niently.\(^3\) 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.\(^2\)

(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,\(^3\) so that those who are

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\(^3\)To 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).


\(^1\)Although 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.

\(^2\)Cf. Doc. 149a, n. 3.

\(^3\)With 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certain changes were required in the Rules dealing particularly with Communion, confession, and practices that are no longer applicable.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.
near death may leave this world in a proper state and those who are recovering may make the firm resolution to live a good life in the future.

(3) The spiritual assistance they will endeavor to give them, according to their modest ability and the disposition of the patients, will be mainly to console and encourage them and to instruct them in things necessary for salvation, helping them to make acts of faith, hope, and love for God and the neighbor, contrition for their sins, reconciliation with their enemies, asking pardon of those whom they have offended, resignation to God's Will—whether to suffer or to be healed, to die or to live—and other similar acts, which they should suggest to them, not all at once but a few each day, and very briefly for fear of fatiguing them.

(4) Above all, they will give themselves to God to dispose them, particularly if the illness is serious, to make a good general confession of their whole life, helping them to realize its importance and instructing them how to make it well. Among other things, they will tell them to confess not only the sins committed since their last confession but also all the others they have ever committed, both those already confessed and the ones they have forgotten. If they are unable to make this confession of their whole life, they will encourage them at least to have general contrition for all their sins and the firm resolution to die rather than to commit them in the future, with the help of God's grace.

(5) If the patients begin to rally and then relapse once or several times, they will urge them to receive the sacraments again, even that of Extreme Unction, and will make it a point to procure this great blessing for them. If they are with them in their last moments, they will help them to die well, having them make briefly some of the acts mentioned above, praying for them, sprinkling them with holy water with an asperges brush, and reminding them to gain the plenary indulgence given for some medal if they have one, by saying on the point of dying, with their lips or in their heart, the Holy Name of Jesus. After their death, they may help to lay them out for burial,

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Crucifix.
in case of necessity, if they can do so conveniently and the Sister Servant allows it.

(6) If the patients are restored to health, the Sisters will intensify their efforts to encourage them to benefit from their illness and recovery, telling them that God has permitted their physical illness to heal their soul, and has restored their physical health to them so that they might use it in the future to do penance and to lead a good life; consequently, they must make some firm resolutions and renew the ones they made during their illness. They will suggest some little practices to them according to their ability, such as to pray kneeling, morning and evening, to go to confession and Communion several times\(^5\) during the year, or to avoid the occasions of sin or other such things; but they will always mention these things to them briefly and humbly.

(7) For fear that these spiritual services may be prejudicial to the corporal service they should render to the sick, as might happen if, by spending too much time speaking to one of them, they caused others to suffer by failing to bring them their food or medicine at the right time, they will strive to limit themselves in that, regulating their time and exercises according to whether the number and needs of the patients are great or small. And because their afternoon duties are not as urgent as the morning ones, they will ordinarily take that time to instruct or encourage them as explained above, particularly when they are rendering them other necessary services.

(8) If the instruction given to one patient can be extended to others in the same room, they will try to do so with the requisite discretion. This can easily be done when children are there because, in questioning them on the principal mysteries of our holy faith or reminding them of their duties, the parents who are present can benefit from it without realizing that it is partly for them that they are speaking.

(9) They will make it a matter of conscience to fail in the smallest service they are supposed to render to the patients, especially with regard to remedies, which they should give them in the way and at

\(^5\)Frequently.
the time prescribed by the physician, unless some great necessity obliges them to act otherwise; for example, if the patients were to take a bad turn, had chills or fever, or something similar.

(10) In serving the sick, they should have God alone in view and pay no more attention to the praise given them than to the insults they receive, except to make good use of them by rejecting the praise interiorly at the thought of their own nothingness and accepting the insults to honor the contempt the Son of God received on the Cross from the very people on whom He had showered His blessings.

(11) Although they should be neither too lenient nor too condescending if the patients refuse to take the remedies or are too insolent, they must, nevertheless, be careful not to be harsh or disrespectful to them; on the contrary, they will treat them respectfully and humbly, remembering that the harshness and disrespect they show them, as well as the service and honor they render them, are directed to Our Lord Himself.

(12) They will not accept any gift, however insignificant, from the poor persons they assist and will be very careful not to think that the patients are under any obligation for the service they render them. On the contrary, the Sisters must be convinced that they are greatly indebted to the patients since, for a little alms they give them—not from their own property but merely by providing them with a little care—they make friends who are entitled to give them access to heaven some day, and that even in this life they receive from them more honor and true happiness than they could ever have hoped for in the world. They should never abuse this, but be ashamed at the sight of their unworthiness.

(13) To avoid any serious inconveniences that might arise, they will not undertake to sit up with the sick nor with women in labor, nor to assist loose women. If they are asked to do so by the Ladies of Charity, poor persons, the neighbors, or others they will humbly apologize and say that it is forbidden by their Rules; and even though certain cases of urgent necessity may seem to oblige them to be of service to someone in these three categories of persons, they will not undertake it without a general or special permission from
their Superiors and an express order from the Superioress of the Charity.\textsuperscript{6} Even then, they will do their best to assist them only through someone else and will inform no one but their Superiors about it.

(14) If there are any sick persons so abandoned as to have no one to make their bed or to render them some other service even more lowly, they may do it if they have time and the Sister Servant judges it appropriate. They will try, nevertheless, to get someone else to continue this same charity, for fear that it may delay the assistance of other poor persons.

(15) When a Sister becomes ill and is confined to bed, they will inform their Superioress of the illness the next day, or the third day at the latest, so that she may come to visit her and do what is necessary for her relief. The Sisters who live in places at a distance from the Superioress will notify her at the first opportunity.

(16) They will be careful to manage well and preserve the money they have to handle; for this purpose the Sister Servant will keep locked up in a separate place what is for the Sisters, and they will make very sure that they not use for themselves anything intended for poor persons, be it food, linen, or money, reflecting that in so doing they would commit a theft of which they would be guilty before God. They are permitted only to use at any time utensils and household linens such as sheets, tablecloths, napkins, etc., and when they are ill they are given the ordinary portion of the sick poor and all the necessary remedies, even those they may need by way of prevention, after discussing this with one of the Lady officers of the Charity, if an offer has not been made to them to that effect.

(17) As for the money given them for their support, the Sister Servant may leave a certain amount with a Sister companion, who will take care of their minor expenses. She will, however, purchase nothing without the consent of the Sister Servant, unless the need is urgent and for ordinary things. None of them, however, will use the money remaining after what is spent for their food has been taken

\textsuperscript{6}From the Sister Servant.
out, without the permission and according to the intention of their Superioress.

(18) They will also pay very special attention to the other articles of their Common Rules that particularly concern them, and to the following above all:

[1] To prefer the service of the sick poor to every other ministry, be it corporal or spiritual, and to make no scruple either of advancing or postponing everything else for that, provided it be the urgent need of the patients and not laziness or lack of discipline that leads them to act in that way. They will also be exact in always going to bed at nine o'clock and rising at four.

[2] To show great respect to the Ladies of Charity, physicians, and, above all, Pastors, the confessors of those who are poor, and other priests. They will be very reserved in their behavior toward all these persons, never being familiar with them and, even less, becoming attached to them.

[3] Not to waste time speaking to persons when going through the streets or in the houses where they are obliged to go, unless there is great necessity, and even then dealing with matters briefly, particularly with men.

[4] Not to take it upon themselves to treat any patient nor to give anything to a poor person contrary to the order prescribed or the intention of the Lady officers. 7

[5] Not to make use of any drug or bloodletting 8 for themselves nor to consult the physician for the same purpose, without the permission of their Superior 9 or in distant places of the Sister Servant.

[6] To be satisfied, when they are ill, with being treated like the poor persons they assist, since it is unreasonable that servants be better treated than their masters. If, however, they really need some little delicacy, and the Ladies or their Superior 10 give them any, they may have it.

7Of the Sister Servant.
8Remedies or drugs.
9The Visitatrix.
10Their Sister Servant.
[7] To buy no clothing nor furnishings for themselves but to be content with what the Superioress will give them for their personal needs and, if they must buy something besides their food, to ask her permission for it, either verbally or in writing.

[8] Not to fail to take to the Superioress or to send her annually payment for the clothing she provides for them according to the custom of the Community.

[9] To be very careful not to become attached by misplaced affection to the parish where they reside, because of their satisfaction in being with a certain Sister or in speaking with the Ladies or their confessor. Should they become aware of this, they must try to break off this attachment by telling the Superioress promptly of their weakness and their need for immediate assistance.

[10] Neither to eat nor to drink in the homes of persons outside the Company—not even of the Ladies of Charity—but always in their own rooms.

[11] Not to allow outsiders to enter their rooms, except poor persons in the place set aside for their dressings or bloodletting, and much less to allow anyone to eat or sleep there—not even their relatives, particularly men.

[12] Not to go to the residence of priests, except in the cases mentioned in the Common Rules, and, on those occasions, never to go alone but always two together. If only one Sister can go, she should take as a companion some married woman or young woman of the house or neighborhood.

[13] Not to absent themselves from their parish without necessity, not even to go to hear a sermon, gain indulgences, take part in processions, etc.

[14] To be conscientious in whatever they have to do, working at sewing or spinning when they have some time to spare, and, if

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12 The Sister Servant.
13 If they need anything they should make known their needs to her.
14 Some trustworthy person.
15 Sewing or knitting.
they have no work, to get some from their Superioress or, in distant places, from the Sister Servant.

[15] To be very submissive to the Sister Servant and to show her great respect, even if she is younger in age or vocation, undertaking nothing without her order or permission, not even giving an egg or a larger portion than usual, nor any medicine, nor going to the homes of the Ladies, nor speaking to them about anything unless they are questioned about it.

[16] Not to fail to go once a month to make their review to the confessor of the house, and, for those who are in the parishes in Paris, to give an account of their ministries to the Superioress; the others will do what is stated in the Common Rules. 17

[17] With regard to the order of the day, they will conform as much as possible to that of their Community, adapting it to the service of poor persons in approximately the following manner, which they will try in general to observe: 18

1. Immediately after morning prayer—and in summer, after the reading of the subject—they will be careful to take the medicines to the patients. On their return they will go to Mass, during which they may also make their prayer, if they have been unable to do so at half past four.

2. After Mass, they will eat a piece of bread for breakfast in their room.

3. Next, at the usual time—or earlier, if need be—they will go to the home of the Lady where the soup for the patients is being prepared, so that the soup pot may be ready at exactly nine o'clock at the latest and they can be back by half past eleven.

4. Afterward, they will read carefully the prescriptions of the physician and prepare the medicines in order to take them to the patients at the proper time; they will also deposit the soup pot for the

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16 The rest of the 1954 article reads: If they are obliged to do so, they should exercise great prudence and discretion.

17 The 1954 edition (Art. 15) reads: Not to fail, once a month, to give an exact account of their ministries to the Sister Servant as is prescribed for them in the Common Rules.

18 The 1954 edition (Art. 16) reads: With regard to the order of the day, they will conform as much as possible to that of the Community, adapting it to the service of the sick, but without dispensing themselves from the exercises prescribed by the Common Rules, except in case of necessity. (The next six points are omitted.)
next day in the home of the Lady whose turn it is, unless they have to make it in their own house. After supper they will prepare the medicines for the next morning and, if anything else is urgent, they will do it quickly without wasting time, so they can be in bed by nine o'clock.

5. They will lock the door at six o'clock in winter and eight in summer, and will not open it again without great necessity.

6. When they are able to teach little girls in the parish without being prevented from going to the sick, one of the two will do so, but will be relieved by the other if necessary, presuming, however, that the Superioress approves. If she does, they will observe as far as possible the Rules drawn up for the Sister who teaches school, which they will be given for this purpose.

Signed: RENÉ ALMÉRAS, and sealed with his seal

PARTICULAR RULES FOR THE SISTER WHO TEACHES SCHOOL

(1) She will often think of her great happiness in being called by God to cooperate with Him in the salvation of those poor little girls, who might perhaps be damned one day if they did not receive the instruction she gives them. That is why she must be extremely faithful in carrying out her ministry well and exact in keeping the following Rules:

(2) She will be sure to learn well herself what she has to teach others, particularly all that concerns faith and morals.

(3) She will not instruct them either on the catechism or on morality before previously asking the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

(4) She will do her utmost to form these little creatures in good habits and keep them from contracting bad ones, remembering how very difficult it is to correct them when they become deep-rooted.

(5) As far as possible, she will regulate the times of instructions, except the ones she has to give to poor little girls who go to beg their bread or have to work to earn their living. These must always be

19 Children.
given priority and welcomed whenever they come, and be allowed to leave whenever necessary.

(6) She will make it a point to encourage poor little girls to come to school, inviting them with kindness and affection when she meets them in the streets or on the roadways, even giving them for this purpose booklets, rosaries, and holy pictures. If she has none, she will see that the Ladies supply her with them.

(7) She will arrange her classroom as neatly and devoutly as possible, but simply and without overdoing it, bringing to it and having others bring to it the respect due to places where God is pleased to have people speak of Him, and in which special graces are received.

(8) She should be more anxious to teach the girls the articles of faith, devotion, modesty, obedience, purity, and other necessary virtues than to have them answer well at catechism on matters of lesser importance or that are too lofty for them, or to make them memorize maxims to be recited with a certain studied manner, which often causes vanity both in them and in their teacher. Nevertheless, those means should not be neglected insofar as they may help to encourage the pupils to learn well, provided this be done with the requisite moderation and discretion.

(9) When she reminds the pupils to live in the fear and love of God, depicting to them the evil caused by sin and the good that comes from virtue, she will remember to apply to herself what she says to them and be ashamed at not possessing the virtues she recommends to others.

(10) She will urge them often to kneel down and pray to God morning and evening and will endeavor to make herself respected and loved at the same time, in such a way that the pupils will have in her a confidence that does not prevent respect, modesty, or the silence they should observe in school.

(11) She will be very careful to say or do nothing that might give them the slightest bad example, reflecting that Our Lord curses those who scandalize others, especially children.

(12) She will correct them earnestly but gently, encouraging them by expressing the hope that they will not commit again the

20The rest of the article is omitted.
faults for which they have been reproved, and telling them that they should often ask this grace of God.

(13) She will be careful to punish them for their usual shortcomings but give them a whipping only rarely and for serious faults, and never more than five or six strokes, taking them for this purpose to a place in the school out of sight of the others. Typical punishments she will give to correct them of their faults are to have them kneel down and ask pardon of God and of those they have offended, to kiss the floor, to deprive them of part of their snack, to have them remain kneeling for the length of a Miserere, to make them sit on the dunce stool, to give them a few taps on the hand with a switch, and similar things. She will, however, be very careful never to strike them on the face, the head, or elsewhere, either with switches or with her hand—and even less with disciplines—or give them any other extraordinary penances. 21

(14) She will praise publicly and reward with prizes those who excel, not only in their lessons, but also in catechism and in virtue.

(15) She will not follow her own opinion regarding the way to instruct children, but will conform to the one observed in the house of the Superioress for reading, catechism, and morality. For this purpose she will try to comply as far as possible with the following articles which contain more or less the order that should usually be observed.

(16) She will be punctual in getting to school at the appointed time, 23 which is usually half past eight in the morning and half past two in the afternoon.

(17) Before beginning to go over the lessons or to give the instruction, she will take holy water, kneel before the little oratory with all the pupils, and say the Come, Holy Spirit; then one of the girls will say aloud the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, Credo, and the Commandments of God. Next they will all take their places and study their lessons in silence, while she begins to hear one bench af-

21This article is replaced in the 1954 edition (Article 12) by: She shall not correct them by corporal punishment such as kissing the floor or keeping them on their knees, and she shall remember never to strike them for any reason whatsoever.

