between the Administration of the hospital and the
Daughters of Charity.

1Saint-Jean l'Évangéliste Hospital in Angers was founded in 1175 by Henry II Plantagenet,
Count of Anjou and King of England, in expiation for the murder of Saint Thomas Becket. In the
twelfth century it was run by Augustinian monks; but, toward the middle of the sixteenth
century, the municipality of Angers named four citizens, called Fathers of the Poor, to take over
its direction. In the seventeenth century, a request was made to Claude de Rueil, Bishop of
Angers (1626-49), for the reorganization of the temporal and spiritual service of the hospital.

2Date written on the back of the first draft.
bond of His love, and to love the sick poor as their lords, since Our Lord is in them and they are in Our Lord.

They will be infinitely grateful for the grace of having been rescued from the dregs of unmarried women and widows and called by God to a divine state in which Kings and Queens have sought and found their sanctification.

For the love of Christ, who has given us the example, they will strive to hold in contempt what the world esteems, and esteem what the world despises. For that purpose, each Sister will seek out what is contemptible, mortify herself in all things, and prefer menial and abject employments to honorable ones. They will stand firm against every temptation to the contrary that will come to them.

They will renounce earthly attachment to their relatives and native regions, changing it into a spiritual one, according to the counsel of Our Lord, who tells us that we cannot be His disciples if we do not hate father and mother, and that no prophet is without honor except in his native place.

They will be faithful to the observance of their Regulations, to the way of life proper to their Little Company, and to the acquisition of solid virtue, especially to having a pure intention to please God in all things, preferring to die rather than to displease Him. To this effect, they will work incessantly at renouncing their own will.

Poverty will be observed exactly among them as a means to preserve them in their vocation, with God’s help. For that purpose, each Sister will always choose for herself whatever is poorest. They will keep neither money nor anything else individually or with some other person. They will manage the property of poor persons as the property of God; they will neither receive nor give any presents, and will be content with the food, clothing, and lodging given them. In a word, they will remember that they were born poor, that they must live as poor persons for the love of the Poorest of the poor, Jesus Christ Our Lord, and that, as such, they must be extremely

³Cf. Lk 14:26. (NAB)
⁴Cf. Mt 13:57. (NAB)
⁵The clause “They will manage the property of poor persons as the property of God” appears in the second draft only.
humble and respectful toward everyone and keep their eyes lowered when speaking to people.

They will use every conceivable precaution to preserve their chastity and will keep watch over their interior and exterior senses. They will not speak to men when they are alone, not even to priests or to the male religious of the house. They will always observe poverty in their dress and head covering.

They will obey their Superiors in this city of Paris in matters of discipline and conduct in internal affairs and will obey the Administrators for external matters concerning hospital regulations for the service of poor persons. They will obey their local Superior for the implementation of the regulations and for everything in general that she will instruct them to do. Their obedience will be prompt, cheerful, total, constant, persevering in everything, and with submission of their own will and judgment, always considering that what they are instructed to do is best. In addition, none of them will speak, write, or receive any letters without the permission of the local Superior, unless it is something from their Father Superior.

They will be content to have their Superior informed of all their failings by those who observe them; every evening they will mention the faults they have committed during the day, doing so honestly, humbly, and simply, and accepting the penance their Superior will give them for this.

They will go to confession and Communion every Sunday and assist at Mass daily. They will pray for half an hour in the morning and the same in the evening; before eating, they will make a brief examination of conscience on the virtue they have proposed to themselves to acquire, and a general examination in the evening. Each day they will read one chapter of the assigned spiritual reading, in addition to reading at table.

They will rise at four o'clock sharp in the morning and offer themselves to God on awakening, adoring and thanking Him for the grace He has granted them of passing the night well, and asking His forgiveness if they have offended Him. They will offer Him their thoughts, words, and works of the day, asking Him for the grace to spend the day in His love. For this purpose they will say: Blessed be
the Holy and undivided Trinity, now and forever, world without end. Amen.

At half past four, they will go to their little oratory and make mental prayer until five. Next they will say the Litany of Jesus and two decades of their rosary, then go to finish dressing and make their beds.

At six o'clock they will go to the ward of the sick, empty the chamber pots, make the beds of the patients, clean the toilets, and administer the medicines. Before going there, they will take a little bread and a finger of wine when they first enter the hospital. On Communion days, they will sniff a little vinegar or rub some of it on their hands.

At seven o'clock they will serve the sickest patients some broth or a fresh egg for breakfast, and a little butter or stewed apples for the others.

After that, they will assist at Holy Mass, if they have not done so at five o'clock, and will be very careful to see that broth is served at the appointed times to the patients who have been purged.

The Sisters who need to eat something will do so after that, then they will return to the patients, instruct in the things necessary to salvation those who are uneducated, encourage them to make a general confession of their whole past life and to go afterward to confession and Communion every Sunday as long as they are ill and are able to do so, and to receive the last sacraments in good time. They will console those who are seriously ill and have them make acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition, and conformity to the good pleasure of God. They will dispose those who are near death to leave this world in a good state, and those who will recover, never to offend God again, or, if they do, to go to confession as soon as possible.

They will take great care to see that the sick poor have what is necessary: meals at the scheduled times, something to drink when they need it, and occasionally a few little sweets.

At ten o'clock they will go to the infirmary to prepare and serve the meal to the patients. The Superior will say aloud grace before meals, urging the patients to raise their hearts to God at that time. If it is the responsibility of the Sisters, they will see that they are given
some veal and mutton for dinner, along with a little beef stew, and for supper some roasted and boiled meat for those who need it, if the order already established does not indicate otherwise.

For those who should not eat solid meat, however, they will alternate broth and eggs every three hours so that they will be given broth four times and three eggs daily.

When the poor persons have finished their meal, the Sisters will make their brief examination of conscience and, at exactly eleven o'clock, will eat the portion given them for lunch, taking their turn reading at table. Then, after grace has been said, they will pray a decade of the rosary to offer to God what they have to do after dinner, asking Him for the grace to do it in His love.

Following this, two of them will go to relieve the Sister who remained with the patients, who will then go for her dinner at the second table with the reader. The other two will try to entertain the patients.

After the reader and the nurse of the sick have eaten, said grace after meals, and cleared the table, they will go to the church or oratory to pray a decade of the rosary for the same intention as above; the other two Sisters will go to wash the dishes and do the work assigned to them by the Superior.

If the Hôtel-Dieu of Angers has no Company of Ladies of Charity to serve refreshments to the sick poor, the Sisters will go to the infirmary at exactly two o'clock to give them a few little sweets for their snack, such as stewed pears and apples, and, if the Administrators agree, some sugar toast and jam.

The Sisters who are not on duty with the patients will return to their work or, if they have nothing urgent to take care of, will stay in the infirmary to instruct the poor persons, prepare the newly-arrived for a general confession, have them make interior acts of faith, hope, love, contrition, and conformity to the good pleasure of God, and console them, as in the morning.

At four o'clock, they will give the enemas, change the soiled sheets, empty the chamber pots, and straighten up the beds of the patients a little, without getting them up.
At exactly five o'clock, all the Sisters will go to the infirmary to serve supper to the patients as at dinner; afterward, the Sisters will go to pray for half an hour, at the end of which they will make the particular examination of conscience, followed by supper. Then they will say grace after meals and do as they did for dinner.

After grace, around half past six, the Sisters will go to the infirmary, relieve the nurse, send her to supper with the reader, and do everything as after dinner; meanwhile, before seven o'clock the others will put to bed those patients who are ambulatory, giving instructions that some wine and a few sweets be provided for the most seriously ill.

At half past seven, all the Sisters will go to the infirmary to make the general examination of conscience; those patients who are able will do the same. One of the Sisters will read aloud in the middle of the infirmary the points for mental prayer; then they will say the Litany of the Blessed Virgin and the Superior will give holy water to all the patients and to the Sisters.

At eight o'clock, the Sisters will depart, leaving one Sister in the infirmary to watch over and assist the sickest and to help those near death to die well. She will finish her rosary as soon as the patients are asleep and will spend the night keeping watch, reading, and sometimes dozing, as long as they are resting. The others will go to their duties to prepare what will be needed the next morning and will go to bed at nine o'clock sharp, after having made the act of adoration.

At half past three, the Sister on night duty will make her prayer; at four o'clock, she will conclude it, go to wake the others, and get something to eat. Then she will go to bed until nine o'clock, when she will rise to assist at Holy Mass. The Superior will send someone to replace her, who will make her prayer there in the same manner and at the same time as the others, unless her presence is required with one of the patients. In that case she will know that the service she is rendering to the patients is a continual prayer before God.

And, so that it may please God to grant them the grace of accomplishing all these things, they will frequently ask it of Him, will go to confession and Communion for this intention, and will walk in the
presence of God. They will take as their patrons and intercessors before God the Blessed Virgin, Saint Joseph, Saint Louis, Saint Genevieve, Saint Margaret the Queen, and Saint John the Evangelist, patron of the hospital. They will be faithful to performing their daily actions well and will live in great kindness, gentleness, and cordiality with one another and those who are poor. They will strive to be very humble toward one another and most respectful and obedient to the Administrators. They will avoid talking with people, especially with the male religious of the house, to whom they will never speak unless there are two of them together, and, even then, briefly and about necessary matters, never about their own affairs, even under the pretext of charity, nor about their own little problems and difficulties, which they will mention to no one except the Superior. They will write often to their spiritual Superiors in Paris concerning their interior state and will follow their advice, obeying them exactly. Every Friday they will read the present Regulations at table.

In conclusion, they will reflect on the happiness of their situation, namely, that they are serving Our Lord in the person of His poor people; that He recognizes as done to Himself the service they render to the sick poor; that, on Judgment Day, they will go forth with their heads held high because, in doing what they do, they are accomplishing God’s law to the full; and lastly, that, as long as they remain in a state of charity, they will always be in God and God in them.

143a. - CONTRACT WITH SAINT-JEAN HOSPITAL IN ANGERS

February 1, 1640

Provisions granted to the establishment of the Daughters of the Congregation of Charity and Servants of the Poor of hospitals and parish confraternities to serve the sick poor in Saint-Jean l’Évangéliste Hospital in Angers.

Document 143a. - Arch. Nat., S 6160, Angers file. The Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity has a handwritten copy, which has been published in Documents, Doc. 280, pp. 264-66, and is used here.
(1) The Sisters will always be dependent on the Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission of the archdiocese of Paris for spiritual matters only, and no one may enquire into them. The Chief Administrators give them entire liberty to live according to their Rule, which obliges them to leave everything when the service of poor persons requires it, since this is their primary and definitive obligation.

(2) For what concerns temporal matters, the service of the sick poor, and the government of the hospital, the Sisters will be entirely under the authority of and dependent on the Administrators, who will give them whatever orders they wish with regard to the above, and they will obey them exactly.

(3) The Sisters alone will be responsible for the poor persons, and no one may associate any wives or unmarried women with them, so that, through the union and relationship existing among themselves, those who are poor may be served better.

(4) They will be fed and furnished with all their clothing—of which no one may change the color or form—at the expense of the hospital, and will be supplied with medicine and food if they fall ill. They will be considered members of the household and not paid workers.

(5) They will not be obliged to stay up at night with patients outside the ward of the hospital, unless it is with women who are within the enclosure of the hospital, such as the maternity ward. They will give an account of their service and administration only to the Administrators, who will support them, considering that, if they are not authorized by them with regard to the officers and domestic help and with persons who are poor, they could not do the good God wants them to do and would always be subject to complaints. They will, however, notify them of their failings, which they will correct, with the grace of God.

(6) When any of the Sisters die, the Administrators, mindful that they have devoted themselves to the service of God and persons who are poor, will kindly allow the other Sisters who serve there to give them a proper burial in their ordinary manner, leaving the body in their little infirmary until it is taken away to be placed in the
church, followed immediately by the Sisters. Each will carry a candle and will chant High Mass there, after which the body of the deceased will be interred. If the body cannot be kept, it will be taken to the church, as mentioned above, where the Office for the Dead will be said. The next day one High Mass and two Low Masses will be offered, through the charitable attention of the Administrators, that God may be pleased to grant pardon and mercy to the deceased.