22For general subjects.

23The rest of the article reads: and begin class by a prayer.
ter the other recite a part. For example, one will say Pater, another Noster, and another qui es, and in this way each of the beginners will recite consecutively a word or two or a verse of their lesson. Once they know how to read a little, they may say more.

(18) At half past ten, before dismissing them, she will have them recite aloud the Angelus, then the Confiteor, to ask pardon of God for the faults of the entire morning. Next, she will take them to Mass two by two, if possible; and if they have heard Mass previously, she will not dismiss them until eleven o’clock.

(19) After dinner the same will be done as in the morning, except that at five o’clock, before they leave, she will have them recite the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, Credo, and the Litany of Jesus or of the Blessed Virgin, alternating these with silent prayer. They will also chant the Commandments of God and three times “Praised be the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.”

(20) On Thursday afternoons and Saturday mornings she will teach them the catechism, making sure they understand thoroughly what they are reciting. She will ask them various informal questions for this purpose, among the six main ones indicated in the catechism lesson, and in terms other than those used in the book.24

(21) On all the eves of feast days she will explain to them simply what feast will be celebrated the following day and how it should be spent.

(22) She will be careful to take them to confession on the eves of the four principal holy days of the year; in the villages, she will also take them to Vespers on the eves of the feasts of Our Lady, the first Sunday of the month, and other more solemn ones. For confession, she will remind them, among other things, not to go several together but one after the other, even though they may only be receiving the blessing of the priest because they are not yet ready for absolution.

(23) When the time comes to instruct those whom it is desirable to prepare for First Communion, she will beware of favoring any one of them, or of proposing them because of their knowledge or apparent desire, but, seriously considering the importance of this holy action,
she will carefully inquire about their conduct and natural inclinations in order to inform the person who is to examine them.

(24) She will keep a list of all the pupils and check it every month to see who has been absent. She will make note of this in order to remind them of it, if need be, and to give a prize to those who are faithful.25

(25) She will also have regulations for the pupils, which she will read every month and will see that they are kept exactly.

(26) She will keep in mind that the schools of the Daughters of Charity are only for girls; consequently, no boy, young or old, may be admitted. Nevertheless, if she has the time and the opportunity, she may teach the truths of faith to poor beggars, either at the door of the house or on the roadways, at least on the way to the country.

(27) She will also understand that all sorts of girls are not to be received into her school, but only those who are poor. If, however, Providence and obedience should call her to a parish where there is no teacher to instruct those who are rich, and the parents insist that they be admitted with the other pupils, in that case she may accept them with the Pastor’s consent, but on condition that those who are poor always be preferred to those who are rich and that the latter do not look down on the others.

(28) Lastly, although she should do her best to observe all the articles of these Regulations, still she will note that some points cannot be practiced in very small places, particularly those that set down the times of entering and leaving school, and a few others that are incompatible with their ministry with the sick. For this reason, she will not hesitate in such cases to omit or change the ones that she sees before God cannot be observed in their entirety without prejudice to something else of stricter obligation. And in order not to be mistaken in that, she will find out from the Superioress what she should do, and follow her decision as best she can.

(29) She will be convinced that if, after all, God Himself does not instruct interiorly the children for whom she is responsible, in vain will she herself invest her time and energy in teaching them. Therefore, she will often commend them to Our Lord, entreati...
Him to bestow His graces and blessings both on the pupils that they might profit from her instructions, and on herself that she might fulfill her duty well, so that together they may receive the rewards promised them for that in heaven.

Signed: RENÉ ALMÉRAS, and sealed with his seal

PARTICULAR RULES FOR THE SISTERS IN THE VILLAGES

(1) Because the Sisters who minister in the villages are deprived for long periods of time of communication with their Director and with the Superioress, and because there are usually only two of them together, they must strive particularly for great confidence in Divine Providence and the faithful practice of their Rules, including these [Particular] Rules. They should endeavor especially to be on such good terms with one another and so supportive and cordial that they enjoy the holy liberty of helping, consoling, and encouraging one another in their needs, even sharing their minor difficulties with one another, except those that might be detrimental to their Sisters or should be disclosed only to the Superior, the Director, or the Superioress.²⁶

(2) Those who are in places where the Confraternity of Charity is established²⁷ will do more or less all that is done in the parishes of Paris,²⁸ except that, if there is no physician, they themselves will go to see what the patients need and, depending on their illness, will administer²⁹ remedies such as bloodletting, enemas, or drugs. If, however, the illness is very serious, they will at least consult a surgeon.

(3) In places where the Confraternity of Charity is not established, they will have full responsibility for the patients and, for fear

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²⁶The Superior, the Director, or the Visitatrix.
²⁷The 1954 edition begins: They will do more or less . . .
²⁸In the city parishes.
²⁹The rest of the 1954 article reads: First Aid remedies while waiting for the doctor.
of neglecting something with regard to remedies, will comply with the following advice:

First, they will be careful not to let blood or purge, unless it is really expedient, because of the dangers that might arise; therefore, as soon as they are called to go to see the patients, after giving them a cheerful, cordial welcome, they will find out how long they have been ill and begin their treatment with an enema—or a bloodletting, if the patient is reluctant to have an enema.

Second, if the patient has a chronic fever, they will increase the bloodletting to three or four and, if the fever persists, will bleed the foot, then start over on the arm, until the fever subsides. They will begin to purge them with a laxative tea if there is intermittent fever and recurring chills, but they will be careful not to administer any remedy during the chills or fever, other than a glass of tonic that is not too strong with a measure of theriac\(^{30}\) in it shortly before the chill, and the same amount near the end to make them perspire for a good three hours. After half an hour of rest and when they have dried them off well, they will give them a good enema; for everything else they will follow the two sets of regulations regarding the manner of living and the medicines indicated for hospitals.\(^{31}\)

(4) They will also be concerned about the instruction of poor girls—and not only those who come to class in their house—regardless of their age and at whatever time they come, particularly those who have to beg their bread, even if this be at meal time, if they cannot wait. In addition, they should try to attract cordially those who, through timidity, dare not come, giving them a very warm welcome, even taking them to a place apart to accommodate their weakness.

(5) They will be as careful, and even more so, to instruct those who are almost never able to go to school, such as shepherdesses, girls who mind cattle, and others who tend animals, taking them individually whenever and wherever they meet them, not only in the villages but also in the country, along the way.

\(^{30}\)A paste made from sixty or seventy different drugs mixed with honey; it was formerly used as an antidote to poison.

\(^{31}\)This article is omitted in both English editions.
(6) They will endeavor chiefly to teach these poor girls how to make the Sign of the Cross; to kneel down and pray morning and evening; the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; and how to make a good confession and Communion; in a word, everything a Christian is obliged to believe or to do in order to be saved, depending on the age and intelligence of each and the time available. Besides that, they will show those who come regularly to class how to read and, by the same means, recommend to them the virtues they should practice, while instilling in them a horror of the contrary vices. And they will do whatever else is contained in the Rules for the Sister who teaches school, which they will have in order to observe them in all that is not incompatible with these Rules.32

(7) When there are any sick persons to be served, one of the Sisters will be responsible for that and the other will teach school; when there are none, they will both devote themselves to teaching the children, except that the one who is not in charge will take care of preparing the meals.

(8) On days when they are obliged to be away from their house for a long time for the service of the neighbor, they will take a lunch with them so as not to burden anyone for their food. Should it happen, however, either because they were taken unawares or because of forgetfulness they may have brought nothing with them and so might be obliged to eat something in the homes of poor persons, they may do so, provided they pay them for it and let them know that they are doing it only out of sheer necessity.

(9) In places where there is little for them to do for poor persons, they will use the time for a more exact observance of their Rules and also to work together to earn part of their living. If they do not have enough handwork for that, they will at least keep busy with spinning in order to be able to make linen.

32The 1954 edition (Art. 4) reads: They should endeavor to teach these poor girls especially the mysteries of the Most Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Holy Sacrament of the Altar; how to make the Sign of the Cross, to pray to God both morning and evening; and how to make a good confession and Communion; in a word, all that a Christian is obliged to know and to do in order to be saved, all this according to the age and capacity of each one and so far as time will allow.
(10) If they are in places where the churches are very neglected and dirty—especially if through carelessness the lamps are not always kept burning—they will inform the Superioress to see if they may tend to all these needs.

(11) Since they may easily be diverted from their good practices and resolutions if they are not careful to be attentive to them and to avoid adverse circumstances, they will be on their guard, especially in conversations with the villagers, against forgetting themselves and contributing to the gossip, scandal, and complaints that are often so common among them. Above all, they will refrain from speaking, under any pretext whatsoever, of what goes on among themselves, especially the imperfections of one another, reflecting that they are there by order of Divine Providence to edify and not to scandalize others.

(12) They, and the Sister Servant in particular, will carefully observe what is prescribed in the Common Rules concerning the letters that she and her Sisters are to write to their Superioress.

Signed: RENÉ ALMÉRAS, and sealed with his seal

PARTICULAR RULES FOR THE SISTERS
IN THE HÔTELS-DIEU AND HOSPITALS

The purpose for which the Daughters of Charity are established in a Hôtel-Dieu or hospital is to honor, corporally and spiritually, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of the sick poor; corporally by serving them and giving them food and medicine, and spiritually by teaching the patients the things necessary for their salvation and seeing that they make a general confession of their whole past life. By this means, those who are going to die may leave this world in a good state, and those who are recovering may take the resolution never to offend God, with the help of His grace.

(1) The conditions under which they are sent and received there are: first, that they will always be dependent on the Superior Gen-

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23The Visitatrix.
eral of the Congregation of the Mission. He can visit them, personally or by someone else whom he will delegate, and even hear their confessions from time to time, with the approval of the Ordinary. He may also designate an approved confessor for them, and give them the advice he thinks proper for the observance of their Rules so that thereby they may be better able to carry out their duties toward God, the Administrators of the temporal affairs of the said Hôtel-Dieu, and the sick poor.

(2) With regard to temporal matters, in what concerns the service of the sick poor and the governance of the said hospital, the Sisters will be under the complete authority of and dependence on the Administrators, who will order them whatever they please in that regard. The Sisters will obey them entirely\(^\text{34}\) and will be bound to interrupt the order of their spiritual exercises, advancing or postponing them when necessity or the service of poor persons requires it. They will even omit them if they are unable to get back to them before the following exercises, to which they are already obligated by their Rules, that being their primary and principal duty.

(3) The Sisters alone will be responsible for the service of the said poor persons, and no one may impose on them as associates any married or unmarried woman, so that the patients may be better served by the union and good relations existing among the Sisters.

(4) Their room, board, and maintenance will be paid by the hospital for everything they need. With regard to their clothing and linen, each year the Administrators will give the Sister Servant responsible for the others the sum of money agreed upon in the contract, and they may not make them change either the fabric, color, or style used in the Community.

(5) They will not be obliged to sit up with patients outside the wards of the hospital, except for women who are in the enclosure of the hospital, such as the lying-in rooms.

(6) They will give an account of their services and management only to the Administrators, who must uphold their authority, considering that, if the Sisters are not given authority by them with re-

\(^{34}\) The 1954 edition adds: in all things which are not contrary to their Rules.
(7) When they become ill or infirm, they may not be sent away for this reason alone if their Superior does not judge it advisable to recall them to their Paris house, but will be kept at the hospital and given food and medicine as daughters of the house. To replace those Sisters who, through old age or an incurable infirmity can no longer carry the ordinary workload of the service of poor persons, the Administrators will be obliged to welcome and assume the support of others of the same Company, whom the said Superior may send them at the expense of the hospital, even if the infirm or elderly Sisters are not recalled.

(8) When these Sisters die, their companions will give them a proper burial in the usual manner, leaving the corpse in their little infirmary until it is taken to the church, followed immediately by the Sisters, each carrying a candle. After the High Mass and three low Masses, the body of the deceased will be interred in the chapel or cemetery of the hospital, with a small stone marker over the grave to indicate the place where she has been buried. If the corpse cannot be kept, it will be taken into the church, where the Office of the Dead will be said, and the following day a High Mass and three low Masses will be offered through the kindness of the Administrators, that God may be pleased to be merciful to the deceased.

(9) The Sister Servant, to whom the Administrators will address their orders for the admission of poor persons into the hospital, and without which none may be admitted or discharged, will have those poor persons who enter it registered with their name, surname, age, profession, state, religion, birthplace, discharge date, or date of death. Lastly, she will have a list made of their clothing and money, and everything will be returned to them when they leave after their recovery. If, however, they should die, everything will be given to the hospital, and she will ask the Administrators to have some Masses said for the deceased.

(10) She will remind the Administrators to have an inventory taken of all the furnishings and clothing of the hospital on the day
after the feast of Saint John to check the increase or decrease, so as to provide accordingly.

(11) She will see to it that the sick poor are visited once a day by the confessors, physicians, pharmacists, and surgeons and, if these should fail in their duty toward the poor persons, she will notify the Administrators.

(12) She will make sure that no one enters or leaves the hospital without her knowledge and, for this purpose, the porter or the Sister receptionist will notify her of those who enter and leave, and will bring her the keys of the house every evening.

(13) And in order that the service of those who are poor be carried out better and the Administrators obeyed more exactly, she will take care to distribute and change regularly the little duties for each Sister—except the three principal offices in large hospitals—whenever she thinks before God that this is advisable. She will also see to it that they fulfill their duties properly.

(14) If the Sisters are given money to purchase necessary items and small supplies for the hospital, they will give an account of this to the Administrators whenever they are ordered to do so, as well as of all their weekly receipts and expenditures, except what is given them annually for their clothing and linen. These weekly accounts will be calculated daily in each duty, and settled and signed at the usual time and place by one of the Administrators, if the others are absent. After that, the Administrators—or one of them—will give orders to the Sisters for the little supplies for the following week because most of the supplies will be purchased at a convenient time and season at the request of the Administrators.

(15) The Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission can withdraw the said Sisters when he judges it advisable for the good order of their Company, sending others in their place at the expense of their Community. Likewise, the Administrators, after having tested them for a year, may ask the Superior to send them others,

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35 No patient enters or leaves without permission.
36 Here the 1954 edition inserts: the Sister Servant alone shall treat directly with them about the needs of the hospital.
37 Small expenses.
but the journey will be made at the expense of the hospital, as also in
the following cases:

1. When the Superior sends Sisters there for the first time to be­
   gin their establishment.

2. When he sends others to replace those who die or who have
   exhausted their health and strength in the service of poor persons
   and are no longer able to do the work.

3. When the same Superior judges it advisable to recall the aged
   and infirm Sisters to their house in Paris to relieve the hospital of the
   burden.

4. Lastly, should it happen that the said Superior is obliged to
   recall all of them because the Administrators break the contract
   drawn up with the municipal authorities, in that case, since the
   journeys are made for service, the journeys will be made at the ex­
   pense of the hospital; but should the Sisters themselves break the
   contract, they can be sent back at the expense of their Community
   by the municipal authorities if, when their Superior has been in­
   formed of this by them, he does not provide for this within one year.

MEANS THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY WILL USE
TO CARRY OUT THEIR DUTIES
IN THE HOTELS-DIEU AND HOSPITALS

1. They will faithfully observe their Common Rules and the or­
   der of the day they have been accustomed to follow in their Com­
   munity, as far as the particular obligations of the service of the sick
   poor will allow. In addition, they will also be very faithful to the
   Particular Rule concerning spiritual exercises and temporal matters
   that they are to observe in the hospital, especially the following arti­
   cles:

   2. At quarter past four the Sister whose week it is for the kitchen
   will go to light the fire under the pot she has filled with water and
   for which she prepared the wood the previous evening. She will
   heat as much broth as is needed for the patients who are frail, taking
   care to put in just the amount necessary for each serving time be­
cause broth becomes more salty each time it is reheated. At half past four she will go to prayer.