(7) When the Father Superior in Paris thinks it appropriate, he may withdraw up to three Sisters, sending others in their place at the expense of their Community in Paris. Likewise, the Administrators may send away a similar number, receiving others in their place at the expense of the hospital, after having previously notified the Father Superior so that he will have time to send others to replace them.

There follow the terms of the Regulations regarding the spiritual practice of the Sisters.1

The Articles and Regulations given above were signed and confirmed by our Chief Administrator of Saint-Jean Hospital and Mlle Louise de Marillac—widow of the late noble man Antoine Le Gras, who was secretary in his lifetime of the Queen Mother—Directress of the Sisters, Servants of the Sick Poor, under M. Vincent, Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission and of the Sisters, according to the report2 of the Lieutenant General and of the Seneschal of Anjou, to be attached to it and to have recourse to it, if need be.

Drawn up on the said day, February 1, 1640, and signed: Louise de Marillac, Solimon, Gardeau, Doublard,3 Martin, Cécile-Agnès Angiboust, Marguerite François.4

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1Cf. Doc. 143.
2The copy of this report was recorded in the Registry of the Tribunal in March 1641 (cf. Doc. 143b).
3Pierre Solimon, Julien Gardeau, and Pierre Doublard were Fathers of the Poor (Administrators of the hospital).
4Elisabeth Martin (cf. III, 178, n. 4), Cécile-Agnès Angiboust (cf. VI, 453, n. 1), and Marguerite François were among the first Daughters of Charity to work in this hospital.

Marguerite François, who accompanied Saint Louise to Angers in December 1639, died in March 1640 from the plague that was ravaging Anjou at the time of the Sisters’ arrival.
143b. - ACT OF ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY
AT SAINT-JEAN HOSPITAL IN ANGERS

(March 18, 1641)

We, Louis Boïlève, Counselor of the King, Lieutenant General of
the Seneschalsy of Anjou and Presidial See of Angers, had it explained
to us by the Procurator of the King that, in the former establishment of
Saint-Jean l'Évangéliste Hospital of this town, some Sisters, Servants
of the Sick Poor, were placed with the patients and entrusted with guid­
ing and assisting them, and were seen to do so with an unusual spirit of
humility, gentleness, and charity. This good order continued for many
years, then became relaxed with the passage of time, as noted in the
documents and registers of the house, having a succession of a number
of paid servants and salaried workers that people were obliged to toler­
ate with only the remotest semblance of that primary obligation. And
the limitations of the others did not end there, but there were, on the
contrary, many failings; in a word, disorder in the welfare and service
of poor persons, which was, furthermore, acknowledged as being a
great burden and expense to them.

For this reason, the Mayor and Magistrates of this town, the
Chief Administrators of the hospital, the late Madame Goussault
the President's wife,¹ and other persons of quality, exceptional pi­
ety, and virtue complained to us in his [the Procurator's] presence,
and with him proposed an establishment in this town, similar to the
one in Paris, of the Sisters of the Congregation of Charity, serving
poor persons in hospitals and already placed and inserted in several
in this kingdom. They would endeavor to do the same in this hospi­
tal and, as it were, to restore and continue with greater firmness the
former original institution that was maintained here so religiously
and to which the one proposed is so closely related and so much in
conformity. In accepting this, we were most willing to contribute to
the same end by our orders and authority and to work together.

¹Madame Goussault [Geneviève Fayet] (cf. II, 2, a. 5).
The result was that, by the favor and intervention of some and the concern and trouble taken by others, negotiations were undertaken with the Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission and the Seminary of the Sisters, and an agreement was reached with him or with persons representing him concerning each and every one of the responsibilities and conditions required and reasonable for their establishment, and his permission was then obtained for the choice and leadership of some of the best instructed and dedicated among them.

Mlle Le Gras their Mother Directress, with the consent of the Superior General, had the charity to bring some of them to this town a few days ago.

She asked that we kindly go to Saint-Jean House and Hospital to admit and welcome them there, as Sisters serving there for the guidance and assistance of persons who are poor.

These instructions having been given, we, along with the Magistrates of this town, in the absence of President Lanier the Mayor, went to the hospital with M. Jacques Phelipeau, clerk of our Registrar. There, Pierre Solimon, Julien Gardeau, Symphorien Brouard, Pierre Doublard, merchants and Chief Administrators of the place, appeared before us together with Mlle Le Gras, who presented to us Sisters Élisabeth Martin from Argenteuil, near Paris; Cécile-Agnès Angiboust from Serville, near Chartres; Marie-Marthe Trumeau from Poissy; Marguerite François from Saint-Nicolas in Lorraine; Barbe Toussaint from Suresnes, near Paris; Clémence Ferré from la Champignière, near Nancy; Madeleine Mongert from Sucy-en-Brie; and Geneviève Caillou from Saint-Germain-en-Laye. After the responsibilities and conditions

When the contract was signed on February 1, 1640, only five Sisters were present: Élisabeth Martin, Cécile-Agnès Angiboust, and Marguerite François, who signed the document; and Clémence Ferré and Barbe Toussaint who did not sign it, probably because they did not know how to write. The three other Sisters, Marie-Marthe Trumeau (cf. VIII, 127, n. 2), Madeleine Mongert, and Geneviève Caillou (cf. VII, 403, n. 2) arrived at the end of March after Saint Louise had left. Their names were added in 1641 at the time of the registration of the document at the Registrar's office in the Seneschalsy.

Madeleine Mongert, born in Sucy-en-Brie (Val-de-Marne), first served in the parishes of Paris and then with the galleys convicts. In March 1640 she was sent to Angers, where she was named Sister Servant in 1641. In 1644 she spent a few months in Paris, returning to Angers in September and remaining there until her death at the end of 1648.
had been read to them in line with the provisions that had been
drawn up and confirmed in their name, together with the regulations regarding their duty and practice, Mademoiselle accepted for them and, in so far as might be needed, agreed to them.

In the presence of the King’s Procurator and with his consent, we welcomed and established the Sisters of the Congregation of Charity serving those who are poor in the hospitals and confraternities of the parishes, as Sister servants for the guidance and treatment of the sick poor under the Chief Administrators of the hospital, with the other responsibilities and conditions agreed upon with them, contained in the provisions that will be attached to these present letters with the Regulations. The Mayor and Magistrates asked us to issue the Act for them, which we granted, and which is given above, and we order our present report to be recorded in the Registry of this office so recourse may be had to it.

Drawn up in Angers by us, the above-mentioned Lieutenant General, Wednesday, February 1, 1640.

Signed: Boisleve, Jouet, Louise de Marillac, Gauche, Solimon, Garneau, Doublard, and Brouard.

The above report was registered in the Civil Registry of this office in order to have recourse to it when needed, at the request of Julien Garneau the merchant, former Administrator of Saint-Jean Hospital, for whom the document has been issued to serve for that purpose.

Drawn up in Angers before us, Louis Boisleve, Councillor of the King, Lieutenant General in the said office, under the signature of our Registrar, March 18, 1641, and signed:

RENOU [with paraph].
144. - DECLARATION CONCERNING THE DEPOSIT
OF A SUM OF MONEY

(August 25, 1644)

We, Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of
the Priests of the Mission, make known and declare to all whom it
may concern, present and to come, that:

Several years ago Divine Providence allowed several of our
Prelates in this kingdom, notably His Excellency the Most Illustri-

ous and Most Reverend Jean-François de Gondi, first Archbishop
of Paris, to cast their eyes on us, unworthy though we be, to erect in
their dioceses the Confraternity of Charity, composed of wives and
unmarried women, for the corporal and spiritual assistance of the
sick poor. Some time ago, our Holy Father Pope Urban VIII, of
happy memory, gave us a general authorization to establish it in all
places where it should please our Bishops, as is evident in the Bull
of confirmation of our Congregation. When experience showed us
that the ones established in the towns could not survive because the
Ladies who belonged to them, given their social rank, could not do
the work themselves in all the menial, painful services that have to
be rendered to the patients, according to the regulations of the Con-
fraternity, that same Providence directed to us a few good young
country women, whom we received for that purpose and placed to-
gether under the guidance of Mlle Le Gras, whose piety and zeal are
known to all. They went to work immediately after, as they are now
doing, in most of the parishes in Paris and other places in this king-
dom. All this was done with the consent of our Prelates, each in his
own diocese, and especially of His Excellency the Archbishop of
Paris.

A certain very pious, charitable person who, through humility,
did not wish to be named, has learned from experience and often
considered all the benefits God in His goodness is bestowing
through these poor Sisters, and the blessings God gives to their

Document 144. - Original signed document, property of the Daughters of Charity of Caen, 71
rue de Bayeux, Caen. At the top of the document is written: "This sum has since been used for the
benefit of the Daughters of Charity, making this document unnecessary."
work, which consists in the spiritual and corporal relief not only of the sick poor, but also of convicts condemned to the galleys, while they are detained in Paris, and even of little foundlings, whom the Sisters have been raising for several years, as well as some poor little girls whom they are teaching, free of charge.

And, in addition, moved by the piety, charity, modesty, simplicity, purity, and close union that those poor Sisters have always shown since their establishment, which began fourteen or fifteen years ago;

And considering that those good Sisters could not survive by remaining always in a borrowed, rented house;

Her piety caused her to donate what was needed to purchase one for them that would be theirs permanently, and, on her own accord, she gave us for this purchase the sum of nine thousand livres, on condition, however, that, in the event God might not be pleased to have this Little Company of Sisters subsist in their present state and practices, she was giving the sum to our Congregation of the Mission, which would accept and collect the money with the intention of using it for the aforementioned purpose. This has not yet been possible to do because no advantageous opportunity has been found. In addition, fearing to be surprised by death without having acquitted ourselves of this obligation, and even without having provided the sum in favor of the said Sisters, for the purposes and conditions mentioned above, we judged it most expedient to place the amount in the hands of a pious, charitable person who could apply it better than we to the aforesaid purposes. We felt also that we could not entrust this work of mercy to anyone better able to carry this out than the high and powerful lady the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, who has special ties of affection to the Sisters;

For these and other reasons that moved us, and in virtue of the authority granted us for the Confraternities, we resolved and confirmed that the Duchess should be most humbly requested, for love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of the Poor, to accept this charitable mission. We have handed over to her the sum of nine thousand livres to be used for the above-mentioned purposes and conditions. And, although no one has obliged us to pay the interest on that sum
for the four years we have had it, nevertheless, considering that this money is specifically designated for persons who are poor and not desiring in any way to profit from what belongs to them, we have paid the Sisters about $1\%$ interest having given them for this purpose the sum of two thousand livres for the four years, partly in cash, partly by canceling the rent for our building they lease from us, as appears on the receipt Mlle Le Gras gave us for this, in the name of and as being in charge of the Sisters. And to better authorize and affirm the above and to prevent anything that might hinder its effect, we likewise resolved and confirmed that there be three copies of the present act, signed and sealed like this one, one of which would remain with the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, another with Mlle Le Gras, and the third one with us.

Besides all that, we have carefully recommended and by this document recommend to all our Missionaries, present and to come, that they see that the wishes of the said person, who desires to remain unknown, be fully carried out and, at the same time, that they do their utmost to strengthen and maintain the Company of the Sisters, as far as and in the manner that it may please His Excellency the Archbishop and each of our Prelates in the dioceses where the Sisters are, or will be, established.

In testimony whereof we have signed the present Act in our own hand, had it countersigned by our regular secretary, and had the seal of our Congregation affixed to it.

Drawn up in our house of Saint-Lazare in Paris, August 25, 1644.

VINCENT DEPAUL

A. PORTAIL

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\[1\] In 1971 John Cardinal Cody, Archbishop of Chicago, IL (USA), donated one of these documents, along with some original letters of Saint Vincent, to the Congregation of the Mission. These nine documents, known as the Cody-Mundelein Collection, are in the Archives of the Mission, Curia Generalizia, Rome.
145. - REGULATIONS OF THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY

(1645)

The Confraternity of unmarried women and widows, Servants of the Poor of the Charity, will be instituted to honor the charity of Our Lord its patron toward the sick poor of the places where they are established or sent, serving them corporally and spiritually according to the order that will be given them by the Ladies who are officers of the Charity in the parishes where they are: corporally, by preparing and bringing to them their food and medicine; spiritually, by seeing that those who are near death may leave this world in a good state and that those who will recover may take the resolution to live better in the future.

The Confraternity will be composed of widows and unmarried women. Every three years they will elect four of their number, by a plurality of votes, to be their officers, of which the first will be the Superioress or Directress; and they may have another term of office. At the election, which will take place every three years, a priest, delegated by the Archbishop of Paris for the direction of the unmarried women and widows, will preside.¹

The Superioress will have the entire direction of the Confraternity, together with the priest; she will be like the soul who animates this body, will see that the present Regulations are observed, will receive into the Confraternity those whom she finds suitable, and will form them in all that concerns their duties, but especially in the practice of the Christian virtues proper to their salvation, teaching them more by her example than by her words. She will send them out, recall them, detain them, and have them do everything that is in line with the purpose of the Confraternity, not only in the parish where the Confraternity will be established, but also in all the places

¹Saint Louise was never happy with the powers granted the Archbishop of Paris to appoint this priest. In the Rules submitted in 1655, the direction was given to the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and to his successors in that office.
she thinks it advisable to send them. All this will be done with the
dvice of the priest and the blessing of the Pastors.

The second officer will be Assistant to the Superioress and will
represent her in her absence. The others will obey her as they would
the Superioress, when the latter is absent.

The third one will act as Treasurer, will collect the money and
keep it in a strongbox with two different locks, of which the
Superioress will keep one key, and she the other. She may, how­
ever, keep on hand the sum of one hundred livres for current ex­
penses.

The fourth will manage the storeroom and provide for the com­
mon needs of the Company. The officers will give an annual ac­
count of their expenditures to the Superioress and the priest.

They will act as Councillors to the Superioress.

The widows and the unmarried women of the Confraternity will
be subject to and obey the Superioress and all those who will be del­
egated by her. They will consider that they are obeying God in their
persons, and will implement willingly and punctually the orders the
Superioress gives them, whether in the parishes where they are es­
tablished or wherever else they will be sent.

They will also be obedient, in what concerns their conduct, to the
priest who will be delegated to direct the Confraternity.

Those who desire to be received into the Confraternity will pres­
ent themselves to the Superioress. When she has tested their voca­
tion and conferred with the Director, she receives them and forms
them for a time in their duties. Afterward, as she judges them capa­
bile, she will put them to work in the holy occupations we have men­
tioned.

Following is the daily schedule for those who live in the house:

They rise at four o'clock and, after dressing and making their
beds, they pray for half an hour together. After this, some go to as­
sist at Mass in their parishes and the others work at their designated
occupations, as stated above. Then, after the first group has re­
turned, these go to Mass.

At half past eleven, they make a particular examination of con­
science on the virtue they propose to acquire, following which they
have dinner together, with reading at table. Next, they have one hour of recreation in a moderately cheerful manner while working together, some at sewing and spinning, others at other things, until two o’clock.

From two to three o’clock those who work together will keep silence, while one of them reads aloud from some spiritual book.

At six o’clock, they make a second examination of conscience on the same virtue, then have something to eat and take their recreation while working together as before. At eight o’clock, they make their general examination and read the topic for their prayer of the next morning. After this, if they think they may have given some reason to sadden another, they ask forgiveness, then go to bed.

As far as their duty permits, the Sisters who work in parishes, either in the town or in the country, observe the same things and the same hours. Both groups go to confession and Communion every Sunday and on feast days in the parish, and every year they make a little retreat and an annual confession at the house where the Superioress lives.

They all dress in the same way, in the style of countrywomen.

When they are sent to any parishes, they will go to ask the blessing of the Pastors, which they will receive kneeling. While they are in their parishes, they will show them all manner of honor and submission.

They will also obey the Ladies who are officers of the Charity as well as the physicians in whatever involves the needs of the sick poor.

Their main concern will be to serve the sick poor, and they will do their utmost to fit into the aforementioned daily schedule, particularly for the times of rising and going to bed, prayer, the general and particular examinations of conscience, spiritual reading, confession, Communion, and silence, especially before morning prayer and after evening prayer.

As far as possible, they will also take care to observe uniformity with regard to food, clothing, their manner of walking and speaking, the service of those who are poor, and especially in the way they arrange their headdress and are dressed, as has been stated.
If they save any money, they will put it in the common purse, which will be used to provide them with their clothing and other necessities, when the time comes for this.

And to give greater honor to Our Lord their patron, they will have a straightforward intention to please Him in all their actions and will strive to conform their lives to His, especially in His poverty, humility, gentleness, simplicity, and moderation.

And to avoid many inconveniences, they will accept nothing from anyone, or give anything to anyone whomsoever, without informing the Superior.

They will make no visits, except to the sick, and will not allow anyone, particularly men, to visit them at their house, without the consent of the same Superior.

When they go through the streets, they will walk in a modest manner with their eyes lowered, not stopping to speak to anyone, especially men, without great necessity. Even then, they must keep the conversation brief and conclude the matter promptly.

They will not leave the house without the permission of the local Superior or someone else delegated by her. On their return they will present themselves to her and give an account of where they went.

They will send no letters nor open those written to them, without the permission of the same Superior.

They will not waste time speaking at the door with persons outside the Community, nor will they do so in the house, without the same permission.

They will be careful to go at least once a month to the house of the Superioress to share with her the details of all their duties, and will go there every time they are requested, making provision ahead of time for the needs of the patients.

They will be mindful that they are called Daughters of Charity; that is, Sisters who make profession of loving God and the neighbor; consequently, besides the sovereign love they should have for God, they should excel in love of the neighbor, especially of their companions. Accordingly, they will avoid all coldness and aversion in their regard, as well as exclusive friendships and attachments for any of them, since these two malicious extremes cause the
division and ruin of a Company, especially when they are apparent outside.

To keep always a lowly opinion of themselves, they will consider, furthermore, that people call them Servants of the Poor, which is, according to the world, one of the most insignificant of conditions. They will promptly reject the slightest thought of vain-glory that might pass through their minds because of having heard some good about what they are doing, convinced that all the honor for this is due to God, since God alone is its author.

Since their work is, for the most part, very arduous, and the poor persons whom they serve are a little difficult, to the point that they are sometimes reproached even when they have done their best in their regard, they will strive to do their utmost to have a good store of patience, asking Our Lord every day to give it to them in abundance and to grant them a share of the patience He practiced toward those who calumniated, slapped, whipped, and crucified Him.

They will be very faithful and exact in observing the present Regulations, together with the praiseworthy customs and manner of living they have maintained until now, particularly those that concern their own perfection.

Nevertheless, they will remember that, whenever necessity or obedience calls them to the service of persons who are poor and to other duties, these must always be preferred to their devotional practices, and will reflect that, in so doing, they are leaving God for God.

145a. - RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY IN ANGERS

(June 1-15, 1646)

(1) They will often consider that God has called and united them to honor Our Lord Jesus Christ in the person of those who are poor,
by the corporal and spiritual service they render them, and that the
ture means of performing this ministry well, and consequently of
contributing to their own salvation, is the observance of their Rules.

(2) Whenever their Rules are read, they will be careful not only
to listen closely to them, but also to understand them well, reflect­
ing at the same time on the faults they have committed against them
and on the means of correcting them. In addition, after hearing them
read every first Sunday of the month, they will take them as the sub­
ject of their prayer.

(3) They will strive in all their actions, particularly when they
have to serve the sick, to have a pure intention of pleasing God, be­
ing very careful not to seek in them their own satisfaction or the ad­
miration of the world.

(4) They will not be attached to places, duties, or persons—not
even to their relatives or confessor—but will always be ready to
leave everything willingly whenever they are instructed to do so.

(5) They will do their utmost to live in great union with their Sis­
ters and never to exasperate one another, nor murmur or complain
about one another, but rather bear with each other's imperfections,
carefully rejecting all those thoughts of aversion one might have for
the other, and exclusive friendships as well.

(6) If, through weakness, one Sister has saddened another, she
will ask her forgiveness immediately, if this can be done conve­
niently, and the other, also kneeling, will accept this humiliation
readily and humbly.

(7) They will act in such a way that gentleness and cordiality al­
ways appear in their words and expressions, not only among them­
selves, but also with persons outside the Community, striving,
nonetheless, never to forget the respect they should have for one an­
other, especially for the Sister Servant.

(8) They will be very careful not to argue with one another, and
each will prefer to follow her Sister's opinion rather than her own in
everything that is not sin.

(9) They will take great care not to disclose their temptations,
discontent, and other interior difficulties to their Sisters, and even
less to persons outside the Community, but only to their Sister Ser­
vant or to the Director. They should do this as soon as possible, endeavoring to have great confidence in opening their hearts to them. To acquire this confidence more easily they will go to the Sister Servant once a month to make their communication to her.

(10) They will be exact in notifying the Sister Servant promptly of any serious faults they notice in their Sisters, and will be pleased to have their own faults likewise told her so that she might remedy them in good time.

(11) If they are also aware of some disorder in the hospital, either with the patients, the help, or someone else, they will notify the Sister Servant so she can charitably inform the Administrators.

(12) And so that the Sister Servant may not be in a worse situation than the other Sisters, as soon as a Sister sees some serious, significant fault in her, she will do her the charity of reminding her humbly of it—not on her own, but through the Assistant, to whom she will state it quite simply and with God in view, being careful not to do this through emotion.

(13) They will not write nor have anyone write or send any letter without the permission of the Sister Servant, nor will they open the letters sent to them without the same permission. If, however, someone wants to write to the General of the Mission or to the Superioress of the Paris house, she may do so without the letter being read by the Sister Servant. The latter will also deliver, unopened, the letters sent to an individual Sister by the General or the Superioress in Paris.

(14) At all times they will observe holy modesty, especially in the wards and in the presence of persons outside the Community, being careful above all of flightiness, in particular of touching one another, even through playfulness or as a sign of friendship, unless charity requires it, such as when there is question of a warm embrace for the newly received, or for those coming from the country, or for someone who has not been seen for a long time, and similar occasions. Then it is permitted to kiss one another on the cheek, but never on the mouth.

(15) They will be more careful to keep silence than they have been in the past, especially in the morning before prayer, after eve-
ning prayers, and during the hour set aside to honor the death of Our Lord. If it is necessary to speak, they will do so in a low voice and in few words.

(16) They will act in such a way that their recreations are always tempered by moderation as well as by cheerfulness, interspersing pious, edifying talk with inoffensive topics; refraining, to this effect, from speaking of worldly affairs, current news, the leadership of Superiors and the Superioress, the faults of others, and even certain imperfections and discourteous behavior that could hurt Sisters if someone teased them, even though they should not take them the wrong way.

(17) Above all, they will be exact in obeying the Sister Servant, submitting to her not only their will but also their judgment, and, as far as possible, doing or omitting nothing without her permission, especially in what concerns corporal penances, confession, Communion, and certain extraordinary devotional practices. They will act in the same way with regard to their Director in spiritual matters and with regard to the Administrators in temporal matters concerning the hospital. All of this will be done in conformity with their Rules.

(18) They will also obey the Sister Assistant and go to her for permissions and needs when the Sister Servant is sick or absent.

(19) They will be careful to follow the daily schedule, being faithful to carrying out precisely, in the places indicated, all their little spiritual and corporal exercises, as far as this can be done, especially prayer, the examinations of conscience, and spiritual reading. They will do so in such a way, however, that the service of persons who are poor is preferred above all other activities, and they will be industrious in rising and getting dressed so as to be among the first at prayer.

(20) They will strive above all things to make their confessions well, being careful not to make them through habit, scrupulosity, or attachment. To avoid all these inconveniences, they will try to adapt to the practice and method in use in the Company, which is that, in ordinary confessions, they accuse themselves only of three of their most serious sins or those of which they are most embarrassed and for which
they are most sorry and wish to correct. And if it is advisable to say more about them, they may ask permission of the confessor for this. They always conclude by mentioning a sin of their past life of which they have already accused themselves, varying these as much as possible, so that the confessions will be different from one another.