(3) At quarter of five the Sisters named to distribute the broth or other things needed by the frailest and the dying will leave to do so, after having heard the point of meditation read in the oratory. The others will remain there and make their prayer until quarter past five;\textsuperscript{38} then they will recite the Angelus, the Litany of Jesus, and two decades of their rosary.\textsuperscript{39} After that, they will go off to do whatever is most urgent, such as distributing medicines, or bloodletting if they are the ones to do it, or some of them will go to hear Mass, if possible.

(4) At six o’clock, each will eat a small piece of bread; on Communion days, the Sisters not yet accustomed to the odors of the hospital may inhale a little vinegar and rub some on their hands. Then\textsuperscript{40} all of them will go to the wards and will begin by emptying the chamber pots, basins, and cuspidors, making the beds of the patients, and cleaning and straightening out the wards.

(5) At seven o’clock at the latest, a Sister will give holy water to the patients and recite aloud in the ward the acts of morning prayer. Then the sickest patients will be fed a little broth or a fresh egg, and the others given a little butter, apples stewed or roasted in wine, or something similar.

(6) Next, they will hear Holy Mass if they have not already done so; then they will eat a piece of bread in the refectory. Those in charge of the wards will go to care for the patients, and give some broth to those who have taken some medicine, three hours afterward at the latest. They will also teach those who are uninstructed the things necessary for salvation, explaining to them how to make a good general confession of their whole past life, to go to Communion in a worthy manner, and to receive Extreme Unction properly, as soon as it is time for that, consoling and encouraging those who are near death so that they may leave this world in a good state.

\textsuperscript{38}the others will remain for half an hour’s meditation.
\textsuperscript{39}The Angelus, the Litany of Jesus, and the usual prayers.
\textsuperscript{40}The 1954 edition begins the article here with: At the time appointed.
They will likewise urge those who will recover never to offend God again, and, should they have this misfortune, to go to confession as soon as possible. If those who are recovering have a relapse of their illness, they will encourage them to receive the sacraments again, even that of Extreme Unction, and if they remain ill for a long time, will see that they receive the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist once a month, if possible.

(7) At ten o’clock all the Sisters will go to the wards to serve the patients their dinner and take care of them. The Sister Servant or the Sister she designates will say grace aloud before and after the meal. If there is a priest present, he will be asked to say it, reminding the patients to lift their hearts to God.

(8) They will take great care to see that the sick poor have their meals on time and are given something to drink whenever they need it, and that the frail patients are fed some tidbits occasionally.

(9) At half past eleven, they will make the particular examination of conscience together in their oratory, during which time the cook will prepare the soup and dish out the portions. Then they will eat in their little refectory, each having her portion. If there are more than three Sisters, they will have reading at table; if they are only two or three, they will have it previously and eat in silence. After thanking God for the meal, they will say a decade of their rosary to offer Him what they have to do in the afternoon and to ask Him for the grace to do it in His holy love. Two of them will then go to relieve the Sisters who had stayed with the sick and will send them to eat at the second sitting with the reader, while they try to entertain the patients.

(10) After the reader, the cook, and the ward Sisters have eaten, said grace, and cleared the table, they will go to the church or oratory to say a decade of their rosary, and the two others who had relieved them will go to wash the dishes or work at the tasks assigned them by the Sister Servant.

41 The 1954 edition inserts: saying grace before and afterward.
42 The 1954 version has: while they supervise the care of the patients.
(11) At half past one, the Sisters will prepare some preserves, roasted in wine and sugar, stewed pears or apples, etc., for the light meal of the sick poor. 43

(12) At two o’clock they will have a quarter of an hour of reading, 44 after which those who have been appointed will go to the wards to serve the light meal to the patients, in accordance with their needs. If there is a Company of Ladies of Charity, like the one at the Hôtel-Dieu of Paris, they will present them with some white aprons and the prepared meal, if the Ladies do not bring it from home.

(13) At four o’clock they will give the enemas, change the sheets of those who need it, empty the chamber pots, basins, and cuspidors and straighten the beds of the patients a little without getting them up.

(14) At five o’clock, all the Sisters will go to the wards give the patients their supper, and take care of them as at dinner. At six o’clock, they will go to make the particular examination of conscience and eat supper, after which they will say grace and do as they did at dinner.

(15) At around half past six, the Sisters will go to the wards and relieve the ward Sisters, sending them to eat supper with the reader and others, and will do as they did after dinner, putting the convalescents to bed before seven o’clock in summer, and they will prepare the eggs and broth and a few tidbits for the sickest patients.

(16) At half past seven, all the Sisters will go to the wards, have the patients make the general examination of conscience, recite aloud in the middle of the ward the acts and the litany of the Blessed Virgin, and read one point of the next day’s meditation. Then the

43The 1954 edition adds the following (Art. 10): They shall give the sick the treatment prescribed and instruct the ignorant in the things necessary for salvation. They shall teach them to make a good confession, to communicate worthily and to receive Extreme Unction in a proper manner when it is time for them to do so. They should console and exhort those that are near death, so that they may leave this world in a state of grace and others also who are recovering, that they may never more offend God, or, if such a misfortune should befall them, that they may confess their sins without delay. If the convalescent relapse, they shall exhort them to receive the Sacraments again, and, if their illness lasts a long time, they shall see that they receive them as often as possible.

44The 1954 edition concludes this article: after which they shall go to the chapel for half an hour’s meditation, unless they are prevented by the care of the sick.
Sister Servant or the Sister she has designated will sprinkle all the patients with holy water. 45

(17) At eight o’clock the Sisters will retire, leaving the night nurses in the wards to assist the sick. Toward midnight, they will give them some eggs or broth and help the dying in their last moments. When the patients have fallen asleep, they will finish their rosary and spend the night sitting up with the sick, reading, dozing at times while the patients are resting, but not forgetting to make their half hour of prayer. When the others have gone to their duties to prepare in silence what is needed for the next morning, they will go to bed at exactly nine o’clock, after having briefly made the acts of adoration, love, offering, and petition.

(18) At half past three in the morning, the night nurses will make their prayer until four if they have not done so sooner, and at four o’clock they will awaken the others. After they have taken something to eat if they wish, they will go to bed until nine o’clock, at which time a Sister will awaken them and they will get up to go to Holy Mass. Before they leave the wards to go to bed, however, the Sister Servant will send one or two Sisters to replace them, who will ask them what remains to be done or what is most urgent for the patients. They will make their prayer in the same manner and at the same time as the Community unless some patients require their attention, in which case they will be aware that the service they render to the sick is a continual prayer before God.

(19) For admissions, deaths, recovery, discharge, and other details concerning their duties toward the patients, they will follow

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45In the 1954 edition, Articles 17 and 18 have been replaced with the following:

(13) After this the Sisters shall go to the wards to arrange them for the night. They shall say prayers for the sick, reciting aloud the Acts in the middle of the ward and shall give holy water with an asperges brush.

(14) Then the Sisters shall retire to take their little recreation together and perform their evening exercises according to the Common Rules, leaving the night nurses in the wards to look after the sick and to help the dying at their last moments.

(15) While the patients are in their first sleep, the night Sisters shall finish their rosary and spend the night in watching while the sick are resting, not forgetting to make their meditation for half an hour.

(16) At four they shall call the others, then, having heard Mass, they shall retire to rest. Before they leave the wards to go to bed, the Sister Servant shall send one or two Sisters to take their place, who, having inquired of them what is most urgent for the service of the sick, will make their meditation in the same manner and at the same time as the Community, unless some of the patients require their attention; in which case, they should be aware that the service they render the sick is a continual prayer before God.
the regulations and advice given them for each duty they will have to do.

(20) And that God may be pleased to grant them the grace of accomplishing all these things, they will ask it of Him often, go to confession and Communion on Sundays and holy days, for that intention, and 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 Joanna the wife of Chuza, Saint Margaret the Queen, other holy women who followed Our Lord, and the holy patrons of the parish and hospital.

(21) They will be faithful and exact in performing their daily actions well, living in great union, gentleness, and cordiality with one another and with the poor; they will strive to be very humble with everyone and very respectful and obedient toward the Administrators. They will distance themselves from any kind of contact with the world, as well as, and even more so, from priests, male religious, and other men, to whom they will never speak unless there are two of them together and for necessary matters. Even then they will keep the conversation brief, although it may be under pretext of charity or of their own little affairs. They will tell their troubles to no one except the Sister Servant. From time to time, they will write to their Superior General or Director and their Superioress and follow their advice, obeying them exactly. Every month they will read the present Regulations at table, recalling often that it is a great happiness for them to serve Our Lord in the person of those who are poor; that, at the last judgment this same Lord will acknowledge as done to Himself the services they will have rendered them; that, by continuing to do the good they have begun, they will fulfill perfectly the law of God; and, in a word, that as long as they persevere in charity, they will always be in God and God in them.

46The 1954 edition continues: shunning all worldly conversations. They shall be perfectly free to write to their Superior General, the Director, the Superioress, and the Visitatrix, etc.
ADVICE FOR THE SISTER SERVANT OF THE HOTEL-DIEU AND HOSPITAL

(1) The Sister Servant will always keep these Rules before her eyes in order to be an example to her Sisters. She will do her utmost to be the first to practice what she asks them to do, *making the beds along with them*, emptying the basins, and cleaning the wards, unless her duty sometimes obliges her to do something else. Above all, she will be exact in carrying out the articles of the contract of their establishment in the hospital.

(2) She will take great care to see that each Sister performs her ministry well, always watching over their actions with great gentleness and charity, refraining carefully from doing anything that might disedify them, even though she may think there is no great harm in it.

(3) She will not reprove her Sisters publicly for their mistakes in front of persons outside the Community unless the edification of the neighbor requires it, nor should she do so when she herself or the Sister she must reprove is angry, so as not to embarrass them or give them bad example and so that her correction will be beneficial. Neither will she reveal the faults of her Sisters to persons within or outside the Community, and if someone informs her of their faults, she will thank the person, without showing that she has a poor opinion of the one at fault, but excusing her as far as she can reasonably do so.

(4) She will treat all her Sisters in a humble and very respectful manner, especially her Assistant and the other officers given to her. As far as possible, in doubtful matters she will take the advice of these officers, but so discreetly that she will not reveal to them what the other Sisters have told her in confidence.

(5) She will say grace aloud before and after meals as with the patients, adding the prayer *Retribuere*. She will also say or have someone say morning and evening prayers and make the particular examinations of conscience, taking her turn for the times of service in the hospital along with the other Sisters, and finding out from
each of them some time during the day the condition of each patient, in order to know how they are treated and what they need.\footnote{In the 1954 edition Article 5 is revised as follows: She should be the first at Community exercises and shall go as often as possible to the different parts of the hospital and inquire about the condition of the sick that she may know how they are treated by the Sisters and what they need.}

(6) Whenever she can, she will take her turn sitting up with the patients and will help when those poor persons who have recovered are being discharged, after receiving the orders and advice of the physician. She will do this with great gentleness, reminding them to put into practice the good resolutions taken during their illness, and consoling those who leave reluctantly with the assurance that, provided they live in the love and fear of God, He will not abandon them.

(7) She will make sure that there is always at least one Sister in the wards at times when all of them are not present and that it always be one who is neither a reader nor a night nurse, and she will provide the patients with clean linen, both sheets and other items.

(8) She will keep a duplicate key of all the duties in the house and for the linen of the patients, and see that everything is kept in good order. She will be very careful to have the doors of the hospital locked at night and have them opened in the morning at the appointed time.

(9) She will see that the church and the hospital chapels are arranged properly, having them cleaned every other day and dusted thoroughly every three months, and will not allow any soiled linen or anything unsuitable to be left around.

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ADVICE FOR THE SISTER WHO ADMITS THE PATIENTS AND PUTS THEM TO BED

(1) The Sister responsible for putting the patients to bed will also take care to receive them in a spirit of humility and charity after they have seen the priest, recalling that she is their servant and they are her Lords and Masters. In this spirit she will bathe their feet with
warm water, cleanse them of vermin, and even cut their hair, if necessary. She will also change their nightshirt and give them clean linen and nightcaps. Then she will put them to bed, having previously warmed the linen she distributes to them, and will have them given some broth and a pitcher of something to drink.

(2) As soon as the new arrivals have been put to bed, she will make sure that the physician is notified, and will lock up their clothing and money—if they have any—in the place reserved for that, writing it down immediately in order to give an account of it at the proper time, either to return everything to them when they leave or to leave it for the use of the hospital if they die. If it is the rule that men attend to the men, she will have those who are on duty put them to bed, giving them what is needed to change them, and she herself will put away their clothing, etc., as mentioned above.

(3) When they are leaving, she will see that their shirts are returned with their other clothes when they have been washed, in order to take back the ones that belong to the hospital.

**ADVICE FOR THE SISTERS WHO DISTRIBUTE THE BREAD AND WINE**

(1) They will go to the wards as soon as the bell summons them. While they are distributing the bread, they will recall that Divine Providence provides for all our needs, and think about the multiplication of the loaves Our Lord had distributed. They will give each poor person as much bread as he or she needs, being careful not to give any to those who have a fever, or to refuse others harshly, should any of them want more than they should be given.

(2) When distributing the wine, they will remember to begin this action by an interior act of gentleness and charity, whether giving it to those for whom it has been prescribed or refusing it to others who should not have it, and express regret at not being able to satisfy them in this respect.
ADVICE FOR THE SISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR SERVING THOSE WHO ARE INFIRM

(1) They will take great care to see that those who truly have a need receive their fill, and will gently and charitably discourage those who request something that may be harmful to them.

(2) They will notify the Sister Servant of those who eat too little because of dislike or otherwise.

(3) They will strive especially to differentiate clearly those who are truly infirm from those who only imagine they are, and ascertain their number so as not to forget any of them. When they are unable to eat one thing, they will have them take something else at certain hours; when they are dying, they will give them no more food, particularly eggs, but just a few spoonsful of wine, a few drops of syrup, or some other liquid. They will not move them very much at that time, and then gently and rarely. They will not go too far away from those who are about to die so as to be able to sprinkle them with holy water from time to time and help them at intervals to pronounce the Holy Name of Jesus. They will recite the *De Profundis* as soon as they die, *place the corpse on the straw*, change their linen, and fold their arms.

(4) They will be very careful not to favor the care of one patient over another, but treat them all alike, according to their needs. They will do everything possible, in moving, changing, or cleaning them, that nothing appears in view that is contrary to modesty and Christian propriety.

ADVICE TO THE COOKS REGARDING FAST DAYS

(1) When no fish is available, they will see that some prunes are stewed early in the morning, have the porridge cooked before the bread is brought, and break and beat the eggs into each of the plates so that everything is ready at the same time the broth is served.

48This chapter has been omitted.
(2) In the evening, the porridge should be made before the bread is served and the soft-boiled eggs cooked; sometimes they will have an egg dish prepared in verjuice instead of an omelette.

(3) In places where porridge is not customary, they will not introduce it, since it is not food that is really suitable for sick persons; in its place they can have buttered toast prepared, sprinkling a little water on it before buttering it.

ADVICE FOR THE SISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISHES

(1) She will count them every night, taking care to put them aside and lock them away, and will set the table with them for every meal. She will also put out the cutlery and see that there is always a cloth on the table. Every two weeks she will have the dishes scoured, half of them to be done each week.

(2) She will be careful to keep the lamps and candlesticks ready to be lit on time.

(3) When a dish gets broken, she will be careful to set it aside and to notify the Sister Servant if it needs to be changed.