(21) They will be mindful of the recommendation often made to them not to linger without permission with persons from the outside or with the patients, but especially with the domestic help. If, however, some upright person should ask them something, they will try to reply to them respectfully and cordially, but tell them briefly that they think they should speak to the Sister Servant. If it is also necessary to say a few words of consolation or instruction to women who are seriously ill, they will do so with God in view.

(22) They will strive to be very tolerant of their own shortcomings, being careful not to become discouraged by the faults into which they will fall, but, instead, humble themselves for them and take new resolutions to correct themselves, confident that God will give them the grace to do so.

(23) Every month they will read these recommendations or hear them read and will then make their prayer on them, as stated in the Rules; above all, they will strive to put them into practice.

Advice given by me on behalf of M. Vincent during the visitation of Angers, 1646.

PORTAIL

146. - ERECTION OF THE COMPANY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY AS A CONFRATERNITY

(November 20, 1646)

Jean-François-Paul de Gondi, by the grace of God and of the Holy Apostolic See Archbishop of Corinth, Coadjutor and

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Vicar-General for spiritual and temporal affairs of His Excellency the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Archbishop of Paris, to all those who will read these present letters, greetings.

Our dearly beloved Paul Vincent [sic], Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, has explained to us that, authorized by the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Archbishop of Paris, he erected the Confraternity of Charity for the assistance and relief of the sick poor in the places in his diocese where it was judged necessary, and it has pleased God to bless this pious, praiseworthy undertaking in such a way that it is now established not only in several villages and towns but even in most of the large parishes in this city of Paris. Since the persons who compose this Confraternity cannot perform the lowliest tasks necessary for the relief of the sick poor, our dearly beloved Paul Vincent, with the permission of the Archbishop, has deemed it wise to take some good unmarried women and widows from the country whom God has inspired to dedicate themselves to the service of the sick poor. For several years they have been performing all the lowliest tasks to the edification of the people and the consolation of the sick. This has induced some virtuous, charitable ladies to contribute something from their resources to bring the women together and, for this purpose, to provide them with a house so that, living together, they might be better instructed not only in what concerns virtue and piety, but also in the service and assistance they have to render to the sick poor. In this way they can more easily be sent to city parishes as well as to those in towns and villages where they will be requested and desired. We wish to foster such a good work, which we hope, by the grace and mercy of God, ought to succeed to His glory and the great relief of persons who are poor.

Considering that the best means to help them survive is to unite the unmarried women and widows into some form of Society and Confraternity distinct from that of the Charity, which was established in this diocese a long time ago by the Archbishop for these reasons, by authority of the Archbishop, we have erected and do erect by these present letters the conference of the unmarried women and widows in this diocese in the form of a separate Confrat-
The Confraternity of Charity of the Servants of the Poor of the Charity. We will and ordain that those already admitted to it and those who will henceforth be received into it may freely do whatever can relieve and console the sick poor, on condition that the Confraternity will be, and will remain in perpetuity, under the authority of and dependent on the Archbishop and his successors and in the exact observance of the attached Statutes, which we have approved and do approve by these present letters.

Because God has blessed the care and the work of our dearly beloved Vincent de Paul in helping this pious plan to succeed, we have confided and entrusted to him the leadership and direction of the Society and Confraternity for as long as it pleases God to keep him in this life.

Drawn up in Paris under the seal of the Office of the Archbishop, November 20, 1646.

J.-F.-PAUL DE GONDY, Coadjutor of Paris

In the name of His Excellency

BAUDOYRN

The Confraternity of Charity of the Servants of the Sick Poor of the parishes was instituted to honor the charity of Our Lord its patron, by assisting corporally and spiritually the sick poor in parishes and hospitals, convicts, and foundlings: corporally, by giving them food and medicine; and spiritually, by seeing that the sick poor who are near death may leave this world in a good state, that those who will recover may take the resolution never to offend God, by His grace, and that the foundlings may be instructed in the things necessary for salvation.1

1At the same time he gave his second approval of the Company of the Daughters of Charity on January 18, 1655 (cf. Doc. 149), Cardinal de Retz also approved their Rules, which he republished in full. We will indicate here, in the notes, the variants which distinguish the 1655 Rule from that of 1646.

It should be noted here that, when Napoleon requested the Rules of the Daughters of Charity at the time of their reestablishment after the French Revolution (1801), he was given the 1646 text. This eventually brought about the dissolution in France of the Congregation of the Mission (1809); the imprisonment of Dominique Hanon, the validly elected and officially recognized Vicar-General (1807-16); and a schism among the Daughters of Charity.
It is composed of unmarried women and widows. Every three years on the day after Pentecost they will elect, by a plurality of votes, a Superioress from among their number. This will take place in the presence of the priest whom the Archbishop will delegate to direct them. She may continue in office for another three years only.

They will also elect three other officers every year on the same day, one of whom will be the Assistant; another, the Treasurer; and the other, the Bursar.

The Superioress will have the entire direction of the Confraternity, together with the aforesaid priest. She will be like the soul animating this body, will see that the present Regulations are observed, will receive into the Confraternity those whom she finds suitable, after conferring with the Director and asking the advice of the other officers, and will form them in all that concerns their duties, but especially in the practice of the Christian virtues proper to their state. She will teach them more by her example than by her words, will send them out, recall them, detain them, and have them do everything that is in line with the purpose of the Confraternity, not only in the parish where the Confraternity will be established, but also in all the places to which she sends them. All this will be done with the advice of the said priest.

The second officer will be the Assistant of the Superioress, will act as her Councillor, and will represent her in her absence. Everyone will obey her as they would the Superioress, when the latter is absent.

The third one will act as Treasurer, will collect the money and keep it in a strongbox with two different locks, of which the Superioress will keep one key, and she the other. She may, however, keep on hand the sum of one hundred livres for current expenses, of which she will give a monthly account to the Superioress.

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2 Text of 1655: "... in the presence of the Superior General of the Mission, or of a Priest of the Mission who will be delegated by him for their direction."

3 Text of 1655: "... the direction of the Confraternity, together with the Superior General or the one delegated by him."

4 Text of 1655: "... those whom she finds suitable, on the advice of the said Director."
and an annual account to the Director, in the presence of all the officers. She will also represent the Superioress and the Assistant in their absence and will act as their Councillor.

The fourth will manage the storeroom and provide for the common needs of the Company, giving a weekly account to the Superioress. She will represent the latter and the other officers when they are absent and will likewise act as their Councillor.

The unmarried women and widows of the Confraternity will be subject to and obey the Superioress and, in her absence, the other officers whom she delegates. They will consider that they are obeying God in their persons and will implement willingly and punctually the present Regulations and praiseworthy customs of their Institute, whether in the parishes where they are established or wherever else they will be sent.

They will also be obedient, in what concerns their conduct, to the priest who will be named by the Archbishop to direct the Company.\(^5\)

Those who desire to be received into the Confraternity will present themselves to the Superioress. When she has tested their vocation, conferred with the Director, and sought the advice of the other officers, she will accept them and form them for a time in their duties; afterward, as she judges them capable, she will have them work at the occupations we have mentioned.

When they are sent to any parishes, they will go to get the blessing of the Pastors, which they will receive kneeling. While they are in their parishes, they will show them all honor, respect, and obedience.\(^6\)

They will also obey the Ladies who are officers of the Charity in the parishes and the physicians in all that involves the care of the sick poor.

Their main concern will be to serve the sick poor well, treating them with compassion and cordiality, endeavoring to edify and console them, and dispose them to patience, encouraging them to

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\(^5\) Text of 1655: "They will also be obedient, in what concerns their conduct, to the said Director and Superior."

\(^6\) The 1655 text adds: "... with regard to the assistance of the sick."
make a good general confession; above all, seeing that they receive all their sacraments.

Furthermore, when they are called to their other ministries, such as helping poor convicts, raising the foundlings, and teaching poor young women, they will devote themselves to them with special ardor and diligence, reflecting that in so doing they render service to Our Lord as a child, as a sick person, as a poor man, and as a prisoner.

They will cherish and respect one another as sisters whom Our Lord has bound together and united by His love. They will attend the funerals of their Sisters who die and receive Holy Communion for their intention. One Mass will be sung for each of them.\(^7\) If convenient, they will also attend the funerals of the poor persons whom they have served and pray for the salvation of their souls.

So that in serving persons who are poor they do not forget themselves and the charity they show them may be well ordered, and so that they can receive the rewards Our Lord promises them in this world and in the next, they will be especially careful to keep themselves always in the state of grace;\(^8\) for this purpose, they will detest and avoid mortal sin more than the demon, and will take care\(^9\) not to commit knowingly even a venial sin, especially with regard to\(^10\) chastity, taking every possible precaution to preserve it intact.\(^11\)

They will do their utmost to conform to the daily schedule that has been followed until now, particularly for the times of rising and going to bed, prayer, the general and particular examinations of conscience, spiritual reading, confession, Communion, and silence, especially before making their prayer in the morning and after evening prayers.\(^12\)

As far as possible, they will also take care to observe uniformity with regard to food, clothing, speaking, the service of those who are poor, and particularly the way they arrange their headdress.

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\(^7\)Text of 1655: "They will have one High Mass said for each."

\(^8\)The 1655 Regulations add: "... with the help of God."

\(^9\)The 1655 Regulations add: "... by the grace of God."

\(^10\)Text of 1655: "... in everything that concerns."

\(^11\)This last word is missing in the 1655 text.

\(^12\)These last four words are missing in the 1655 text.
If they save any money, they will put it in the common purse, which will be used to provide them with their clothing and other necessities, when the time comes.

And to give greater honor to Our Lord their patron, they will have a straightforward intention to please Him in all their actions and will strive to conform their lives to His, especially in His poverty, humility, gentleness, simplicity, and moderation.

And to avoid many inconveniences, they will accept nothing from anyone, or give anything to anyone whomsoever, without informing the Superioress.

They will make no visits except to the sick, and will not allow anyone, particularly men, to visit them in their rooms.

When they go through the streets, they will walk in a modest manner with their eyes lowered, not stopping to speak to anyone, especially members of the opposite sex, without great necessity. Even then, they must keep the conversation brief and conclude promptly.

They will not leave the house without the permission of the local Superior or someone else delegated by her. On their return they will present themselves to her and give an account of where they went.

They will send no letters nor open those written to them, without the permission of the Superior.

They will not waste time speaking at the door with persons outside the Community, much less in the house, without permission.

They will be careful to go at least once a month to the principal house to share with the Superioress details of their ministries, and will go there every time they are requested, making provision ahead of time for the needs of the patients.

They will keep in mind that they are called Daughters of Charity; that is, Sisters who make profession of loving God and the neighbor; consequently, besides the sovereign love they should have for God, they should excel in love of the neighbor, especially of their companions. Accordingly, they will avoid all coldness and aversion toward them, as well as exclusive friendships and attachments for any of them, since these two malicious extremes cause division and ruin in a Company and among the individuals who waste their
time fostering them. Should it happen that they give cause for sadness one another, they will ask pardon of one another at the latest in the evening before going to bed.

To keep always a lowly opinion of themselves, they will consider, furthermore, that people call them Servants of the Poor, which is, according to the world, one of the most insignificant of conditions. They will promptly reject the slightest thought of vanity that might pass through their minds because of having heard some good about what they are doing, being convinced that all the honor is due to God, since God alone is the author of it.

Since their work is very arduous for the most part, and the poor persons whom they serve a little difficult, to the point that they are sometimes reproached even when they have done their best in their regard, they will strive to do their utmost to have a good store of patience, asking Our Lord every day to give it to them in abundance and to grant them a share of the patience He practiced toward those who calumniated, slapped, whipped, and crucified Him.

They will be very faithful and exact in observing the present Regulations, together with the praiseworthy customs and manner of living they have maintained until now, particularly those that concern their own perfection.

Nevertheless, they will recall that, whenever necessity or obedience calls them to the service of persons who are poor and other duties, these must always be preferred to their devotional practices, and reflect that in so doing they are leaving God for God.

And so that it may please God to grant them the grace of accomplishing all these things, they will go to confession and Communion every Sunday and on the major feasts of the year in the parishes or hospitals where they are. Every year, as far as possible, they will make their retreat in their principal Community house.