ADVICE FOR THE NIGHT NURSES

(1) When they go into the wards to sit up with the sick, they will think of the vigils Our Lord kept when He was on earth—such as the one in the Garden and several others—to teach us how to keep watch. With this thought in mind, they will remain in great modesty during the night, not detaining anyone to keep them company, be it a sick man or woman or an officer of the house. If someone should try to insist on staying with them in spite of them, they will go immediately to inform the Sister Servant.

(2) In addition, they will be careful to prepare in the evening whatever they will need for those who are very weak.\(^{50}\)

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\(^{49}\)This chapter has been omitted.

\(^{50}\)For the service of the sick.
(3) They will also be very careful to find out in the evening from the ward Sister if there are any patients in urgent need of receiving the sacraments, and both of them together can make the rounds of the wards so as not to be mistaken on this point.

(4) They will likewise reflect that the hour of darkness is also that of the demon; for this reason they should always be on the alert and wary of everything, having recourse to God and their good Angel.

(5) If the priest has to be notified to administer the sacraments to some very sick patient, they will inform the Sister Servant as soon as they have awakened the person who is supposed to go for the priest, and one of the Sisters will remain for this.  

ADVICE FOR THE SISTERS WHO REPLACE THE NIGHT NURSES

(1) In order to know the needs of the patients, they will find out from the night nurses the state in which they left them; if they see that they need no nursing care at that time, they will make their prayer peacefully as the Rule requires, in the ward of the female patients.

(2) The Sisters who nurse in the wards all day long will clean them after the patients’ dinner.

(3) All of them, including those who have just preceded them, will be on their guard concerning everything, since they have to be alone in the wards for three hours in winter.

ADVICE FOR THE LAUNDRESSES

(1) They will see that the soiled linen is collected every day, put the small pieces together the day before it is counted out for the washerwomen, and mark the number of each kind. In accord with

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51 The 1954 revision: Should it happen that a patient who has not been already prepared be in danger of death, they shall send for the priest immediately.

52 This chapter has been omitted.
this count, they will get back everything they have given out and fold it carefully with the help of their assistants.

(2) They will make sure that the sheets for changing the patients' beds are washed daily, and the four youngest will each take a week to wash them, without, however, excluding others when the Sister Servant assigns them to help.

(3) In folding and putting away the linen, they will be careful to set aside what is to be mended or can no longer be used; they will also separate the men's linen from that of the women and be careful not to fold anything that is too damp or wet.

ADVICE FOR THE SISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CLOTHING OF THE DECEASED

(1) As soon as she hears that a patient has died, she will go to the Sister responsible for receiving the patients, putting them to bed, and setting aside their clothing, and ask her to remove it and put it in the place designated for that purpose.

(2) Every month she will remind the Sister Servant to sell the clothing of the poor persons who have died. If she is unable to accompany her for that, she will give her another Sister to be with her to help with the transaction; she will not fail to record in her register what she has sold, together with the amount she has received, noting also the date and the year.

(3) She will spend what is required for the little needs of the patients, in line with the order given her concerning this by the Sister Servant, to whom she will give an account of it, as also to the Administrators.

(4) If some of the clothing is very good, she will not conclude negotiations before consulting one of the Administrators.

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53This chapter has been omitted.
ADVICE FOR THE SISTERS WHO LAY OUT THE DEAD

(1) They will be careful not to put the shroud on the deceased until at least twelve hours after the person has died, and will sprinkle the body with holy water beforehand. They will perform this work of mercy with great modesty and discretion, bearing in mind that the Son of God willed to be in this state.

(2) They will see that the bodies are removed from the beds immediately after death and will close the eyes and mouth; they will also see that they do not remain too long without being buried, even though there are others who are to die soon.

Signed: RENÉ ALMÉRAS, and sealed with his seal

THE ORDINARY DIET TO BE GIVEN TO A PATIENT

(1) When the patient is feverish, he or she is given four good broths and three eggs a day; that is, the first broth is given to the very weak at four forty-five in the morning, and the first egg around eight o’clock, alternating them in this way every three hours.

(2) Broth is to be given in place of eggs to those who cannot take them, and if they cannot take the broth all at once, try to have them take it at several different times.

(3) For very weak patients who can eat only a little at a time, an egg yolk can be beaten into their bowl or they can be given a spoonful of jelly if they can have it, and a little something sweet placed in their mouth from time to time. Those on the point of death should never be given an egg, and very little broth, but a few spoonfuls of wine sweetened with sugar from time to time.

(4) As to the kind of broth and the amount of meat, three quarters—or at least half a pound—of meat, a third of beef, a third of veal, and a third of mutton should be used for each patient and, if possible, one fowl for every twenty-five patients, and a hind shank of beef boiled in six pints of water, which will make four good broths a day for each. The beef and the mutton are to be put on to cook to-

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54 Before the attestation of death.
55 This chapter has been omitted.
gether at half past four in the morning, the fowl at six, and the veal at seven. The pot must be skimmed as soon as it begins to boil, which gives a good flavor to the broth, and some herbs added to that.

(5) The usual herbs that are best for a patient's broth are sorrel, lettuce, purslane, chicory, white beet, Chinese leaves, or Chinese cabbage, and caraway. In winter, when not many herbs are available, chicory, parsley root, cercifie, and a little hulled barley are used.

(6) Broth that is the least salty is always best for all sorts of illnesses; if a little spice has to be added to give some seasoning to the meat of the convalescents, it should be done sparingly.

(7) No nourishment should be given when the fever breaks until the patient has been purged two or three times, following the orders of the physician in the place where he is.

(8) The first two or three days, no matter how hungry they say they are, they must be given only two or three pieces of bread in their broth; on the fourth or fifth day, this may be gradually increased to the full portion, when it is clear that they are in no danger of relapsing.

(9) Some patients have a special diet and remedies for which the particular order of the physicians must be followed and the quantity and quality of the food adjusted on the orders of the Administrators or the Ladies.

(10) The usual beverage served during a fever is herbal tea or water with bread in it; and when a patient is able to eat he or she may be given a setier of wine a day.

(11) During prolonged illnesses, those who have lost their appetite and been abandoned by the physicians may be given whatever they feel like eating, provided it is not too much and they are not too near death.

THE ORDINARY DIET FOR A PATIENT ON THE DAYS HE OR SHE TAKES REMEDIES

(1) On the eve of the day when medicine is to be given to a patient, a laxative must be administered if the patient is constipated.

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56This chapter has been omitted.
(2) Medicines are administered at five o'clock in the morning in summer and six in winter, some broth three hours later, and an egg two hours after the broth. If the patient is able to eat, he or she may be given soup, a little meat, and some stewed fruit at noon, and in the evening some soup, a very small portion of meat, and a soft-boiled egg.

(3) Nothing raw should ever be given on the days medicine is administered.

(4) The best time for bloodletting is the morning, unless the illness requires that it be done at another time. The orders of the physician must be followed in this with regard to the time, the vein, and the amount of blood that should be drawn.

(5) The amount of blood to be drawn from the arm is usually nine ounces, which will make three basins for bleeding, and twelve ounces from the foot of persons with a strong constitution.

(6) As a precaution, it is important to find out the exact need of those who come for a bloodletting in order to see if it is a real necessity for them because most of the poor people have greater need of food or mild laxatives than extensive bloodletting.

(7) Pregnant women are not to have a bloodletting without a prescription from the physician or on the advice of a surgeon or midwife.

(8) Neither should it be done to any young woman without a clear knowledge of her condition; in addition, as far as possible, their arms should not be uncovered in the presence of men.

(9) Half an hour—or one hour at the latest—after the bloodletting, some broth, or failing that a soft-boiled egg and a large glass of herbal tea or water, should be given.

(10) If the persons are not bedridden, they should be warned not to lie on the arm that has been bled and to avoid going to sleep after the bloodletting or going to work that day, for fear that the arm or the foot might start to bleed or some other accident occur.

Signed: RENÉ ALMÉRAS

We the undersigned Superioress and officers of the Company of Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Sick Poor, and the Sister Servants and other senior Sisters of the same Company, established in
the parishes and hospitals of Paris and its environs, assembled at our principal house, in the faubourg St-Lazare-lez-Paris, after having heard the public reading of the above Common and Particular Rules, which were first given to us by our Venerable Instituter and Founder M. Vincent de Paul, first Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, and by our most worthy Mother and Foundress Mlle. Louise de Marillac, widow of M. Legras, Secretary of Queen Marie de Médicis, and which since that time have been carefully reviewed and put in order by our authority and request through the care of our Most Honored Father M. Alméras, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of our Company, to remedy the discrepancy found in most of the manuscript copies and thereby to give them the highest perfection; in the name of our entire Company, represented according to our Statutes and customs by this principal part of our Community, have renewed with all the affection of our heart the declarations and resolutions always to observe them faithfully and inviolably, recognizing from the experience we have had from the beginning of our Company that they are means that are not only very useful but even most necessary to maintain it in its primitive spirit and in fidelity to its works. And to prevent any change or alteration from creeping into them in the future, we have entreated our Superior M. Alméras to sign them with his own hand and seal them with his seal, as he did for the original. With this Act, we also have signed and sealed them with our ordinary seal, declaring by this same Act that no copy made of them henceforth, even if it is printed, will be considered valid and authentic unless it is signed by the Superioress and one of the officers, and sealed with the seal of our Company.

Drawn up in Paris, August 5, 1672

Signed: Mathurine Guérin, Superioress; Françoise Carcireux, Assistant; Barbe Bailli, Treasurer; Philippe Bailli, former Assistant; Suzanne Chanteau, Local Treasurer; Claire Jaudoin, Sister Servant at the Foundling Hospital; Marie Joly, Sister Servant at St-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas; Anne Rose, living in the house; Marie Le
Joine, living in the house; Marguerite Autin, Sister Servant at St-André-des-Arts; Nicole Haran, Sister Servant in Versailles; Catherine Jesse, companion at St-Merry; Geneviève Cailloux, Sister Servant at St-Benoît; Andrée Maréchal, Sister Servant at St-Hippolyte; Laurence Dubois, Sister Servant at St-Merry; Perrine Cretté, Sister Servant at St-Germain-l’Auxerrois; Colombe le Gras, Sister Servant at St-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie; Antoinette Voisin, Sister Servant at St-Étienne; Anne Deveau, living in the house; Anne Denoval, Sister Servant at St-Jean-en-Grève; Charlotte Baillé, Sister Servant at St-Roch; Michelle Percheron, Sister Servant at St-Sauveur; Jeanne Milleret, Sister Servant at St-Séverin; Marguerite le Gras, Sister Servant at St-Médard; Marie Charpentier, Sister Servant at St-Louis; Marie Bourdais, Sister Servant at St-Côme; Madeleine Chauteau, Sister Servant at St-Leu; Françoise Fanchon, Sister Servant at the Hôtel-Dieu; Nicole Bildet, Sister Servant at St-Sulpice; Marie Robodet, Sister Servant at the Petites Maisons; Julienne Laboue, in charge of the new Sisters in the house; Marie de la Ruelle, living in the house; Antoinette Richevilain, companion at St-Hippolyte; Élisabeth Dufour, companion at the Galleys; Nicole Rousselot, Sister Servant in Chantilly; Anne Valin, Sister Servant in Montlhéry; Étiennette Dupuis, Sister Servant in Maisons; Avoye Vigneron, Sister Servant in Corbeil; Claude Laurent, Treasurer at the Foundling Hospital.  

**PARTICULAR RULES FOR THE SISTERS OF THE HÔTEL-DIEU OF PARIS**

(1) Their ministry with regard to the Ladies of Charity at the Hôtel-Dieu and with the foundlings who are brought to their house almost daily obliges them to greater perfection than others because

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57 This copy of the Particular Rules, signed August 5, 1672, concludes with the following verification: Copy of all the Rules checked against the original, November 21, 1939 followed by the signatures of Sister Marie Chapelain, D.C., Superioress General, and Sister Hélène Hémare, D.C., Assistant

58 This entire chapter, written specifically for the Sisters of the Hôtel-Dieu of Paris, is omitted in the English version.
of the example of humility and charity those persons of rank give them and the purity and obedience those poor little innocents preach to them by their very presence. They will do their utmost to grow in these four virtues, which are the source of all the others, and will be encouraged to do so by the confidence they should have of being aided in this by Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, seeing that they have the happiness of living close to their holy houses and visiting them there every day.

(2) They will be careful to have the light lunch ready and laid out in the kitchen cupboard of the Hôtel-Dieu punctually [at two o'clock] each day and to take some work there. They will wait for the Ladies in order to be of service to them, welcoming them simply according to the order that will be given and guiding them, and, when it is necessary to remind them about something, doing so humbly and respectfully.

(3) They will see that nothing ordered for this work is lacking and particularly that there are always white aprons, water, and a basin for the Ladies to wash their hands after they have served the poor persons.

(4) In passing before the Blessed Sacrament while coming and going, they will not fail to kneel down and offer to God, the first time at least, the service they are going to render Him in union with similar actions of His Son.

(5) If, when they are bringing the light lunch for the sick into the wards, some urgent spiritual or temporal need of one of them should come to their attention, the Sister Servant will notify one of the Ladies concerning the instruction.

(6) They will show great honor and respect to the nuns of the Hôtel-Dieu, both because they deserve this and also in recognition of the honor they do them of allowing them to minister in their house, and they will strive to be an edification to them. They will not, however, have any communication with them, being satisfied to carry out their humble assignments with the Ladies and the patients, and if they have to refuse them something, they should do so humbly and discreetly.

(7) To avoid many inconveniences, they will have no communication with the surgeons, pharmacists, and other officers of the Hôtel-Dieu, and accept nothing from them under any pretext what-
soever, even if they are ill. If, however, the nuns offer them any medicines, they may accept them and thank them for them. As for bloodletting, they will have recourse to the Superioress of the house, who will get a Sister from one of the neighboring parishes or someone else to administer it.

(8) The Sister Servant, or, in her absence, the Sister who represents her, will be most careful not to take in any children until after all the customary formalities have been observed and she has received the report made of them. This is to be sent along with the children to the hospital where they are to be raised with the others. Should it be judged that a child is in danger of dying, she will see that the child is promptly baptized without further delay, and always conditionally.

(9) On the principal solemn feast days, namely, New Year’s Day, Candlemas, the first Sunday of Lent, Passion Sunday, the feast of Our Lady in May, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, Pentecost, the feasts of Our Lady in August and September, All Saints’, the Immaculate Conception, and Christmas Day, she will see that someone is sent to notify the Sister Servant of the Foundling Hospital to have some of them taken to the creche in the church of Notre Dame, with a Sister there to take up the collection and to make sure that nothing inappropriate happens to the wet nurses and the babies.

(10) She will take care to write down the names of the Ladies who bring her the money, and the amount she receives, together with the date and the year, in order to give an account of it to the Lady who is Treasurer at the Hôtel-Dieu, when this is requested of her.

(11) When there are collection boxes in the church of Notre-Dame for the devastated regions, and this need no longer exists, they are left there only for the babies. The Sisters will have the keys to them and will be careful to empty them at least every week and the evening of major holy days. They will also write a report to be placed conscientiously in the hands of the same lady named for this purpose.

(12) In addition to the usual days, they will receive Holy Communion on the Saturday of the Ember Days to join their prayers and intentions to those of the Ladies of Charity, who do the same at the church of Notre-Dame to ask God for the graces necessary for
those who are receiving Holy Orders that same day. They will also receive Communion every first Saturday of the month to commend themselves to the Blessed Virgin.

And, since their duties usually take up only part of the day, they will endeavor to use the rest of the time doing some work to earn part of their living, either sewing, spinning, or making jelly to be sold, and, above all, observing carefully all the Regulations and practices that should be observed in the house of the Superioress, except what concerns rising at four o’clock, when each one has to take her turn at night looking after the children the commissioners bring in.

PARTICULAR RULES TO BE OBSERVED
BY THE SISTERS WITH THE FOUNDLINGS
IN ADDITION TO THOSE COMMON TO THEIR WHOLE COMMUNITY

(1) The Daughters of Charity who work in the Foundling Hospital will often reflect on the great happiness they have of being called by God for such a holy and divine ministry, since it aims to cooperate with God to save the life of the body and of the soul of these poor innocents who, without their help, might die on the street and without Baptism; or, should they escape this, might live a bad life and come perhaps to an unfortunate end for lack of a good upbringing and instruction.

(2) They will be convinced that the more lofty and holy their vocation, the more humility and perfection they must have, and if the thought occurs to them that the tasks are too lowly and painful, they will reflect that their ministry is to serve the Infant Jesus in the person of each baby they are raising, and in this they have the honor of
doing what the Blessed Virgin did to her dear Son, since He affirms that the service rendered to the least of His people is rendered to Himself. In accordance with that, they will do their utmost to raise these poor children with as much attention and respect as if it were to the very person of Our Lord.

(3) And so that they might better and more easily carry out their ministry, which is to serve and assist these poor little creatures corporally and spiritually, they will be very exact in observing their Regulations and all the orders given them by their Superioress or by the Sister Servant. They will even beware of doing anything contrary to their intention, calling to mind that the life and death, the salvation and loss of these poor children depend on the good or the bad upbringing they give them and that they cannot raise them well if they do not do what they are instructed to do, either verbally or in writing, especially what is contained in the following articles.

(4) As soon as they are named to serve these infants, they will accept and carry out this ministry with as much respect and devotion as if an angel commanded them to do so on the part of God, as happened to Saint Joseph who was told to take the Infant Jesus to Egypt and raise Him there.

(5) Before beginning to exercise their ministry with these poor children, they will offer them and their actions to God, asking for the grace to carry out this duty well. In this, they will endeavor to have the same sentiments that Our Lady had in serving her dear Son in His infancy.

(6) When they are assigned to raise the babies who have recently been weaned, up to around four years of age, and who, consequently have greater need to be served than the others, they will do this with more special attention, making it a matter of conscience to fail in the slightest of their duties toward them, especially with regard to the youngest and most delicate among them.

(7) The order and manner they will observe for the upbringing of these little ones will be to awaken them at seven o'clock at the earliest and, while they are dressing them, to have them make the Sign of the Cross, join their hands, give their heart to God, and pronounce the names of Jesus and Mary, even those who can only babble.

(8) As soon as they are dressed, they will give them holy water or have them take some, make the Sign of the Cross again, and have
five or six at a time say the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria then the other customary short prayers, particularly for benefactors.

(9) Around eight o'clock at the latest they will give them their breakfast, then let them play in the courtyard or in the room, depending on the weather.

(10) At half past ten, they will take them all together to dinner in their little dining room, where they will all be seated, boys at one table and girls at another, unless they have them eat in their room in winter. When the soup is about to be served, one of them, who has been taught to do so, will recite aloud grace before meals, and a Sister will have them join their hands at the same time.

(11) As soon as they have eaten dinner, they will have all of them say aloud: “Thank you very much, my God,” and immediately the same boy will say, also aloud, “We give you thanks, etc.,” then Retribueret benefactors. After that, they will be sent to play again.

(12) At one in the afternoon they will be put to bed for a nap, without undressing them completely. As they awaken, they will get them up and let them play for a while, then have a snack.

(13) Supper will be served to them at five o'clock in summer and half past four in winter, then they will be allowed to play until bedtime, which is seven o'clock in summer and half past six in winter, beginning with the youngest and most delicate and taking care to separate the beds of the boys from those of the girls, even if they are only three or four years of age.

(14) When they are putting them to bed, they will have them make the Sign of the Cross, join their hands, and pronounce the names of Jesus and Mary; then they will be given holy water, or will take it themselves.

(15) On Sundays and feast days they will take them to the Mass that is said in the hospital, taking care to place the boys on one side and the girls on the other, have them join their hands and to pray according to their ability.

(16) When they are about five years old, they will begin to teach them the alphabet, and even the catechism, partly in the morning, partly in the afternoon; then they will let them play again. All will be done according to the instructions and manner the Superioress has prescribed, without adding, omitting, or changing anything of what she has ordered.
(17) They will be very careful to keep them neat and clean and to wash their diapers every day at the appointed time, which is usually two o’clock. They will, however, beware of taking pleasure in making them look pretty, curling their hair, or putting little trinkets on them to make them look nicer than the others. All that only leads them to vanity, especially the girls, who in the end will become conceited little creatures, and therefore less chaste.

(18) To accustom them to preserve both purity and their health, they will not allow them to get up naked, or even to walk barefoot, or to keep their head uncovered, even refraining from combing their hair in open places, such as the courtyard or in their room by the open windows. They will beware also not to allow them to linger too long by the fire in winter, but rather have the little ones play some game requiring exercise to keep them warm, although it may be necessary from time to time to have them get close to the fire. They will also keep them from sleeping in the sun or in any unhealthy place.

(19) They will make sure, even from the time they are very little, that they do not pick up any bad habits, such as stubbornness, fighting, lying, becoming fond of delicacies, undressing themselves, or doing other similar foolish things, especially among boys and girls, for even if they do not sin in all that because they have not yet reached the use of reason, these are, nevertheless, great tendencies to offend God as soon as they do reach that age. Therefore, they will not even permit boys and girls to play together but endeavor to help them to practice the contrary virtues, giving them for this purpose a great fear of hell and a great desire for paradise. And, in order to help them to do better what they are supposed to do, the Sisters in charge of them will keep an eye on each of the ones in her group from time to time, or at least a Sister appointed for that should be present when they play together or on other occasions.

(20) They will treat them gently; still, they will scold them, if necessary, but without anger, trying to correct them more by words than by striking them, sometimes threatening them with some punishment if they fall back, sometimes promising them a reward if they do better, or showing by their stern expression that they are annoyed with them without saying a word, or encouraging them warmly with some sympathetic word, or having them do some slight
penance, such as kissing the floor or wearing something that makes them ashamed, or depriving them of some little tidbit or trinket, and similar things. Above all they will endeavor to make them capable of mending their ways by reasoning with them and helping them to recognize their fault. When, however, they become incorrigible and the Sisters judge it necessary to give them a more severe punishment, they will inform the Sister Servant who will administer the whipping herself or ask them to give it to them. This must always be done without anger, and for this reason the punishment must be postponed until some time after their fault has been known. Above all, they will take great care not to strike them on the head, especially the youngest children. It will sometimes be well to appoint certain persons to ask their pardon when they are about to give them the whipping; this may be done if the Sister Servant deems it appropriate.

(21) They will also take great care to nurse them when they are ill, treating them with gentleness and kindness. In everything they will have a good store of patience because, since these little ones do not yet have the use of reason, they are more difficult to care for than adults. Still, the Sisters should not be so easygoing and compliant that this prevents them from giving them the assistance they require. In line with that, they will pay no heed when they refuse to take food or medicines but oblige them to take them and not wait until they become seriously ill.

(22) And although they must be careful to serve and think kindly of these poor little ones at all times, they will, nevertheless be especially conscientious about giving them what they need, even changing them, particularly when they are sick. To facilitate this work, they will make use of some good thought, such as recalling how Our Lord once asked the Samaritan woman for something to drink and that He does likewise in their regard by the mouths of these innocents; in putting them back to bed afterward, they can make an act of adoration or love of God, or some other according to their devotion.

(23) Those whose special duty is the care of the sick children will also take special care of their clothing, wrapping it all up so that nothing gets lost or mixed up with the clothing of the others.

(24) They will pay particular attention to preserving uniformity and equality with regard to the children so that, as far as possible,
none of them has more than another, is better clothed, given better bedding, or caressed more than the others, especially in their presence. And to prevent outsiders from giving something to some and not to the others, the Sister Servant will accept, in their presence, what they would like to give and will distribute it with their consent to all the children present. It is unbelievable how envy torments those poor innocents when they see others better treated than they are; it is even at times a cause of their death. This article does not intend to forbid sometimes giving a little treat to a certain child who is sick or in similar need, and the Sister Servant deems it appropriate.

(25) Above all, they will give good example and make it a matter of conscience to commit the slightest fault in their presence, keeping in mind that Our Lord says that whoever scandalizes the least of these little ones deserves to be cast into the sea with a millstone around the neck.

(26) The Sisters appointed to put the children to work, both boys as well as girls, will make very sure that they use their time well, sometimes working along with them, sometimes seeing how they go about it, sometimes praising and rewarding those who do their chores well, sometimes scolding and threatening those who do their work poorly.

(27) When they take them to the chapel for Mass, catechism, or prayers in common, each Sister will watch her group to prevent any unseemly words or behavior on the way, or any irreverence once they are there. For this purpose, they will insist that they kneel down to pray, saying their rosary or reading their prayer book, putting them in front of them so they can watch them more closely, and if they notice that they are misbehaving, they will remind them of their duty and, if advisable and the Sister Servant allows it, will punish them when they get home, but discreetly and not in anger. If they are not going to Mass, they will have them recite their rosary aloud in three parts, namely, one decade after morning prayers, two decades after grace at dinner, and another two after grace at supper.

(28) The Sisters in charge of the older children, particularly from nine to twelve years of age, will see to it that the schedule set up for them is observed, having them rise at five o’clock in summer and
half past five in winter, and when it is time for them to get up, the Sisters whose duty it is will be in their room to help them dress and comb their hair, if need be, and have them go to the chapel for prayers and recite their lessons afterward. Then they will give them something to do, which, for the boys is usually knitting and for the girls lacemaking. Breakfast will be brought to them at eight o'clock, after which they will return to their work until dinner time, except the boys who are learning to write, who will apply themselves to this for an hour after lunch. They will not eat until the younger children have eaten, that is, the girls in the Sisters' refectory and the boys in the room where they are working, everyone at the same time. After dinner, the children will play together for a short time, then go back to work until supper, except that the boys will do their writing again from two until three, then go back to their work.

(29) When they finish supper, they will be put to work again, but they can still have a little recreation; then they will all go to public prayers in the chapel, after which they will get ready for bed, making their little devotions before lying down, and everyone will be in bed by nine o'clock.

(30) Should it happen that there are not enough wet nurses, or because of some other necessity they might have to feed the babies who are still at the breast, they will be very careful about this, especially in seeing that they drink cow's milk. In all that they will follow the order set up and the manner customary in the hospital, making it a matter of conscience to omit the slightest detail of the service they should render them in this great need.

(31) They will not communicate with the wet nurses, unless they are obliged to do so through obedience or because of their duties, and then they will endeavor to have them benefit by some good word of devotion, and especially by their good example. They will refrain above all from saying or doing anything in their presence that might scandalize them ever so little, not even permitting, if possible, that the other Sisters give them any reason for disedification. Should that happen, or if there is any trouble among the wet nurses, they will not fail to inform the Sister Servant.

(32) They will avoid idleness and laziness as the mother of all vices, and when their duties give them any respite, they will work at
sewing or some similar occupation, but in such a way that they re­
call from time to time the presence of God and offer Him their ac­
tions, reflecting on the resolution taken at morning prayer.

(33) They will show great respect and obedience to the Sister Servant as to the Superioress—or rather as to God, since it is Di­
vine Providence who has called them to this office.

(34) The Sisters who have other assignments, such as the kitchen, 
storeroom, bakery, or door, will reflect that they have no less merit 
in fulfilling their duties than if they were looking after the children 
in their rooms or elsewhere, but this is understood if they do their 
duty well and are faithful to keeping the rules of their offices.

(35) Both will endeavor to live in great innocence, simplicity, 
and humility, seeing that they are obliged to imitate these little chil­
dren who are innocent, simple, humble, and so closely united by 
friendship. In line with that, they will beware of ever harboring a 
single thought of envy, murmuring, pride, or ambition in their 
hearts. In everything, they will make it a matter of conscience to 
take any notice of a temptation that might lead them to want a 
change of ministry, companions, or house, remaining indifferent to 
all that and allowing themselves to be guided by their Superioress 
and Sister Servants like unweaned infants with their mother who 
nurses them. In so doing, they may rest assured that Our Lord will 
give them the reward He promises to all those who become like 
these babies, and who has said “Let the little children come to me 
and do not prevent them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to 
them, and if you do not become like these little children, you will not 
enter it.”

DUTIES OF THE SISTER SERVANT AT THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL

(1) It is the responsibility of the Sister Servant of the Foundlings 
to see that the Sisters and the wet nurses do their duties well and 
that the children are raised and assisted, corporally and spiritually, in the way the Rules prescribe.

(2) She will not take in any child brought by the commissioners 
and other officers, before receiving the report made of him, and will 
inform the Superioress of this report, along with the others she has.
As soon as the child is in the hospital, she will visit him, put away his little articles of clothing, and even the little note and anything else she finds on him. She will keep a record of these to serve as some sign to identify him, in case of need. She will have him given some milk or something else, depending on his age and what she thinks he needs, and will have him baptized conditionally without delay, even though there may be a note saying he has already been baptized. She will write on the back of the report his baptismal name, with whatever surname she gives him, together with the day, the year, and the age given in the report, along with any other detail, if necessary. When she sees that he is in the proper condition, she will give him to a wet nurse to be fed and raised, if he is not already weaned, in which case she will place him with others of this sort.

(3) Should it happen that a number of unweaned infants are brought in within a period of a few days, and there are not enough wet nurses to breast-feed them, she will see that they are fed with cow's milk by the Sisters appointed to do so, and she herself will do whatever she can to help. Meanwhile, she will find out from the Superioress whether some of them should be farmed out to be nursed either in the country or in the town, and will follow the instructions given her in this regard.

(4) She will be very meticulous in choosing carefully the wet nurses she gives them, and under no circumstance whatsoever will she accept anyone who does not have the requisite qualifications and whom the Superioress has not approved, above all if a baby is to be given to her to be nursed outside the hospital.

(5) As soon as she has hired any new wet nurses for the hospital, she will take care to see if they know all that a good Christian must believe and do in order to be saved. She will prepare them to make a general confession and even recommend them to the confessor of the house, so that they will be thoroughly instructed and prepared for all these duties.

(6) She will strongly impress on them the care and charity with which they are to look after these little innocents, especially that they should never strike them, nor curse them, nor let them sleep with her at night if they are not yet fifteen months old, nor nurse them when she is angry. In addition, she should make the Sign of the Cross on them at least morning and evening, sprinkling them with
holy water. When they begin to babble, she will help them to pronounce the names of Jesus and Mary, and never teach them any offensive words.

(7) She will be exact in managing the goods of these poor little creatures and not spend too much money, acting, nevertheless, in such a way as to provide sufficiently for their needs, but in the manner poor mothers should do.

(8) She will be mindful to have the children learn some little craft when they are old enough and capable enough to do so, which is usually around five or six years of age at least—knitting for the boys, and lacemaking or weaving for the girls, as well as learning to write, at least for the boys. She will give them two Sisters, one to work with the boys, and the other with the girls. By the same token, they will see to the rest of their behavior, both for body and soul, especially having them pray, use their time well, learn how to work with thread, silk, and linen, and other similar things. In addition, she will not fail to visit them from time to time to encourage them in their duty.

(9) She will take care to buy what is needed to give the children some handwork, sell what they make, and pay the merchants who have put them to work, and will give an account of all that to the treasury office of the Ladies assigned to the foundlings.