J. F. PAUL DE GONDY, Coadjutor of Paris 13

In the name of His Excellency.

BAUDOYUN

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13The 1655 Regulations are signed: “Cardinal de Retz, Archbishop of Paris.”
Louis, by the grace of God, King of France and of Navarre, to all present and to come, greetings.

Our dearly beloved Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, most humbly pointed out to us that, having been authorized by Our Most Holy Father Pope Urban VIII, of happy memory; by the Archbishop of Paris; and by several other Prelates of this kingdom to institute a Confraternity of Charity for the assistance of the sick poor in all the parishes of their dioceses in which it could conveniently be established; and having instituted it successfully in several villages, some charitable Ladies of our fine city of Paris were so touched by this that they used their influence to have a similar establishment in their own parishes, particularly in Saint-Germain-de-l’Auxerrois, Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, Saint-Leu, Saint-Sauveur, Saint-Médéric, Saint-Étienne, Saint-Sulpice, Saint-Gervais, Saint-Barthélemy, Saint-Paul, and other places, where it is also operating successfully.

Since, however, these Ladies who compose this Confraternity are almost all members of high society, which does not allow them to perform the menial tasks necessary for the sick poor, they took on some good country women to whom God had given the desire to work in it. These were formed and prepared for the work by Mlle Louise de Marillac, widow of the late Antoine Le Gras, Secretary of the late Queen Mother of the King, our most honored Lord and father. For this purpose, she has taken them into her own home, where she has fed and maintained them by the charity of some good widows and other pious, devout persons, with the result that there are now in every parish two or three of these good Sisters, who work

Document 146a. - Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: France, vol. 867, pp. 357-59; reprinted in Annales C. M. (1940), pp. 466-69. Because this document is sufficiently different from the letters patent issued by King Louis XIV in November 1655 (cf. Doc. 152), subsequent to the episcopal approval of the Daughters of Charity in 1655 (cf. Doc. 149), it is deemed appropriate to publish it here for its historical value.
daily assisting and serving persons who are poor, sometimes even teaching poor girls, when they are able. They live at the expense of the Confraternity of Charity of the parish in which they minister, but so frugally that their greatest individual expense amounts only to one hundred livres a year and sometimes less. Three of these good Sisters work for the Ladies of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu, preparing the modest refreshments that are brought daily by the Ladies to those who are poor; ten or twelve of them are ordinarily engaged in raising the foundlings in our fine city of Paris; and two or three of them assist the poor convicts.

In addition to those Sisters, others are at hospitals in the towns of Angers, Nantes, Montreuil-sur-la-Mer, Saint-Denis-en-France, and in the towns of Richelieu, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, and other places in the rural areas, where they carry out the same activities for the assistance and treatment of the sick and the instruction of poor girls. And because many of those good Sisters are needed so that some may be sent to all these places and to many others where they are being requested, Mlle Le Gras forms the same number of them in her house and always has more than thirty whom she instructs in matters of piety, preparing them to teach little girls, visit the sick poor, bring them their food, and do generally everything that might be useful for the sick poor. She supports these Sisters with alms that have been given for them, with what they are able to earn by their manual labor when their regular duties leave them some free time, and also with the help of the widows and other pious persons who contribute whatever they can.

Since, however, it usually happens that works involving the service of God die out with those who initiated them unless there is some spiritual bond among the persons engaged in them, our beloved and loyal François de Gondi, Archbishop of Corinth, Councillor in our Councils, Coadjutor and Vicar-General of the Archbishop of Paris, by his letters of November 20, 1646, by authority of the Archbishop, erected the conference of unmarried women and widows in the form of a distinct Confraternity under the title of Servants of the Poor of the Charity. He ordered that those who had been admitted to it since then, and those who would be re-
ceived into it in the future, might do freely anything that could relieve and console the sick poor, on condition that the Confraternity would be and would remain in perpetuity under the authority of and dependent on the Archbishop of Paris and his successors, in the exact observance of the Regulations, Statutes, and Constitutions that our dearly beloved Vincent de Paul had presented to the Archbishop of Paris, and according to which they had lived until then and had intended to live by for the rest of their lives. The Archbishop approved and authorized them by his letters, entrusting and confiding the guidance and direction of the Society and Confraternity to the dearly beloved Vincent de Paul for as long as it might please God to preserve his life. Therefore, there is nothing more to be desired for the perfection of such a holy establishment except that it please us to approve and authorize it willingly by our letters necessary for this.

For these reasons . . .

147. - PETITION OF THE QUEEN, ANNE OF AUSTRIA,1 TO THE POPE 2

(1647)

By the Bull of Establishment of the Congregation of the Mission, issued in the year 16323 by our Holy Father Pope Urban VIII, of happy memory, the said priests are empowered, under the authority of the local Ordinaries, to establish Confraternities of Charity for the relief of the sick poor in the country parishes where they give missions. Because they had such great success in most of the villages of the Paris diocese and others in the kingdom, some chari-

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1Anne of Austria (1601-66).
2Innocent X (1644-55).
3Although dated January 12, 1632, the Bull is actually from January 12, 1633. The practice in effect at the time was to date Bulls from March 25, considered the beginning of the ecclesiastical year; consequently, in the language of the Bulls, January, February, and most of March belonged to the preceding ecclesiastical year, in this case 1632.
table ladies of this city of Paris were so touched by it that they used their influence with the Pastors to have a similar establishment in their parishes for the relief of the sick poor.

Since the ladies of the Confraternities are, for the most part, members of high society, which does not allow them to perform the menial tasks that have to be done in them, they accepted, with the permission of the Archbishop of Paris and on the advice of the Superior General of the Congregation, a few widows and unmarried country women to whom God had given the thought of dedicating themselves to the service of the sick poor. For several years now, to the edification of the people and the consolation of the sick, all of them have been performing the lowliest tasks, prepared for this work by a good, virtuous widow in whose house they are maintained for a time and then sent into the parishes of the cities, towns, and villages that request them. They are called Servants of the Poor of the Charity and have been established under this title by the Archbishop of Paris, on condition that the Confraternity or Society remain in perpetuity under his authority and dependence.

Now, because that good work has extended into several dioceses of this kingdom, such as Angers, Nantes, Poitiers, Sens, Rouen, Beauvais, Reims, etc., and because the other Prelates are unwilling to accept them on this condition, and because that good work was begun and developed almost fourteen years ago by the General of the Congregation of the Mission, and by the establishment of the Confraternity or Society the Archbishop of Paris has now constituted him its Director for life, the Queen entreats His Holiness to name as perpetual Directors of the Confraternity or Society of Servants of the Poor of the Charity the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and his successors in the same office. In so doing, there is reason to hope that this good work will continue to flourish, the Church will be edified by it, and those who are poor better relieved.

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4Jean-François de Gondi.
We repeat the recommendation M. Lambert left with them to follow the advice he gave them.\footnote{Lambert aux Couteaux had made visitations to Nantes in 1647 and 1648. On July 26, 1647, he wrote a report to Saint Vincent (cf. III, 216-18); on July 17, 1648, he reported his visitation of the Sisters in Nantes to Saint Louise (cf. Documents, Doc. 471, pp. 520-22). Documents also provides us with the advice he left them after the 1648 visitation (cf. Doc. 472, pp. 523-24).}

They will endeavor to walk in the presence of God and from time to time will raise their hearts to His Divine Goodness and Justice, doing their utmost to accomplish His holy Will in all things, which consists in observing His Commandments, doing what the holy Church directs, and what their Rules, the Fathers,\footnote{The Fathers of the Poor, Administrators of the hospital.} and their Superioress order them to do.

They will be exact in going to confession every Saturday and Communion every Sunday. They will ring a bell to notify the others of the arrival of the confessor and will be at the confessional, each according to her rank, without keeping him waiting.

They will honor and cherish one another as spouses of Jesus Christ, who has drawn them from the bosom of His love, and will support one another in their little infirmities. Therefore, they will take great care not to complain of or contradict one another, especially in the presence of persons who are not members of the Community.

They will welcome with patience, gentleness, and humility those who visit the patients, doing their utmost to please and edify them, and will observe silence outside the times of recreation. If a matter is urgent, they will speak briefly and in a low tone of voice, and they will be quiet in walking and in closing doors.

They will honor the modesty of Our Lord by their own, keeping their eyes lowered, and not stopping to speak to the domestic help, except in cases of necessity.
They will serve the sick poor with the greatest possible charity, promptness, and attention. Before discharging those who will recover, they will instruct them in things necessary for salvation, and will assist those who are near death to die well.

Upon their arrival, they will see that the sick poor are visited, and put to bed after they have washed their feet. They will keep them as neat and tidy as possible, emptying their basins and cleaning the area often.

And in order to do all these things better, they will read these recommendations every Friday.

149. - APPROVAL OF THE COMPANY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY BY CARDINAL DE RETZ

(January 18, 1655)

Jean-François-Paul de Gondi, Cardinal de Retz, to all who will read these present letters, greetings.

Our very dearly beloved Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, has pointed out to us that one of the principal functions of the priests of the Congregation is to establish the Confraternity of Charity, instituted for the assistance of the sick poor, in places where they go to give missions and where this establishment is deemed helpful. This is clear from the erection of the Congregation made by Pope Urban VIII, of happy memory, and from the Rules of the Congregation, approved by the late Archbishop of Paris, Jean-François de Gondi, as delegate of the Holy See to approve the Rules. The Congregation established the Confraternity in the city and diocese of Paris and in several other places in this kingdom for the assistance of the sick poor of the area. The Confraternity is composed of wives, widows, and pious unmarried women, who take care of visiting and serving the sick poor, giving them food and medicine, and procuring their spiritual assistance in order to help those who are recovering to live well and those who are near death to die well. Experience has shown, however, that the

society ladies of the Confraternity find it difficult to carry the necessary food to the sick poor, as well as to make their beds, give them remedies and, in general, perform other minor services for them.

To provide for this drawback, the Congregation of the Mission, on the advice of the Ladies of Charity, encouraged some unmarried women and widows of lowly condition to join the Confraternity to perform the most menial tasks that have to be done for the sick poor. To that end, it has had them live together in a house destined for this purpose, under the direction of Mlle Louise de Marillac, widow of the late M. Le Gras, Secretary of the late Queen Mother, who instructs them in piety, forming them also to serve and nurse the sick poor, and to prepare and administer medicines. Then she sends them into the parishes of the city of Paris and in rural areas and to those hospitals that ask for them, recalling and changing them from one place to another according to needs. She engages them, under her direction, in several other good works, such as raising the foundlings of the city of Paris; assisting poor criminals condemned to the galleys and the sick in prison; teaching poor girls, showing them how to pray, read, and write; in a word, in every good work in which they may be useful. All of this is done with the advice and under the direction of the petitioner, in conformity with the Regulations and Statutes we approved previously and which were drawn up for the good order and direction of the Confraternity by the petitioner, to whom we gave its direction for life on November 20, 1646.

The approval, which had been attached to the letters patent it pleased the King to grant for it and addressed to the Parlement of Paris to be registered there, was, unfortunately, lost by the secretary of the Attorney General Méliand; then, the secretary died and no one could find the approval, attached to the letters patent, despite the search the petitioner had carried out among the papers of Méliand and his secretary, as well as in the office of the present Attorney General and his Assistants. The petitioner was obliged to turn to us that it might please us to approve once again the Confrat-
ternity and its Statutes and Regulations given below and to empower the petitioner and his successors as Superiors General of the Congregation of the Mission to direct the Confraternity under our authority and jurisdiction and those of our successors, the Archbishops of Paris, as being a work pleasing to God and a good means by which we will meet the needs of the sick poor of our diocese. We will also be giving those good Ladies of Charity and those poor widows and unmarried women, Servants of the Poor, the means of doing a work for the glory of God and the edification of the people.