(10) She will see that the boys are separated from the girls, at least by the time they reach six or seven years of age, depending on their capacity and intelligence. The boys will be placed apart in the quarters reserved for them, so that they may not be able to communicate with the girls. As for boys of five or six and under, who, through necessity or by reason of their young age are not ready to remain with the older boys, she can continue to leave them in the area for girls of the same age, but on condition that they always be kept apart, not only at table or in bed, but even in separate bedrooms, if possible, allowing no opportunities, especially for the older boys, to encounter the girls.

(11) If there are older girls, particularly if they are over fifteen years of age, she will be very careful to provide them with a steady occupation, for fear that laziness might be damaging to them, giving the heavy work to those she judges suitable. If she finds any who are capable of making their prayer, she will ask the Superioress
whether it might not be advisable to form them to do so and to have them rise at four o'clock. Above all, she will do her utmost to prevent anything that would in the slightest way be detrimental to their chastity, such as communication with the boys, the wet nurses, or outsiders; in a word, keeping a tight hold on them, and requesting the Superioress to find some occupation for them, unless they are suited for working as maids, in which case they will inform the Superioress of this to see if they should be kept any longer.

(12) As for the working boys, she will give instructions that care be taken to confine them to their own quarters, permitting them to leave only by her order and when they are notified to go to the chapel. In that case she will see to it that they do not wander off when coming or going, and that once they are there they are always restricted to the assigned place, without being able to talk to the girls. And to better avoid the inconveniences that might arise from communication between the sexes, as soon as she sees that they have reached the age of twelve, she will have them receive some training or placed in a trade. To that effect she will request the Superioress to find them some employment as soon as possible.

(13) She will also be very careful that the wet nurses do not associate unnecessarily with the older boys and girls and even with the Sisters, preventing them above all from conversing about worldly matters, which are capable of upsetting them, causing them aversion, or diverting them from their vocation.

(14) She will make sure that no sick children are left in the room where there are healthy ones but will have them placed in another intended only for that, and will carefully recommend to the Sister assigned to look after the sick children to take good care of them.

(15) When there is smallpox in the hospital, she will be careful to prepare two rooms, one for the children suspected of having this illness and where they may be given the necessary remedies; the other, where they are taken as soon as it [smallpox] begins to appear. She will give instructions that those who are well have no contact with the sick ones or, if possible, with the Sisters who are nursing them.

(16) In all these things she will see that each member of her community acquitted herself faithfully of her duty toward God, particularly the wet nurses and the children who have reached the age of
receiving Communion. She will try to prepare them for Communion, at least on the principal feasts of the year, and the nurses once a month. As for the others who do not yet receive Communion, she will have them go to confession, at least on solemn feasts, namely, those who are over seven years of age, and those who are only five or six, simply at Easter, even if all she can do is to teach them how to make a good confession.

(17) And so that both are prepared properly to receive these two sacraments, she will see that the catechism lessons given by the Sisters are geared mainly to these two points. In order to get them to become more attached to them, will speak to them often of the great happiness of being in the grace of God and the great misfortune of being in mortal sin, of which it takes only one to be damned, and that by means of good confessions and Communions, this evil is avoided and friendship with God is acquired. In addition, they will not fail to have read in the chapel, at two o'clock every Sunday and on solemn feast days, the Lives of the Saints or some other suitable book. The whole community will be present for this, having previously chanted the litany of the Blessed Virgin or of Jesus, and, after the reading, the Commandments of God and of the Church. If there is an exhortation, they will omit the reading.

(18) If she cannot attend to her duty, especially if she has to go into the city, she will recommend carefully to the Sister given her as Assistant to fill in for her in her absence, and particularly to see that the children are served exactly at the appointed times.

(19) She will beware of introducing any innovations, or of changing or doing away with anything in the way things are managed, either in spiritual or temporal matters. If something extraordinary arises, she will tell the Superioress of the Company and follow her instructions regarding it. If she cannot speak with her, and the matter cannot be postponed without danger, in that case she will do what she judges before God to be most advisable, provided she is reasonably certain that the Superioress would agree to it if she were asked right now, and she will inform her of what action she took.

(20) After all, she will be convinced that all means will serve very little to guide this little flock well, if God does not grant her His grace for it, and He will not grant it if she does not ask it of Him of-
ten with the requisite dispositions, among others mistrust of self while trusting in Divine Providence and the goodness of God, humility, and good example, being the first to practice what she orders others to do.

Jesu mitis et humilis corde, miserere nobis.

PARTICULAR RULES FOR THE SISTERS WHO MINISTER TO THE GALLEY CONVICTS

(1) Just as the ministry of the Sisters of the Charity with the galley convicts is one of the most difficult and dangerous they can have, because of the management of money involved as well as the kind of persons to be visited there, it is also one of the most meritorious and pleasing to God when carried out properly, because of what is practiced there to a high degree: the corporal and spiritual works of mercy for persons who are so wretched in body and soul that it is almost beyond imagining. That is why those who are called by God to this holy ministry must, on the one hand, endeavor to make themselves worthy of it by the practice of the requisite virtues and by an exact observance of their Rules, and, on the other, encourage one another and have great confidence in Our Lord Jesus Christ, keeping in mind that, by assisting those poor persons, they will render Him a service as pleasing or more pleasing to Him than if it were done to His own person. Consequently, He will not fail to give them as a reward the graces needed to overcome all the difficulties they might encounter there, in addition to the rich crown He reserves for them in heaven.

(2) Their service consists in ministering to the poor convicts detained in Paris, corporally and spiritually, in sickness and in health, until they leave to be taken to the galleys. And since the Rules of the Sisters in parishes contain many pieces of advice that should also be followed by the Sisters who serve the galley convicts, particularly in what concerns those who are ill, they will adapt to

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64 These Rules were not in the English translation, probably because ministry with the galley convicts was not one of the works of Sisters outside of France. They may, however, provide inspiration for those engaged in prison ministry today.
them as much as possible and will, in addition, observe the following articles:

(3) With regard to the corporal assistance of those poor people, they will prepare their food at home every day, personally buying the meat and other things prescribed for them to eat, and bring them once a day at the exact time their usual modest fare, which should suffice for their dinner and supper. If the cooking pot is too heavy they will get the guards to help them.

(4) They will make it a point to bring them a change of linen every Saturday and have the soiled linen washed. At that time they will remember to renew interiorly the spirit of purity and modesty in order to protect themselves against the usual insolence of such persons in these circumstances.

(5) When the men are ill, the Sisters will take as much or even greater care than with persons in the parishes, taking the proper time to go to visit them, bringing them the food they need for their dinner and supper, and medicines when they require them. Above all, they will give them or obtain for them that spiritual assistance which consists in consoling, encouraging, and instructing them in things necessary for salvation, especially how to make a good general confession and to go to confession and Communion in due time. For those on the point of dying, they will see that they are given Extreme Unction, and when they die, they will have them wrapped in a shroud and attend to their burial. Should they recover, they will encourage them to lead a good life in the future.

(6) When the chain gang is ready to leave, they will make sure they have shirts and other linen; once it has left, they will empty and freshen their straw mattresses and do a thorough cleaning of the hall where they were detained.

(7) And although they should always show great modesty and reserve at all times, they will strive, nevertheless, to pay special attention to this when they are in their hall to render them some service, pretending not to hear their taunts, unless they are absolutely insolent, in which case they must reply seriously to them or leave.

(8) And, although it is very difficult to prevent the men from making these gross insolent remarks to them—and this even when they are doing more good for them—the Sisters will not fail to try to do so by showing great patience and, at the same time, by praying for
them, as Saint Stephen did for those who stoned him. Above all, they will beware of giving them the slightest reason to complain about them, and to this effect will not speak to them rudely, or reproach them for the complaints they received from them. Neither will they answer them back to justify themselves when they accuse them falsely; on the contrary, they will take pains not to say a word to them without great necessity and to correct them gently and compassionately, in view of the pitiful state they are usually in, both of body and soul, and because with all that they are still members of Him who made Himself a slave to ransom all of us from the slavery of the demon.

(9) And inasmuch as experience has shown that the presence of one of the Ladies goes a long way in preventing such insolent remarks, they will do all they can to find a means discreetly to have some of them come there from time to time to be present while they are serving the men. And if this act of charity begins to grow cold, they will take care to notify their Superioress, who will discuss with the Superior what should be done in order to revive those holy visits.

(10) When they go to serve the men, they will be extremely careful that no persons suspected of being disreputable or of giving bad advice go in with them. To avoid that, they will never allow anyone to enter except persons who they are sure are there to be of service to them rather than to do them harm.

(11) They will never become involved in carrying any letters or accepting any errand for them, unless it concerns their salvation and on condition that this is clear to them and that the Sister Servant judges it to be the case. If, however, she thinks before God that it is necessary for them to take some messages for their temporal welfare, it will be done only after asking and receiving the consent of the Superior, or at least of their Superioress, who will not grant it without making very certain that there is no danger in allowing it.

(12) To avoid serious inconveniences that might arise and to forestall any suspicions people might have about them with regard to the way they get along with the convicts, they will refrain from having any private conversations with them. Neither will they give credence to what they tell them, not even when their relatives and friends speak with them about helping them to get out of there, un-
less they have sought the advice of the Superioress and obtained her permission to act otherwise, if there appears to be a great need and the detainee seems innocent.

(13) They will likewise be very careful to avoid any complicity with the guards of the convicts and not allow any of them to enter their rooms, except at the time they come to pick up the cooking pot when it is too heavy. If they need to say something, apart from this instance, it will be done at the door at the bottom of the steps; for this purpose they will have a bell at their window that the men will ring from the street if they want to speak to the Sisters.

(14) They will be careful to manage well the property of the poor convicts, refrain from appropriating any of their food for themselves, either directly or indirectly, and not favor the merchants who supply them to the detriment of those poor men.

(15) The Sister responsible for receipts and expenditures will keep a list of them in order to give an account of them when she is required by those whose business it is. If she receives a very large sum of money, she will inform the Superioress, who will tell her what she thinks advisable to do to prevent it from being lost and to spend it wisely.

(16) If some extraordinary expenditure has to be made for the men, she will ask the advice, not only of the Sister Servant, but also of the Superioress, who, depending on the need or great usefulness she sees in it, will tell her to ask permission of the Deputy of the Attorney General, or to act otherwise if it is expedient.

(17) Above all, they will be sure to notify the Superioress in good time so that she may find out from the Superior whether there are priests to give the mission to the convicts, when the chain gang has been formed.

(18) And so that they may be better able to put all this advice into practice, and that the charity they do in this place may be for the greater glory of God, their own perfection, and the salvation of those poor afflicted men, they will offer special prayers several times a day to ask the Holy Spirit to purify their thoughts, words, and actions so well—especially in temptations of impurity, if they have any—that they may be like sunlight, which passes constantly over filth without being in the least soiled itself. After that, they must trust that God will answer their prayers as He did for the three chil-
dren in the fiery furnace, since it is only through charity and obedience that they undertake this ministry.

150. - ACT OF ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY AND APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

(August 8, 1655)

We, Vincent de Paul, General of the Congregation of the Mission, Superior and Director of the Confraternity of Servants of the Poor of the Charity, make known that, it having pleased God to make use of the Congregation of the Mission to establish Confraternities of Charity in several places in this kingdom, in Italy, and in Savoy, by authority of Our Holy Father the Pope, of our Archbishops, and of the Local Ordinaries, for the assistance of the sick poor; and experience having shown that the Ladies who compose the Confraternity in the parishes of the city of Paris were unable to render the necessary assistance themselves, such as bringing them their food, making their beds, preparing and administering remedies, etc., a certain number of unmarried women and widows joined the Confraternity to supply for the lack of assistance the Ladies themselves were unable to give the patients.

These unmarried women and widows were brought to live together under the direction of Mlle. Louise de Marillac, widow of the late M. Le Gras, Secretary of the late Queen, mother of King Louis XIII, with certain Rules tending to help them to live a good life and to assist the sick poor corporally and spiritually, with the result that it pleased His Divine Goodness to bless this modest work of His hands, the late Archbishop of Paris, Jean-François de Gondi to approve it, and Cardinal de Retz, his Coadjutor at the time, to give his approval, which he afterward repeated, as is clear from the letters patent he has given for this purpose, whereby he approves the Confraternity and its Rules and has established us for our lifetime, and

Document 150. - Arch. Nat., L. 1054, original signed document; published in Documents, Doc. 628, pp. 700-03.
the Superiors General of the Mission who will succeed us, as the Superiors and Directors of the Confraternity of Servants of the Poor of the Charity.

And although it pleased God to institute the Confraternity in this city of Paris about twenty-five years ago, no Act of Establishment was drawn up because we judged it advisable to see beforehand that the Rules of the Confraternity were fully observed, and that its leadership was as might have been desired by the mercy of God; and since, on the other hand, we are on the point of sending several of the unmarried women and widows into new establishments both in this kingdom and in that of Poland, we have judged it necessary at present to make the Act of Establishment. For this purpose, we have convoked the Sisters who are in this city and were at the assembly held at their Community house in this city, where we took the names of those who have already been received and who desire to persevere in it. This took place after the Rules were read to them and the approval given, as is mentioned above.

When this was done, we proceeded to the appointment of officers, and, although it is stated that this should take place by the plurality of votes, nevertheless, because the first time it is up to the one who establishes the Confraternity to appoint the officers, we named the following:

First, we asked Mlle. de Marillac to continue for life in the office of Superioress and Directress of the Confraternity, as she has been doing very successfully, by the mercy of God, since the establishment of this Confraternity until the present. For the other three officers, we named Julienne Loret,¹ First Assistant; Mathurine Guérin,² Second Assistant and Treasurer; and Jeanne Gressier,³ Bursar. Having done this, we urged the unmarried women and widows of the Confraternity to thank God for their vocation, to live it well, and to be exact in the observance of the Rules and in their ministries. They all promised to do so, by the grace of Our Lord.

¹Julienne Loret (cf. VIII, 235, n. 5).
²Mathurine Guérin (cf. VIII, 167, n. 2).
³Jeanne Gressier (cf. VIII, 235, n. 1).
In testimony whereof, we have signed the present Act in our own hand and have had the seal of our Congregation affixed to it. Also signing it were the said Demoiselle, the other officers, and a few of the oldest Sisters who were able to do so.

Drawn up in the said house of the Charity in Paris, August 8, 1655.4

LOUISE DE MARILLAC MATHURINE GUÉRIN
JEANNE GRESSIER JULIENNE LORET
BARBE BAILLY (GENEVIEVE DOINEL) MARIE JOLY FRANÇOISE NORET
BARBE FOULINS GENEVIEVE POISSON (ANTOINETTE LABILLE)+
(JEANNE GOIRAR) + ANNE HARDEMONT
MARIE CRESTE GENEVIEVE CAILOU JEANNE BAPTISTE
(VINCENTE AUCHY) V TOUSSAINTE DAVID ANNE ROSE
(JEANNE LUCE) L ANDRÉE MARÉCHAL (FRANÇOISE FANCHON) F
MADELEINE RAPORTEBLED ÉTIENNETTE DUPUIS PHILIPPE BAILLY
FRANÇOISE (CABRY) (LOUISE DALBEL) O (RENNÉ PESCHELOCHE) R
MARIE ROBIDÉ GABRIELLE CABARET AVOIE' VIGNERON
MARGUERITE CHÉTIF
(MARGUERITE MÉNAGE) + (MARIE CUNY) + MADELEINE GARNIER
GENEVIEVE GAUTIER (FRANÇOISE GESSEAUME) + MADELEINE MÉNAGE
(JEANNE LEMERET) + MARIE (LA RUELLE) FRANÇOISE LE ROSEAU
VINCENT DEPAUL

These signatures are followed by the names of all the other Sisters who had been received from the time of the institution of the Confraternity and Society until today, August 8, 1655: Jeanne Prévost (known as Christine), Gillette Joly, Louise Ganset, Cécile Angiboust, Jeanne Lepeintre, Henriette Gesseaume, Marie-Marthe Trumeau, Claude Carré, Marie Le Soin, Nicole Georget, Louise-Christine Rideau, Jeanne de Saint-Benoit, Catherine de Gesse, Anne Vallin, Barbe Angiboust, Jeanne Coignart, Marguerite Le Soin, Perrette Chefdeville, Jeanne Paon, Françoise Carcireux, Jeanne de Saint-Albin, Jeanne Huiot, Charlotte Royer, Marguerite

4A blank space precedes Saint Louise's signature. The copyist wrote, probably on her instructions: "Space was left here for M. Vincent's signature; but he preferred to sign the last of all." For the list of signatories that follows, Coste respected the family names as they were written; we have used the commonly accepted spelling given in Charpy (Doc. 628, pp. 702-03). Nine or ten Sisters who did not know how to write marked some sign, beside which another Sister added the name. These names are given in parentheses, followed by the sign in italics.

5Coste gives Marie; the autograph has Avoine.
Moreau, Madeleine Drugeon, Françoise Douelle, Marguerite Lavalle, Madeleine Riquet, Marthe Baudoin, Jeanne Goirard, Charlotte Prou, Anne Véron, Catherine Pain d'Avoine, Nicole Bildet, Françoise Goupil, Barbe, Claude Chantereau, Claude Laurent, Toussainte (Allou), Marie Navain, Françoise Ménage, Jeanne Henault, Laurence Dubois, Jeanne Huot, Perrine de Bouhery, Nicole Haran, Élisabeth Joustean, Nicole Fouillet, Marie Gaudoin, Marie Poulet, Nicole-Colette Boquet, Marguerite Menessier, Michèle Lecontre, Étiennette Massé, Anne Tacaille, Catherine Baucher, Anne de Vaux, Claude Tacaille, Jeanne Bonvilliers, Anne Lelièvre, Jeanne-Marie Boule, Suzanne, Charlotte Moreau, Marie Quinville, Jeanne Turet, Jeanne Labiche, Geneviève Vigneron, Antoinette Leroy, Marie Railleard, Claire Jaudoin, Françoise Bouhery, Radegonde Lenfantin, Claude La Mucette, Marie Rat, Julienne Allot, Mauricette Villain, Claude* Thibault, Louise Chomon, Louise Corbe, Claude Parcollet, Françoise Gouin, Claude Blanchard, Marie Allet, Pétronille Gillot, Anne Bocheron, Anne Levies, Antoinette Richevillain, Jeanne La Mère, Mathurine Brillehaut, Jeanne de Vaux, Marie Damé, Sulpice Dubois, Élisabeth Morancy, Marie Papillon, Marie Petit, Michèle Métayer, Marie Roger, Jeanne Blot, Clémence... , Marguerite... , ... de Fimes.6

151. - AUTHORIZATION FOR SISTERS TO TRAVEL TO ARRAS

(August 30, 1656)

Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, Director of the Confraternity and Society of the Daughters of Charity and Servants of the Sick Poor established in the parishes of this city of Paris, to our very dearly beloved Sisters in Jesus

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6This list, except for the first section, follows the order of entrance into the Company. It is, however, incomplete, lacking the names of those who had died or left the Company, among others.

Document 151. - Archives of the Mission, original signed document.
Christ Our Savior, Marguerite Chétif and Radegonde Lenfantin,\textsuperscript{1} Sisters of the Confraternity and Society of the Charity, greetings in the love of Our Lord.

His Excellency the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Bishop-elect of Arras\textsuperscript{2} and some devout persons of rank of the city, together with the Ladies who are officers of the Company of the Charity of Paris, did us the honor of asking us for two Sisters of the Society to assist the sick poor of the town of Arras for at least one year. We desire to accede to the request of such a Prelate and the holy desires of so many charitable persons and, by the same token, to contribute in some way to the accomplishment of such a devout intention. Furthermore, being well informed of your uprightness, zeal, ability, and fidelity in what concerns the service of those who are poor and the observance of your Rules, we have assigned and sent you, and by these present letters do assign and send you for the aforesaid purpose, instructing you to go as soon as possible to the town of Arras to receive there the orders that the Bishop and others concerned will give you.

You will live there in the way in which you are accustomed to live in other places where you have been working by our mandate for the same purpose, under the spiritual direction of the priest we will indicate to you and in conformity with your Regulations, of which we have given you a copy so that you may act in accordance with them as far as the urgent needs of the sick will allow you to do. All this will be for as long as the persons on whom you depend will accept your modest service and as we deem it advisable. We ask God meanwhile to bless your journey, keep you always under His protection, and fill you with His graces and blessings in order to accomplish worthily all that has been and will be prescribed for you.

And in order to give greater credence and authority to all of the above, we have signed the present letters in our own hand, had them countersigned by our secretary, and had our regular seal affixed to them.

\textsuperscript{1}Marguerite Chétif, Radegonde Lenfantin (cf. \textit{VIII}, 352. n. 8).
\textsuperscript{2}Étienne Moreau (1656-70).
Paris, August 30, 1656

VINCENT DEPAUL,
Unworthy Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission

By order of Monsieur [Vincent].

DUCOURNAU

152. - LETTERS PATENT APPROVING THE COMPANY
OF THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY

(November 1657)

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

Our very dearly beloved Vincent de Paul, priest and Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, has most humbly pointed out to us that, since 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 the places where they go to give missions and where this establishment is deemed useful, as is seen in the [Act of] Erection of the Congregation issued by Pope Urban VIII, of happy memory, and in the Rules of the Congregation approved by the late Archbishop of Paris, as delegate of the Holy See for the approval of the Rules, the Congregation has established the Confraternity in our fine city of Paris and other places in the diocese, even in several other places and areas of our kingdom, for the assistance of the sick poor in those places.

The Confraternity is composed of wives, widows, and pious unmarried women, who attend to visiting and assisting the sick poor, giving them their food and medicine, and procuring spiritual assis-


1Jean-François de Gondi. He died on March 21, 1654, and within an hour was canonically succeeded by his nephew, Jean-François-Paul de Gondi, Cardinal de Retz. Perhaps, since the latter was persona non grata in France, this document does not refer to him, even though on January 18, 1655, he had approved the Company of the Daughters of Charity and reaffirmed the Rules submitted in 1645 (cf. Doc. 149).
tance for those who are recovering so that they will live a good life, and for those who are near death so that they will die well. Experience has shown, however, that the society Ladies of the Confraternity found it difficult to carry the necessary food to the sick poor, make their beds, give them remedies, and, in general, to perform the other minor services they need. To provide for this, 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 patients. To that end, it 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 of the King our most honored Lord and father. She supports them by means of one thousand livres tournois income given them by the late King our most honored Lord and father, to be taken on our Gonesse property; in addition, from an annual, perpetual income of twelve hundred livres they have acquired on the Rouen coach line from the money coming from a donation that our dearly beloved cousin, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, gave them; also, from what they can earn from their manual labor, when their ordinary duties leave them some leisure time; from the assistance devout persons contribute according to their resources, and from the alms that are given them. She instructs them in piety, prepares them to serve the sick poor well, to do bloodlettings and to administer medicines. Then she sends them to the parishes of our city of Paris, to some of the rural areas, and to those hospitals of our kingdom where they are requested, such as the ones in Nantes, Angers, Saint-Denis, and others. She recalls them and changes them from one place to another according to needs; engages them under her direction in several other good works, such as raising the foundlings of our city and faubourgs of Paris; assisting poor criminals condemned to labor on our galleys and sick prisoners in the Conciergerie of the Palais in our city of Paris; teaching poor girls, showing them how to pray and to read; in a word, in every good work in which they can be useful. All of this is done with the advice and direction of our dearly beloved Vincent de Paul, Superior Gen-
eral of the Congregation of the Mission, and in conformity with the Regulations and Statutes he has drawn up for the good order and direction of the Confraternity.

It usually happens, however, that works involving the service of God die out with those who have begun them, unless there is some spiritual bond among the persons engaged in them. Unfortunately, the letters of erection of the Confraternity and Society and the letters approving the Regulations and Statutes,\(^2\) issued by our dear cousin Cardinal de Retz, Archbishop of Paris, then Coadjutor and Vicar-General of the archdiocese, and attached with our letters patent under the counterseal of our Chancery, addressed to our Parlement of Paris to be registered, were lost by the secretary of M. Méliand, our Attorney General at the time. The latter had been entrusted with our letters patent to give his conclusions to them, but his secretary died, and no one has been able to find the approval attached to our letters, 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 therefore obliged to turn to Cardinal de Retz that he might be pleased to approve once again the Confraternity and its Statutes and Regulations following the approval, and to empower the petitioner and his successors as Superiors General of the Congregation of the Mission to direct the Confraternity under his authority and jurisdiction and those of his successors, the Archbishops of Paris. This he did in Rome on January 18, 1655, by other new letters\(^3\) and once again erected the Assembly of the unmarried women and widows in the form of a Confraternity or distinct Society, under the title of Servants of the Poor of the Charity, ordaining that those women who had been admitted to it at that time, and those who would be admitted in the future, may freely do anything that could relieve and console the sick poor, on condition that the Confraternity will be, and will remain in perpetuity, under his authority and dependence and those of his successors, in the exact obser-

\(^2\)Cf. Doc. 146.
\(^3\)Cf. Doc. 149.
vance of the Statutes and Regulations that our dearly beloved Vin-
cent de Paul presented to him, and according to which they had
lived until then and had intended to live for the rest of their lives. By
the letters of January 18, 1655, the Archbishop approved and autho-
rized these Statutes and Regulations, once again entrusting and
confiding the guidance and direction of the Society and Confrater-
nity to the said dearly beloved Vincent de Paul for as long as it
might please God to preserve his life, and, after him, to his succes-
sors as Superiors General, so that there is nothing more to be desired
for the perfection of such a holy establishment except that it may
please us to will to approve, confirm, and authorize it once again.

Be it known that, desiring to approve by our authority all the
good works and establishments that are founded and will be
founded in the future in the extent of our territories and regions un-
der us for the glory of God, and particularly the establishment of
that Society and Confraternity, which has had a beginning so filled
with blessings and a development so abounding in charity with re-
gard to the sick poor, poor foundlings, poor convicts, and little girls,
and even the poor young women who present themselves to serve
them, giving them a beautiful, holy opportunity to give themselves
to God and to serve Him in the person of those who are poor; we,
from our sure knowledge, full power, and royal authority, have by
these present letters, signed in our own hand, once again accepted
and approved, confirmed and authorized, and do accept, approve,
confirm, and authorize, the establishment of the Confraternity,
Community, and Society, under the title of Servants of the Poor of
the Charity, instituted by our dearly beloved Vincent de Paul. We
have stated, declared, ruled, and ordained, and do state, declare,
rule, ordain, and will, and it so pleases us that the establishment of
the Confraternity, Community, and Society remain firm and stable,
now and for the future, and even that the unmarried women and
widows who have been and will be admitted and accepted into the
Society and Confraternity of Servants of the Sick Poor may go
(with the permission of Vincent de Paul and, after him, of his suc-
cessors as Superiors General of the Congregation and of their
Superioress) and be welcome in all places, cities, towns, and vil-
lages of our kingdom and regions under our rule where they are called. There they may be established and practice charitable acts similar to the ones they do in this city of Paris itself for poor orphans and the sick poor in houses, hospitals, and Hôtels-Dieu, where they will be deemed necessary for the education, feeding, and instruction of the orphans, and the service and assistance of the sick poor, by the Mayors, Municipal Magistrates, leading citizens, Syndics, Aldermen, Chief Magistrates, or local inhabitants, each in what concerns them.

And, to show how pleasing the establishment is to us, we have placed and do place under our safeguard and special protection and those of our successor Kings, this Confraternity, Community, and Society, its property, houses, lands, and revenues dependent on it, and generally everything that has been given to it as alms and will hereafter be given to it, very expressly prohibiting and forbidding all persons, whatever rank or position they hold, to conspire against or introduce anything that may be harmful to the Confraternity; to disturb and impede it or its men and women officers in carrying out their duties and the regulations and governance of matters pertaining to it and could pertain to it, to cause harm to it, or to malign it directly or indirectly, under pain of incurring our disfavor.

Likewise, we have also permitted and do permit the Confraternity, Community, and Society and its men and women officers to accept and receive from any persons whomsoever all gifts and legacies that may be made and given as alms by donation inter vivos, by will, or because of death, both movable and immovable, in any way or manner whatsoever, and to acquire moneys that may be given them (as they did around four years ago\(^4\) for the house and place where they are living, situated in the faubourg Saint-Denis of this city of Paris), using the benefits and revenues for the needs of the Confraternity, Society, and Community. We have, as of now, written off and do write off forever as dedicated to God, the immovable

\(^{4}\)The Company of the Daughters of Charity had bought the Motherhouse from the Congregation of the Mission, which had acquired it in 1641. The contract was notarized on April 1, 1653 (Arch. Nat., S. 6608). The purchase price of the house which sat on some five acres of land, was 18,400 livres.
goods given in this way in alms or acquired by the Confraternity, Society, and Community of the unmarried women and widows, Servants of the Poor, even the house acquired by them, as has been stated, by these present letters, with no need to obtain any others from us or from our successors as Kings, nor that they be obliged to pay us or our successors the Kings any taxes, sales, rights of repurchase, frank-fees, or new acquests; to hand over money in hand to someone appointed by the court; nor to pay any financial charges or compensation. By these present letters we have made and do make a gift of these to them.

We therefore give orders to our beloved, loyal gentlemen in charge of our Parlement courts and Chambres des comptes and all our other officials, judges, and officers concerned, to have these present letters read, published, and registered, and that their entire contents may be enjoyed and used by the Confraternity and Community, peacefully and fully, now and in perpetuity for the future, without causing, permitting, or allowing any trouble or hindrance to be done to them, all edicts, ordinances, commands, and prohibitions, decrees, letters, privileges, and other things contrary to this notwithstanding, from which and from the dispensations of their dispensations we have departed and do depart by these present letters.

And so that this matter may be firm and stable forever, we have had our seal placed and affixed to these present letters, safeguarding our rights in other matters and the right of others in all; for such is our pleasure.

Drawn up in Paris, in the month of November in the year of grace 1657, the fifteenth of our reign.

Louis

In the name of the King.

De Loménie
The Court having examined the letters patent given in Paris in the month of November 1657, signed Louis, and on the fold, In the name of the King, De Loménie, and sealed on a silk knotted cord with the great seal of green wax, letters obtained by the priest Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, by which and for the reasons contained therein the Lord accepted, approved, confirmed, and authorized the establishment of the Confraternity, Community, and Society under the title of Servants of the Poor of the Charity, instituted by the petitioner, it wills and it pleases it that it remain firm and stable now and for the future, and even that the unmarried women and widows who have been and will be admitted and accepted into the Society and Confraternity of Servants of the Sick Poor may go, with permission of the petitioner and, after him, of his successors as Superiors General of the Congregation of the Mission, and of their Superioress, and be welcomed in all the places, cities, towns, and villages of the kingdom where they will be called, to be established and to practice there charitable acts similar to those they do in this city of Paris itself for poor orphans and the sick poor in houses, hospitals, and Hôtels-Dieu where they will be deemed necessary for the education, feeding, and instruction of the orphans, and the service and assistance of the sick poor, by the Mayors, Municipal Magistrates, leading citizens, Syndics, Aldermen, Chief Magistrates, or local inhabitants, each in what concerns them.