For these reasons, wishing to foster such a good work, which we hope is to succeed for the glory of God and the great relief of persons who are poor, as God has done until now through His mercy, and considering that the best means for helping them continue is to unite the unmarried women and widows into some form of Society and Confraternity, distinct from that of the Ladies, established in our diocese long ago by the late Archbishop our predecessor, we have once again erected and by these present letters do erect the conference of unmarried women and widows in our diocese into a special Confraternity or Society, under the title of Servants of the Poor of the Charity. We will and ordain that those women already admitted, and those who will be accepted hereafter, be able to do freely whatever will relieve and console the sick poor, on condition that the Confraternity or Society will be and will remain in perpetuity under our authority and dependence and those of our successors, the Archbishops of Paris, in the exact observance of the Statutes and Regulations specified hereinafter, which we have once again approved, and do approve, by these present letters.

And since God has blessed the efforts our dearly beloved Vincent de Paul has made for the success of this pious intention, we have entrusted and confided to him and by these present letters do entrust and confide to him for life the leadership and direction of the Society and Confraternity and, after him, to his successors as Superiors General of the Congregation of the Mission.

These Rules differ from those of 1646 (cf. Doc. 146) on only a few points. Since the variants have already been pointed out in previous notes, it is unnecessary to repeat here the Regulations that accompanied this Act of Approval.
In testimony whereof, we have signed these present letters, had them countersigned by our regular secretary, and had the seal of our crest affixed to them.

Drawn up in Rome, December 18, 1655.

CARDINAL DE RETZ, Archbishop of Paris

In the name of the Archbishop. GAULTRAY

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149a. COMMON RULES
OF THE COMPANY OF SISTERS OF CHARITY
CALLED SERVANTS OF THE SICK POOR
WHICH THEY MUST KEEP TO PERFORM THEIR DUTY WELL
BY THE GRACE OF GOD

1. The purpose of the Community

They will often recall that the main purpose for which God has called and brought them together is to honor their patron Our Lord, serving Him corporally and spiritually in poor persons, sometimes as a child, or someone in need, or a sick person, or a prisoner. And to

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1The version of the Common Rules of the Daughters of Charity given here in forty-three articles, is, as closely as possible, the one Saint Vincent explained to the Sisters in a series of conferences from October 1655 to July 21, 1658. These “Rules” had evolved from the “Regulations” that were gradually introduced to the Sisters from the origin of the Company, as can be learned from his first recorded conference on July 31, 1634. The Rules are probably the fruit of a collaborative effort between Saints Vincent and Louise. Louise, who lived and worked with the Sisters on a daily basis, was eminently qualified to suggest revisions or changes to the Rules as she saw them lived out in the Company.

During the lifetime of the Founders there were several versions of the Rules, each a further development of the previous ones. The 1645 version is given in Doc. 145. Variants between the 1655 version approved by Cardinal de Retz and the 1646 version that had been previously approved by him are given in the footnotes for Doc. 146, but even Saint Vincent was not completely satisfied with this set of the Rules.

The “Rules of Alméras,” were drawn up at the request of Mathérine Guérin, Superior General, and completed in 1672. While faithful to the teachings of the Saint, Alméras organized and rearranged the Rules of Vincent into nine chapters, with thirty-two additional articles, twenty-seven of which he incorporated from the “Daily Schedule.” At the end of these Rules, Alméras affixed his signature and his seal, verifying the conformity of the contents of the Rules with those of Saint Vincent. The Daughters of Charity continued to observe the 1672 “official” version, with revisions later made in line with the 1917 Code of Canon Law, until the promulgation of the Constitutions of 1954.

2Saint Vincent explains Articles 1, 2, and 3 in the Conference of October 18, 1655.
be worthy of such a holy function and of such a perfect patron, they should strive to live a holy life and work earnestly at their own perfection. As a means to achieve this, they will do their utmost to observe carefully the present Regulations.

2. To prefer their own salvation to all else and to spare nothing to maintain themselves in grace

The first thing they will endeavor to observe inviolably is to value the salvation of their souls more highly than all earthly things and to spare nothing to maintain themselves always in the state of grace. In order to do so, they will avoid mortal sin more than the demon and even death, and do all they can, with the help of God, never to commit deliberately any venial sin.

3. Purity of intention

They will perform all their actions, corporal as well as spiritual, in a spirit of humility, simplicity, and charity, in the same spirit and in union with those Our Lord Jesus Christ performed on earth, making their intention for this purpose at the beginning of each principal action, particularly when going to serve the sick. They will remember that these three virtues are like the three faculties of the soul, which should animate the body and each member of their Community and that, in a word, they constitute the spirit of their Company.

4. Spirit of the Company

They will detest the maxims of the world and embrace those of Jesus Christ, among others those that recommend interior and exterior mortification, disregard for self and for the things of this world, choosing tasks that are menial and lowly rather than those that are honorable and pleasing, and always taking the last place and what

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3In the 1672 version, Alméras inserted as Art. 2 the famous “Charter” of the Daughters of Charity, originally part of the Particular Rules for the Sisters in the Parishes, which brings out the secular character of their Company: “They should consider that, although they do not belong to a religious Order because that state is incompatible with the duties of their vocation, nevertheless, since they have much greater contact with the world than nuns, having generally for monastery the houses of the sick; for cell, a hired room; for chapel, the parish church; for cloister, the streets of the city or the wards of hospitals; for enclosure, obedience; for grate, the fear of God; for veil, holy modesty; they are therefore obliged to lead as virtuous a life as if they were professed in a religious Order, and to conduct themselves wherever they mingle with people, with as much recollection, purity of heart and body, and detachment from creatures, and to be as exemplary as true religious in the enclosure of their monastery.”

4Cf. Conference of November 2, 1655.
others do not want. With all that they will be convinced that they are better off than they deserve because of their sins.

5. Detachment and Indifference

They will not be attached to any created thing, especially to places, duties, and persons, being careful not to become attached even to their relatives and confessors. They will always be prepared to leave everything when they are instructed to do so, reflecting that Our Lord says we are not worthy of Him nor of following Him if we do not renounce ourselves and our disordered actions in every way whatsoever, and even leave father, mother, brothers, and sisters to follow Him when He calls us.

6. Patience

They will endeavor to endure willingly and for the love of God inconveniences, contradictions, ridicule, calumnies, and other mortifications that may befall them, even for the good they have done, bearing in mind that all this is only a part of the Cross Our Lord wants them to carry after Him on earth so that one day they may merit to go to heaven with Him who, though innocent, suffered so much for us and even prayed for those who crucified Him.

7. Poverty

They will honor the poverty of Our Lord, being satisfied with having their modest needs met in the customary simplicity, reflecting that they are servants of poor persons and therefore should live poorly. Consequently, none of them will have anything either in the house or outside for her private use, but each will put everything in common like the first Christians. They may not dispose of or give away Community property, nor even their own, nor receive or acquire any from anyone else without the consent of the Superioress in minor, ordinary matters; for extraordinary and important matters, the permission of the Superior is also required.

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5Cf. Conference of June 6, 1656.
7Cf. Conference of August 20, 1656.
8. Not to ask for nor to refuse anything

They will do their utmost to practice what is so strongly recommended by the saints and observed so carefully in well-regulated Communities, namely, neither to ask nor to refuse anything in temporal matters. If, however, someone really needs something, she may mention it quite simply and with indifference to the persons who should provide it and then rest satisfied whether it be granted her or not.

9. To be glad that others use or deprive us of what is for our use

Just as they should not use without permission what is intended for the use of another Sister, neither should they complain if, by the same permission, someone else be given things they are using, but rather be glad to have the opportunity to practice holy poverty and mortification. Nevertheless, if it is necessary to speak of this, it will be only to their Superioress, or, in one of their distant houses, to the Sister Servant.

10. Sound management of Community goods and the property of those who are poor

They will make it a matter of conscience not to manage well the money and other things they handle for the use of the Sisters, reflecting that this would be to sin against the virtue of poverty, which they promised to practice when they received the dress and name of Servants of the Poor. It will also prevent abuses that might slip into the use they make of that property, especially with regard to clothing, which could happen if each one had the liberty to buy fabric and linen to have clothes made to her liking. This would be the cause of great disorder in the Company and would put an end to holy uniformity, so necessary in Communities. Therefore, the Sisters in the parishes, in the villages as well as in the towns, will spend the money the Ladies or other persons give them for their food and support only in accord with the order the Superioress prescribes for them. They will not purchase any serge or linen for their clothing.

*Cf. Conference of June 17, 1657.
*Cf. Conference of August 5, 1657.
*Cf. Conference of August 26, 1657.
but will ask her for dresses already made, and she will supply them. As payment for the clothing they receive from her, they will be bound to bring or send her their surplus annually, after taking out money for their food. If they themselves have to purchase some little necessities, they will ask her permission beforehand. As for food, medicines, linen, money, and other things earmarked for poor persons, they will be careful not to take any of these for the use of the Sisters, except when they are ill, remembering that this would be stealing the property of those who are poor.

11. Not to invite anyone for a meal without permission

While they are in the house of the Superioress, they will be careful not to invite any person from the outside to eat there without permission. The Sisters in the parishes and in the other houses at a distance will act the same way with regard to the Sister Servant, who will not allow it unless there is great need, and not without a special or general permission from the same Superioress, and only for women, even if there were no other harm in it except that it would be giving away property that does not belong to them and is to be used only for their personal needs and those of poor persons.

12. Service of the sick poor

Their chief concern will be to serve the sick poor, treating them with compassion, gentleness, cordiality, respect, and devotion, even those who are most troublesome and difficult, since it is not so much to them they are rendering service as to Jesus Christ. They will not forget to say a good word to them occasionally to dispose them to be patient, to make a good general confession, to prepare for a happy death or to lead a good life, and, above all, to teach them the things necessary for their salvation. They will also see that they receive all their sacraments in due time—even more than once if they have a relapse after convalescence. All this will be done in the manner and according to the order prescribed for them in the Particular Rules of their ministry with the sick.

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11 Cf. Conference of September 8, 1657.
12 Articles 12-16 are explained in the Conference of November 11, 1657.
13. Ill-directed charity for persons who are poor

Since ill-directed charity is extremely displeasing to God and harmful to the souls of those who practice it in that way, especially if done contrary to obedience, they will never take it upon themselves to give food or medicine to any patient against the will of those responsible for them or contrary to the order given them. Although they will not worry about the complaints discontented poor persons are accustomed to make, they will try nevertheless to comfort them, and do their best to satisfy them, showing compassion for their sufferings and regret at not being able to help them as they wish. They will also do their utmost to encourage the Ladies of Charity and others to do them as much good as possible.

14. To be very attentive to the sick Sisters

They will be very attentive to the sick Sisters, especially when they are outside the house of the Superioress, looking upon them as servants of Jesus Christ because they are servants of His members who are poor, and as their own sisters, since they are all in a special way daughters of the same Father, who is God. They will minister to them with all possible affection and exactness, but will remember, in caring for them in their illnesses, that servants should not be better treated than their masters with regard to medications, food, and other similar needs. If, through excessive charity, the Ladies might wish to treat them more delicately and indulgently, they will thank them very humbly for their kind intention and ask them most respectfully not to keep them from observing their little Regulations on this point, which, however, do not prevent them from accepting some small gratification when there is a great need.

15. Duty of the sick Sisters

The Sisters who are sick should not show any impatience nor complain when they are not always treated as they would like, reflecting that they do not know what they need as well as the physician and the nurses do; and after all, being poor persons, they should be glad to suffer something for the love of God, who is pleased to try their patience in this way.
16. To use no remedy nor consult the physician without permission of the Superior

Since too much tenderness for themselves may often prompt the Sisters, especially those in parishes, to speak about their minor ailments to the physician of the poor persons, who gives them remedies nearly every time they complain to him of the least discomfort they experience, causing many of them to ruin their health while thinking they are improving it, they will take no medicine nor be bled nor consult the physician for the same purpose without permission of the Superioress—that is, for those who are with her, or in the parishes of the city where she lives because those who live at a distance will have to ask this permission of the Sister Servant, who will not permit it unless she thinks it necessary. Furthermore, the said Sister Servant herself will strive to give the example to the others in the practice of this Rule.

17. Uniformity

As far as possible, they will observe uniformity in all things since it is the means of maintaining union and good order in Communities, and will avoid all singularity as the cause of divisions and disorders in a Company. In keeping with that, all of them will conform in everything to the common way of living in the house where the Superioress lives, complying with the maxims and customs taught there for their spiritual and temporal direction and following no others, although they may seem good and even better. With regard to their material needs, they will beware of having clothing, shoes, headdress, sleeping arrangements, food, or furnishings better than or different from what others have. Nevertheless, if anyone feels in conscience that she needs something special because of illness, she may mention it quite simply and with indifference to the same Superioress, who will decide before God and with the Superior what is best to do in the situation.

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\(^{13}\)Cf. Conferences of November 15 and 18, 1657.
18. Chastity

They will do their utmost to preserve perfect chastity of body and heart. To that end they will banish promptly all kinds of thoughts contrary to this virtue and avoid carefully every occasion that might harm it ever so little, particularly the desire to appear pleasing, vanity and affectation in the way they dress, walk, and speak, as well as curiosity to see and hear people, particularly through the windows and when going through the streets. Because of the dangerous consequences that may ensue, they will beware above all of speaking unnecessarily with men, be they priests or others, even if their conversations are on matters of piety.

19. Modesty

Because holy modesty is necessary not only to edify their neighbor—since it is a wordless and continual sermon—but also to preserve purity, which is easily sullied by immodest acts, they will be careful to preserve it at all times and in all places, even during their recreations. They will refrain from—among other things—frivolity, unbecoming gestures, and excessive laughter, and especially from touching one another without necessity, even though this be done playfully and as a token of friendship, unless charity requires it, as in the case of cordially embracing newly-received Sisters or those coming in from the country, or to be reconciled with someone whom they have saddened. Then it is permitted to kiss one another on the cheek, but never on the mouth. With regard to men, however, Daughters of Charity must never allow them to kiss them or to touch them in any way and under any pretext whatsoever.

20. Obedience to the Superior, the Superioress, and the Officers of the Company

They will honor and obey the Superior General of the Mission as the Superior and Director General of their Company; those whom he designates to govern it; the Superioress; and, in her absence, the Sister Assistant and the other Officers of the house, in all that concerns their office. They will also obey the Sister Servants who will

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14 Articles 17-19 are explained in the Conference of November 18, 1657.
15 Articles 20-23 are explained in the Conference of December 2, 1657.
be given them in the parishes and other places where they are established and see to it that their obedience is prompt, submitting their will and judgment in all things in which there is no sin, and to all sorts of Superiors and Officers, both those who are imperfect and disagreeable as well as those who are perfect and agreeable. They will recall that it is not so much persons they are obeying as God, who gives orders by their mouth and says Himself, speaking of those who have charge of others, *He who hears and obeys you, hears and obeys me; and he who rejects you, rejects me.*

21. Obedience to Superiors outside the Community in what concerns persons who are poor

In what concerns the service of persons who are poor, they will likewise honor and obey the Administrators of the hospitals where they are established, the Ladies of Charity in the particular parishes, the Lady Officers, and even the physicians, carrying out their orders promptly and exactly. The sick Sisters must also obey the nurse and the physician in what concerns their duties.

22. Obedience and respect toward Pastors

When they are sent to any parishes to live there while serving the sick poor, they will go to receive kneeling the blessing of the Pastors. As long as they remain in their parishes, they will show them every kind of honor and respect, and even obedience with regard to the care of the sick.

23. Respect and submission toward other priests

They will also show great respect to all other priests, but especially to those who are appointed to direct them and to hear their confessions. They will do the same for the confessors of those who are poor, regarding them at all times and in all places with almost the same reverence as when they are at the holy altar. They will submit to their orders and advice in all that is not sinful nor contrary to the Regulations and usual customs of their Company or the intention of their Superiors.

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16 Cf. Lk 10:16. (NAB)
24. Use of corporal mortifications

Although the constant work of the Daughters of Charity does not allow them to perform many bodily penances and practices of austerity, they may, nevertheless, sometimes do them, but only after obtaining permission of the Superioress in ordinary matters and of the Director in extraordinary ones. They will be convinced that exterior mortifications are of little benefit if they are not accompanied by interior ones, which consist in combating and overcoming their passions and evil inclinations, refusing the senses the satisfactions they demand—except in case of necessity—and, above all, keeping their tongues in check, reflecting that, even as Christians, they are obliged to do all that.

25. Not to write nor to receive any letters without permission

They will neither write nor receive any letters without the permission of the Superioress, to whom they will give those they have written, to be sent out or held back as she sees fit. Those Sisters living far from the house of the Superioress will act in the same way with regard to the Sister Servant. All will know, however, that this Rule does not oblige them to show anyone the letters they write to the Superior, Director, or Superioress, nor any they receive from them.

26. Not to eat outside mealtime nor out of the house without permission

And because moderation and good order at meals contribute greatly to health of soul and body, they will do their utmost to conform in this regard to the Regulations followed in the house of the Superioress concerning the quality and quantity of food and drink and the time and places of taking them. If, however, someone needs to eat and drink outside of meal time or out of the house, or to take something extra, she will ask permission of the Superioress, or of the Sister Servant of the place where she is living.

27. Not to go out without permission

They will not leave the house without the permission of the Superioress, whom they will tell where they are going and why; and

\[17\text{Articles 24-27 are explained in the Conference of December 9, 1657.}\]
will give her on their return an account of what they did. The Sisters in parishes and in other places will do more or less the same with regard to the Sister Servant, who will likewise inform her companion before going out.

28. Not to make nor to receive any visits without necessity and permission

They will make no visits, not even to their Sisters in another parish, without the permission of the Superioress—except in case of necessity, such as to visit the sick Sisters. Neither will they, especially Sisters who are not living near the Superioress, try to get others to visit them by way of recreation. They must not allow any outsiders, particularly men, to enter their rooms without great need, not even priests nor their confessors, unless they are sick. Even less should they go to see them in their rooms when they have to speak with them, but will do so in church or at the door of the house. They will take care of matters briefly and not at a late hour, regardless of their good reasons and intentions.

29. To remind Superiors of the faults of the Sisters and to be willing to have their own disclosed

Since neither the Superior nor the Superioress can remedy disorders that may arise in the Community unless they are aware of them, nor can know about them unless they are informed of them, and since, if they are not informed of them the Company, with time, might be in danger of perishing, each Sister will be careful to apprise the Superior and the Superioress, humbly and charitably, of the significant faults or strong temptations she has noticed in her Sisters. In addition, she will be content to have her own faults disclosed to the Superior and Superioress and will accept willingly the reproofs given her both publicly or in private.

30. Not to speak to outsiders in the house nor to allow the Sisters to speak to them without permission

Since frequent contact with persons outside the Company, except in cases of necessity, may be as harmful to purity and to the vo-

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18Articles 28 and 29 are explained in the Conference of December 23, 1657.
19Articles 30-32 are explained in the Conference of December 30, 1657.
cation of the Daughters of Charity as it is worthwhile and meritorious when done through obedience and to fulfill their obligations toward poor persons, as long as they are in their Community house they will not speak to any outsiders, especially men, nor allow any Sister to speak to them, without the authorization of the Superioress, or the Sister Servant if this takes place in their other houses.

31. Criticism of authority
They will not have the curiosity to probe into the affairs of the house in order to find fault with what is being done there, and will be very careful above all not to grumble about the conduct of the Superior, the Superioress, the Sister Servant, or about the Rules and good practices of the Company. This sort of criticism is capable of drawing down the malediction of God, both on the person who does it and on the one who listens to it with pleasure, and, in a word, on the entire Community because of the great scandal it causes.

32. To avoid malicious gossip
They will be very careful in their conversations not to reveal the faults of others, especially of their Sisters, nor, on the other hand, should they listen to those who might speak unkindly of them. They will do their best to prevent this, or else leave quickly, as if they heard the hissing of a serpent.

33. To unburden their heart only to Superiors and Directors
To prevent many serious inconveniences that might ultimately cause the downfall of the Company if each one were free to unburden her heart to whomever she wished, they will not tell their temptations and other interior troubles to their Sisters—even less, to outsiders—but will go to the Superioress or her representative, or to the Superior or the Director appointed by him, and, in case of need, to the Sister Servant because God has called them and no others for that purpose. If, however, someone feels before God that she needs to speak to or ask the advice of someone outside the Community, she may do so, but she must have permission from the Superioress,

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20Articles 33-35 are explained in the Conference of January 6, 1658.
Superior, or Director for fear that, by acting otherwise, God may allow someone to give her bad advice in punishment of her disobedience.

34. Not to waste time nor to speak with outsiders in the street

In going through the streets and even in the houses they enter, they will not linger with outsiders without real necessity. Even then, they will have little to say and will keep the conversation short, carefully avoiding any curious inquiries about current news and worldly affairs. If someone should mention these things to them, they will try to change the conversation in order to speak about something good and then leave politely and unobtrusively.

35. Confidentiality

Above all, they will be careful to keep silence regarding confidential matters, especially what is said or done during conferences, communications, or confession, particularly with regard to faults mentioned or heard and penances performed or given, because it is certain that, besides the offense they commit against God by revealing what is secret, they cause all these holy practices to become in the end loathsome, useless, and harmful to many. It is not forbidden, however, to mention something good that the Superior, Director, or one of the Sisters has said there, provided it be to edify others and without saying where it was heard, especially if in confession; but it is never permitted to speak of these things by way of recreation or, even less, in order to complain of something.

36. Union and charity among themselves

They will often think of the name of Daughters of Charity that they bear and will strive to make themselves worthy of it by the holy love they will always have for God and their neighbor. Above all, they will live in great union with their Sisters and never murmur or complain about one another, being careful to dismiss any thoughts of antipathy they may have for one another. They will refrain from anything that may cause disunion among the Sisters, particularly feelings of envy at seeing others better treated and honored.

21 Articles 36 and 37 are explained in the Conference of March 4, 1658.
37. To ask forgiveness

If it should happen through weakness that a Sister offends another Sister, she will not fail to kneel down and ask her forgiveness immediately, or at least in the evening before retiring. The other will also kneel and will accept this humiliation humbly and willingly. This practice is a good remedy to heal promptly the antipathy that might have been caused.

38. Condescension

They will bear willingly the slight imperfections of their Sisters as they would wish to be tolerated in a similar situation. They will adapt as far as possible to their moods and sentiments in everything that is not sinful nor against the Rules. This holy condescension, joined to mutual support, is a sovereign means to maintain union and peace in the Community.

39. Cordiality combined with respect

Just as they should not manifest too much cordiality or pleasure in speaking to anyone whomsoever, particularly to men, but should always have a respectful attitude—more or less as the rank and condition of each requires—neither must they seem to be rude or ill-humored, especially to their Sisters, but maintain a cordiality that consists in Christian gentleness and respectful cheerfulness, which can be remarked in our expression.

40. To avoid exclusive friendships

Although they should love one another dearly, they will, nevertheless, be careful to avoid exclusive friendships. These are all the more dangerous as they appear less so because ordinarily they are cloaked under the mantle of charity but are, however, only an attachment of flesh and blood. For this reason they will reject them as much as or more than enmities because, in the course of time, these two vicious extremes are capable of destroying a Company.

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23Articles 39 and 40 are explained in the Conference of June 2, 1658.
41. Confidence in Divine Providence

They will have great confidence in Divine Providence, abandoning themselves completely to it as an infant does to its wet nurse. They will be convinced that, provided they strive on their part to be faithful to their vocation and the observance of their Rules, God will always keep them under His protection and assist them with everything they need both for body and soul, at the very time they think that all is going to be lost.

42. The four virtues most appropriate for the Daughters of Charity

Although their vocation calls them to strive their entire life to practice all sorts of Christian virtues in imitation of Jesus Christ their Patron, they will, however, give more particular attention to those represented by the four extremities of the Cross: humility, charity, obedience, and patience, since they are the foremost ones Our Lord practiced principally during His crucifixion, and which He requires of all Christians and, for even greater reason, of Daughters of Charity because of the great need they have of them to carry out their ministry. That is why they will make sure that all their actions are animated by them, and will reflect that it is useless for them always to have a material cross on their person if, at the same time, they do not have the spiritual one, which is none other than the framework and practice of these four virtues.

43. To have a deep appreciation for all the Regulations and customs of the Company and to be very faithful in observing them

They will think highly of all these Regulations and the body of all the praiseworthy customs they have kept until now. They will consider all of them as means given by God for their greater perfection and to save themselves more easily. For this reason they will endeavor and strive earnestly to put them into practice. If perchance there are some articles that are repugnant to their thinking and sentiments, they will try to overcome and mortify themselves in that, re-

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calling that Our Lord has said that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.  

SCHEDULE FOR THE WORK OF EACH DAY AND OF THE YEAR WHICH THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY ARE TO OBSERVE

1. Rising  
They will rise at four o’clock, giving their first thoughts to God. Each will dress quickly and then make her bed. Before they finish dressing, they will take holy water and kneel down to adore God, to thank Him, and to offer themselves to Him with all the actions of the day.

2. Morning meditation and vocal prayers  
At half past four they will recite the usual prayers in common and then listen to the points of meditation that are read. They will make meditation for half an hour, beginning with the Come, Holy Spirit, and concluding with the Angelus, the Litany of the Name of Jesus, and other customary prayers. The Sisters in the parishes who do not know how to read will meditate on some mystery of the Passion or another assigned to them, or on some holy picture, or something else. For vocal prayers, they will say those they know by heart—at least the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Creed, the Confiteor, and a few decades of the rosary.

3. The regular schedule; Mass  
After prayer, they will work at what is most urgent, each according to her duty; then they will go to Mass if they can do so then; if not, at another more convenient time.

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27 Cf. Mt 11:12. (NAB)
28 Articles 1 and 2 of the daily schedule are explained in three conferences from 1658. The first of these is undated, but Saint Vincent begins the conference of October 13 by saying: “Last Sunday we spoke to you about the first Rule in the daily schedule...,” allowing us to place the first conference on Sunday, October 6, 1658. The third was given on November 17.
29 Articles 3–7 are explained in the Conference of November 17, 1658.
4. Breakfast

After Mass, they will go to breakfast; then each will return to her duty. If they cannot hear Mass until very late, there will be no difficulty in their having breakfast before going.

5. Particular examination of conscience; dinner

At half past eleven, they will make the particular examination of conscience for the space of a Miserere or two, reflecting on the resolutions taken at morning prayer and particularly on the virtue they have as their practice. Next they will go to dinner, saying grace before and after the meal. If possible, they will have reading at table; if not, they will have it immediately before the meal, during which they will talk about what has been read or some other edifying topic. Following grace after meals, they will recite the Angelus; if they do not know it, then three Hail Marys.

6. Work and recreation

After dinner they will devote themselves to their duties, if necessary; if not, they will work together at spinning or sewing. At the same time, they may converse on something edifying by way of cheerful, moderate recreation. They will often remember to raise their hearts to God, and, if something improper or some forbidden topic escapes them, a Sister designated for this purpose will say, "Let us remember the presence of God."

7. Time of silence and spiritual reading

From two to three o'clock they will keep silence as strictly as possible to honor that of Our Lord, beginning with spiritual reading, which one of the Sisters will do aloud, in order that they may have some good thoughts while at their work. They will conclude with the words, "Christ became obedient unto death for us, etc.," which will also be said aloud, kneeling, to offer to God the Father the moment His Son died for the salvation of our souls and to pray for those who are in their agony and in a state of mortal sin, as well as for the souls in purgatory, that this divine merit may be applied to them. At the end, they will kiss the floor. Those who do not know how to read will say one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Requiescant in pace. Amen. Those who are obliged to speak during this hour because of their duties may do so, provided they say only what is nec-
necessary. Even when going through the streets, they will recall from time to time that this is the time of silence and that during this same hour the newly-arrived Sisters who are in the house where the Superioress lives will be listening attentively to the instruction being given there to teach them the duties of a good Christian and a true Daughter of Charity. The other Sisters—even the older ones—will try to be there occasionally for the good example they will give and because there is always something beneficial in it for all of them.

8. Conversation among the Sisters

After the hour of silence they will continue working. They may still converse as before on something edifying, but more seriously and devoutly, since the time of recreation will be over.

9. Evening meditation, particular examination of conscience, and supper

At half past five, those for whom it is convenient will make their prayer until six, followed by the particular examination of conscience as at dinner. Then they will go to supper, saying grace before and after meals with reading at table, and do everything else that was said concerning dinner.

10. Recreation and work

After supper they will apply themselves to their duties, if necessary; otherwise, they will work with the others and observe what is prescribed for recreation after dinner.

11. General examination of conscience and prayers in common

At eight o’clock they will go to the place designated for making the general examination of conscience and the evening exercise in the usual manner; namely, prayers in common; reading of the martyrology, where this can be done; then the points of meditation for the following day. They will make the general examination of conscience, then recite the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Creed, and other customary prayers. After

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30 Articles 8-15 are explained in the Conference of November 25, 1658.
that, at least the beginning of each point of the same meditation will be reread; then they will get ready to go to bed.

12. **Friday conference**

On Fridays they will be present for the little conference that will take place after evening prayers in the presence of the Superioress or her representative concerning the failings noted against the Rules of the Company and the means to correct them. To this end, each Sister mentions her fault and accepts willingly the advice and penance she is given. They also ask pardon of one another if they have offended or given one another bad example. In parishes and other houses they will do almost the same thing in the presence of the Sister Servant.

13. **Bedtime**

At nine o'clock, after taking holy water and kneeling to say their usual short prayers for the space of one or two Our Fathers—or three at the most—they will go to bed and try to fall asleep with some good thought, for example, on the subject of the next day’s meditation.

14. **Time of silence**

From the end of evening prayer until after prayer the next morning they will keep strict silence. If, however, it is necessary to speak, they will do so in a low voice and in few words.

15. **Time for learning to read and write**

Those who have permission to learn to read and write will spend half an hour in the morning for reading and the same amount of time after dinner for writing, provided this does not hinder the service of poor persons or any other duty for which they have a stricter obligation.

16. **Rosary**

In addition to the above, they will say part of their rosary at different times, such as one decade after morning prayer; two in church while waiting for Mass to begin, or, if it has already begun,

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31 Articles 16 and 17 are explained in the Conference of December 8, 1658. The Conference of March 16, 1659 continues the instruction on Article 17 and also explains Articles 18-23.
up to the Gospel; one after the noon Angelus; and another after the Angelus in the evening.

17. Program for Sundays and feast days; catechism

On Sundays and feast days they will follow the same schedule, except that the time spent in manual labor on work days will be devoted to spiritual exercises, such as devotional reading, listening to the sermon, catechism, Mass, pious conversations, catechetical formation with the Sisters so they may become proficient in teaching poor persons and children things necessary for salvation, or some other similar occupation in conformity with their state. All that should not prevent them from taking their little recreation together after the meal, according to the time remaining.

18. Kneeling before going out

Before leaving the house, they will take holy water and kneel before a picture of Our Lord to ask God’s blessing and the grace not to offend Him. On their return they will do the same to thank Him for having preserved them from sin or, if they see that they have committed some fault, to ask His forgiveness.

19. Days of fast and abstinence in addition to those of the Church

Every Friday and on the eves of the feasts of Our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin they will fast; every Wednesday of Advent they will abstain; however, the infirm and those who go to visit the sick will take a small piece of bread every morning or some other small amount of food by way of a remedy, even on fast days of obligation, provided this is done with the consent of the Superior or of the person delegated for their direction.

20. Confession and Communion on Sundays and feast days

Every Saturday and on the eves of feast days they will make their confession to the confessors the Superior has appointed, and to no others without permission. They will receive Communion on Sundays and feast days and not more often, nor on two days in succession, without the permission of the same Superior, or, in his

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32 These and other directives concerning confession and Communion were later revised to bring them in line with the 1917 Code of Canon Law.
absence, of his representative or someone else delegated by him; neither will they refrain from Communion on the assigned days without the same permission. To prevent many abuses that may arise from this general permission to receive Communion on all the aforementioned days, and, at the same time, to have the merit of receiving this sacrament always through obedience, the Sisters who are in the house of the Superioress will ask her each time for permission to receive Communion. The Sisters in parishes and other places will act in about the same way with regard to the Sister Servant, but neither they nor the others will receive Communion if the Director or confessor does not allow it.

21. Review and communication

Every month they will make their review to the Director designated by the Superior, and by the same occasion will see the Superioress to give her an account of their ministry and present their difficulties to her. If not, they will come back another day for that purpose.

22. Retreat

Every year, if possible, they will make a spiritual retreat in the house of the Superioress and their general confession of the faults committed since the last general confession, in accord with what the Superior has prescribed for them.

23. Meetings

Whenever they are notified that there will be a meeting or conference, which the Superior or his delegate will hold in the house of the Superioress, they will be punctual in going to it, provided it is in no way prejudicial to the service of poor persons or some other occupation of stricter obligation.

24. Special instructions for the Sisters in distant places

Those who live in villages far from the house of the Superioress, and who, consequently, are unable to get to it as often as those who are nearby, will go there for the reasons mentioned above whenever they can do so conveniently, in such a way that those who are at a distance of a day's journey or two will try to get there at least once a

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33 Articles 24-27 are explained in the Conference of August 11, 1659.
year, one after the other, to make their retreat. They will, however, ask permission beforehand by letter or otherwise. As for the others who are much farther away—around sixty or eighty leagues, for example—they will not go unless they are told to do so. For their retreat, monthly confession, conference, communication, and other spiritual assistance, they will have recourse to the regular Directors who will be given them for that purpose on site. When an extraordinary Director comes to visit them for a few days, they will go to him for all of the above.

25. Good use of time

If, after having done all that is prescribed in their Regulations, they have some extra time and no work to do, particularly sewing and spinning, they will ask the Superioress or the Sister Assistant for some in order to try to earn some of their board. Those in distant houses will do about the same with regard to the Sister Servant, and they will all make it a matter of conscience to lose a minute of time, remembering that God will require an exact account of it.

26. To prefer the service of persons who are poor to every other ministry

Although they must do their utmost to observe exactly all these Regulations, including the daily schedule, a Sister should, however, have no scruple about changing the times and even leaving some of her work, when the extraordinary needs of the sick, the children, or other similar necessities require it. They will remember that their chief ministry is to serve poor persons faithfully, in both spiritual and temporal matters, and that, when they do so, they are leaving God for God, and therefore are doing the Will of the same God.

27. Reading of the Rules

They will read these Regulations, or hear them read, together with those of their duties, once a month, if this can be done conve-

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34 Although Saint Vincent gives Articles 25 and 26 in the Conference of August 11, he does not explain them. The copyist here notes: "What M. Vincent said on these two articles, as well as the rest of the conference, must not have been written down."
nently. They will examine themselves on them to see if they have observed them well or not, so as to thank God if they have and to ask His pardon if they have not.

149b. - PARTICULAR RULES OF THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY

PARTICULAR RULES FOR THE SISTERS IN PARISHES

(1) They will consider that, since their ministries oblige them to be out of the house and among the people most of the time, and often even all alone, they need greater perfection than Sisters who minister in hospitals and other similar places, which they rarely leave. For this reason they will make a very special effort to advance in the virtues recommended to them by their Common Rules, particularly deep humility, exact obedience, perfect union among themselves, great detachment from creatures, and constant foresight in order to preserve intact purity of body and heart.

(2) They will often think of the principal purpose for which God has sent them to the parish where they reside, namely, to serve the sick poor, not only corporally by giving them food and medicine, but also spiritually by seeing that they receive the sacraments worthily and in due time, including **confession on the first or second day after they are welcomed into the Charity**, so that those who are

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35To this day the Daughters of Charity are encouraged to read and esteem the "First Rules of the Company, which they consider the legacy of their Founders" (cf. **Constitutions and Statutes of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul**, 1983, statute 11).


1Although Saint Vincent gave the Daughters of Charity guidelines in the Common Rules for uniformity in living their vocation, he also recognized that their ministries involved adaptation to different situations in order for them to carry them out effectively. His foresight in this matter resulted in Particular Rules for each of the major apostolates in which the Sisters were engaged.

2Cf. Doc. 149a, n. 3.

3With the publication of the Code of Canon Law in 1917, certain changes were required in the Rules dealing particularly with Communion, confession, and practices that are no longer applicable. The texts in italics indicate those parts of the Rules that do not appear in the 1954 version. Other changes will be indicated as they appear.