The Lord has placed under his protection and safeguard this Confraternity, Community, and Society, its property, houses, lands, and revenues dependent on it, and generally everything that has been and will hereafter be given as alms to it, with permission for its men and women officers to accept and acquire all sorts of movable and immovable goods, which the Lord has now written off.

as dedicated to God, as is stated at greater length in the letters addressed to the Court.

Having also examined the approval of Cardinal de Retz, Archbishop of Paris, of the Society and Community and its Statutes and Regulations, dated January 18, 1655, attached under the countersign of the letters, the request presented to the Court by Vincent de Paul to have the letters registered, and the conclusions of the Attorney General of the King; having heard the report of Messire Charles Le Prévost, Councillor of the King in the Court, and having considered all of the above, the Court has ordered and does order that the letters be recorded by its Registrar, to be implemented according to their form and terms.

Drawn up in the Parlement, December 16, 1658.

DU TILLET

154. - AUTHORIZATION FOR SISTERS TO TRAVEL TO NARBONNE

(September 12, 1659)

Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and Director of the Confraternity and Community of Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Sick Poor of the parishes, established in this city of Paris and in other places in this kingdom, to our very dearly beloved daughters in Jesus Christ our Savior, Françoise Carcireux, Anne Denoual, and Marie Chesse,1 Sisters of the Confraternity and Community of the Charity, greetings in the love of Our Lord.

Since His Excellency the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Archbishop of Narbonne2 did us the honor of asking us for three Daughters of Charity of the Community to assist the sick poor of the


1Françoise Carcireux (cf. VIII, 127, n. 3); Anne Denoual and Marie Chesse (cf. VIII, 166, n. 3).

2François Fouquet.
town, we, desiring to comply with the order of the Archbishop and being well informed of your uprightness, zeal, ability, and fidelity in what concerns the service of poor persons and the observance of your Regulations, have assigned and sent you, and by these present letters do assign and send you for the aforesaid purpose, instructing you to go as soon as possible to the city of Narbonne to receive there the orders that the Archbishop will give you.

You will live there in the way in which you are accustomed to live in other places where you have been engaged for the same purpose and in conformity with your Regulations, We ask God meanwhile to bless your journey, keep you always under His protection, and fill you with His graces and blessings.

And in order to give greater credence and authority to all of the above, we have signed the present letters in our own hand, had them countersigned by our secretary, and have had our regular seal affixed to them.

Paris, September 12, 1659.

VINCENTIUS A PAULO, Unworthy Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission

A. PORTAIL, Secretary

155. - AUTHORIZATION FOR THREE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY TO TRAVEL TO POLAND

(September 16, 1660)

Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and Director of the Confraternity of Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor, established in Paris, to our very dearly beloved Daughters in Jesus Christ Our Savior, Barbe Bailly,
Catherine Baucher, and Catherine Bouy,¹ Sisters of the Confraternity of Charity, greetings in the love of Our Lord.

About eight years ago, at the urging of the Most Serene Queen of Poland, the Confraternity of the Daughters of Charity was established in the city of Warsaw for the relief of the sick poor, and several months ago Her Majesty did us the honor of asking for three of the Daughters. Wishing, therefore, to comply with the desires and orders of such a worthy Princess, we have sent you and by these present letters do send you to the said city to receive there the orders Her Majesty will give you and to observe there the manner of living to which you are accustomed in France, under the direction of M. Desdames, or someone else who will be Superior of the priests of our Congregation now in Poland, and under the good pleasure of the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend local Bishops. We exhort you to carry out your ministry well, especially by living in perfect union and observance of your Regulations. Hoping in the mercy of God in this regard, we entreat Him to preserve and bless you.

In testimony whereof, we have signed the present letters in our own hand and have had the seal of our Congregation affixed to them.

At Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, September 16, 1660.

VINCENT DEPAUL, Unworthy Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and Director of the Daughters of Charity

In the name of the said Superior General.

THOMAS BERTHE

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¹Barbe Bailly (cf. VIII, 2/14, n. 1); Catherine Baucher (cf. VII, 465, n. 4); Catherine Bouy entered the Daughters of Charity after 1655. Her sister Florence, then deceased, was also a Daughter of Charity.
By the grace of God, dear Sisters, the establishment of this little Council is a beginning of the order and foundation Providence is laying in your Company. We have met here to give some thought to certain needs—as is done in all well-regulated Communities—to tell you how you should act here, and to see how Mlle. Le Gras or the Sister Servant should conduct the meeting.

Don't begin it, Sisters, before asking the assistance of the Holy Spirit. For this purpose, it will be well for you to pray the antiphon Veni Sancte, with the versicle and prayer, and to close with an anthem to the Blessed Virgin. I think that Sancta Maria, succurre miseris or Sub tuum praesidium would be appropriate.

The second point is something about which you must be very careful: never plan ahead of time what you'll have to say here; don't be concerned about one point of view or the other, don't speak according to your feelings of like or dislike but allow the Spirit of God to act in you. Don't decide 'I'll say this or that,' but simply say what God inspires you to say. Do you know why, Sisters? Because, if your mind is made up on one point or another before coming here, it will no longer be free to judge clearly what will be proposed, and if it acts according to your likes or dislikes, Sisters, it won't be the Spirit of God but your own whims that will prevail during your little Council meetings. Oh! what a great loss that would be for you! Do you know what our Savior says about Council meetings to be held in Communities? 'If you are assembled in my name,' He says, 'I will be in your midst.' Ah, Sisters! that's the truth, and since this is so, you must allow God to act, for you may be sure that He won't be present like a stone. He's there to bring light and grace into your hearts; He's there enlightening your understanding and moving
your will. So then, come to it prepared to be led by what He’ll say to you and have no other interest in view than His greater glory in the progress of the Company.

“...A third element—one that’s absolutely essential—is inviolable secrecy. This confidentiality is the soul of God’s affairs, for, as soon as someone mentions outside what goes on, everything is ruined and falls into disorder. Consequently, secrecy must be observed here, like the secrecy of the confessional. It’s imperative that no one ever know not only what decisions have been taken but even what has been proposed. Never, directly or indirectly, should you reveal anything treated here. You mustn’t even mention such matters among yourselves, as you might say, ‘But what do you think about that? Wouldn’t it be better this way? Let’s say something.’ Oh no, Sisters! Never, never so much as open your mouth about them; never mention what has been treated here.

“Since it’s the duty of the Sister Servant, who is Mademoiselle right now, to propose the topics, she’ll follow this procedure. Now, in any affair there are always pros and cons. So, it’s her duty, in proposing the topic, to state first of all the reasons in favor of a certain measure, then those opposed to it, as, for example, ‘We should do a certain thing for such and such a reason; however, there are other reasons contrary to it, namely, such and such.’

“...To ask the opinion of the Sisters, she’ll address the one on her right first, then the next, and so on.

“The Sister whose opinion has been asked will incline her head before beginning and then say, ‘Mademoiselle, for such and such a reason, I think it’s appropriate to do or not to do that.’ For the reasons should always be given. When she has finished, she’ll incline her head once again. If the Father Superior is present, it will be well to stand; also, if the Sister Servant stands, I think it proper for everyone else to stand as well.

“If the second Sister doesn’t agree with the first, she might say, ‘For such and such a reason, I don’t think that’s advisable.’ This is done without naming the Sister of whom she’s speaking; and she’ll state the reasons calling for a different course of action.
“If the third Sister doesn’t agree with either of the others, she might say, ‘For such and such a reason, I don’t think it advisable to act in the first way or the second, but in this manner; and for a certain reason that seems to preclude it, I think it can be resolved this way.’

“After that, once the Sister Servant has heard the opinions, it’s up to her to follow the one she thinks most appropriate. And if she doesn’t want to follow any of them, it’s up to her to say, ‘We won’t finish this today; we have to think it over before God.’ Or, if she wants to seek some advice, she may say, ‘I’ll mention this to M. Vincent; we’ll see what’s best.’

“In addition, Sisters, you should never take issue over your opinions but express them simply, without pressing to try to have them accepted. On the contrary, you should always want the others to be heeded instead of you.

“Now, Sisters, something has come up that requires your advice: it concerns poor Jacqueline, who is here in the house. She’s not well-balanced and is causing many minor disturbances; consequently, she shouldn’t remain in the Company any longer. She complains constantly, which can upset weak persons who don’t yet know her. And since she doesn’t appreciate anything that’s done, wherever she is she makes up ridiculous stories that can be very harmful. If her wishes are opposed, she’s unbearable and incapable of accepting a correction, and, what is worse, I think that, since apparently she’s here only grudgingly, she can’t work out her salvation in this place and will do better if left to her own devices. In short, Sisters, she has no common sense.

“On the other hand, you have to consider that she’s a Sister who has worked hard for the poor and is one of the oldest members of the Company—even one of the very first, I think. For that reason, it might seem better to keep her.

“Sister, what do you think about that?” The Sister answered that she thought she should be separated from the Company because of

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3Sister Jacqueline, one of the first Daughters of Charity, served the poor at the Hôtel-Dieu and in Saint-Leu parish.
the unrest she is causing in it. However, in view of the service she has rendered, it would be well not to abandon her.

"And how do you think that can be done, Sister?"

"Place her in some village where only one Sister is needed to look after the sick," the Sister replied, "and give her as much help there as possible. In that way, she'd be separated from the Company without being completely out of it, and that would be very beneficial for the Community."

"And what do you think about that, Sister?"

The Sister replied that placing her in a village wouldn't stop her from saying the same things all the time, but she felt that, for the rest of her days, it would be safer to keep her in the house to follow her own fancy, and see that she was taken care of for the love of God.

The next Sister was of the same opinion, adding: "The others won't follow her example there when they see that she's being kept only for love of God."

"And what does Mlle. Le Gras have to say about this?"

Mademoiselle said that she really should be sent away because keeping someone so self-willed here in this house would give bad example to the others. Moreover, there was no guarantee that she would remain at peace, since, at the first whim that seized her, she might start up as before and, at the slightest thing that displeased her, might turn to the newcomers or to those she suspects are the weakest. More than all that is the reason Most Honored Father gave in saying that she wasn't working out her salvation. As for placing her in a village, that's where she was spoiled in the first place. If, however, she herself wanted to withdraw, either to her own village or elsewhere, and work to earn her living, the Company could help her in some way to support herself. Mademoiselle had thought that, if Mme. de Lamoignon had some work to be done, she could be placed in one of her houses. That might have been a good solution, and Mademoiselle had asked Mme. de Lamoignon about it. In addition, she had also thought that Sister might have been well off if

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4Marie des Landes de Lamoignon (cf. IV, 4, n. 3).
they could have placed her at the Petites-Maisons. She herself had thought about that place and would have liked it, but she would have had to be sent there under pretext of serving the poor because, despite all her caprices, this good Sister has always wanted to serve the poor, stating that she had left her own region for that purpose.

Mademoiselle added further that she had written to the Pastor of the Petites-Maisons about this. He told her that Sister would be very useful there and that the usual way of being admitted was first to be a charity case and then to talk to the Administrators of the Bureau, but sometimes there’s a long wait. Those patients who bring their property with them need only an order from the Procurator General; however, since she’d be coming to serve the patients through M. Vincent’s influence, he felt that this could easily be done.

After listening attentively to all of the above, Most Honored Father asked M. Alméras his Assistant what he thought. He answered that he didn’t know the Sister, but, based on the report that had been given concerning her, he judged it best to remove her, and felt it would be well to place her in some village, as had been said, or, as Mademoiselle had thought of doing, in the home of some lady like Mme. de Lamoignon or another lady of rank, where she could come and go and be free to do as she pleased, without anyone contradicting her or paying too much attention to what she was doing.

After that, M. Vincent spoke again, “Oh! God be praised, Sisters! For all the reasons stated, I think it’s a good idea for her to leave. But how? I’m a little uncomfortable with that. She can’t be kept here in this house the way she is, and to allow her to be free is even worse; that would give too much bad example, and others, who would be unaware of the reasons for this, might want to be free to do the same, thinking that the Community would put up with such conduct as well. And in a village, her imagination will conjure up the ill-treatment she’ll claim she has received, and she won’t fail to voice her complaints. What Mademoiselle has suggested regarding the Petites-Maisons would be very worthwhile for her—and you were right to hope for it—but I see nothing more problematic

Petites-Maisons (cf. VII, 199, n. 3).
than that. If the Charity were established there, it could easily be done; but, first of all, as regards admission, either there's a long wait or it's very difficult to get in. I can tell you that about twenty-five years ago I made my first attempt to place some people at the Petites-Maisons, and I never had any influence there. Nevertheless, maybe it can be managed some way. But even if she does go there she won't stay, and that could do harm to the Company. First of all, people would know that she was a member of the Company. Then, too, all the patients are mentally ill, extremely unbalanced, always sullen, and there are constant quarrels. Oh! There's nothing like it! I can't describe it to you. Lastly, there's so little social contact that two persons can't even get along together but have to be separated. Each does his or her own thing. She wouldn't be there a month perhaps before getting a hold over someone as unbalanced as herself; right away you'd hear complaints about her made to the Administrators, and that could be very harmful to the Company. Still, we'll have to look at it, but I'm afraid she's incapable of staying happy. If, as has been said, she herself could make up her mind to go off somewhere and live quietly, I think that would be very suitable. Oh well! we won't settle that today.

"Your second proposal is to decide whether to keep little Catherine. What do you think about that, Mademoiselle?"

Mademoiselle said that Catherine was a very good Sister, but that was her only strong point because there was no hope that she could do any work in the house on account of her disability. It's so serious that, when she kneels down, the only way she can get up is by holding on to something. She can barely walk without leaning on people she meets. If we were to keep her, we could make her a school teacher who would always remain in the house. It's almost a necessity to have a Sister who can do nothing but that because, if she's capable of doing something else, she is taken away as soon as there's a need, so the school doesn't fare very well. This Sister could give good example to the Company because she's so docile.

"And what do you have to say about this, Sister? Be very careful, however, about what we mentioned a little while ago, namely, not to be influenced by any human respect or consideration. Don't let
the fact that she’s the sister of one of our Brothers change the way you express your thoughts."

The Sister replied that she judged her suitable only for that. She also felt that her infirmity wouldn’t give reason to fear, but she might also be suitable for the bloodletting done at the house.

The other Sisters said that they didn’t know her well enough to judge what work she could do, but they felt that her frailty didn’t allow her to do anything more strenuous and that what was suggested would be a good idea.

"I really pity the poor child! But I still think it would be better to send her home, for you might assign her to the school and perhaps she couldn’t adapt to it, or she might be able to do it for a while but not for always. She might get tired of it—even discontented—seeing the other Sisters sometimes in one duty, sometimes in another. I think it’s better to follow the Rules, that is, not to burden ourselves with Sisters who aren’t suited to all sorts of ministries. Yes, I think that’s better, not only because of her physical disability but also for the spiritual good of the Sister we just mentioned.

"You have to bear in mind, dear Sisters, how necessary it is for the preservation of your Company that it be composed of persons fully suited to it both in mind and body, so that they can carry out all its works. In the event that contrary dispositions are noted, particularly with regard to their mental state, don’t keep them. ‘What good gardener,’ says the Son of God, ‘never weeds his plot?’ A gardener who often visits his garden takes notice of a plant that’s sturdy and fruitful. He waters it, tends it, takes pleasure in it. On the other hand, when he sees one that doesn’t grow, he uproots it, for it’s useless. It takes up land without yielding a return. The gardener who acts this way is wise and prudent.

"You know also, Sisters, that it takes only one scabby sheep to ruin the entire flock. What would a master say to his shepherd who, by neglecting to remove an infected sheep, allowed it to contaminate a hundred others? That would certainly be a great evil, and the master would be right in being very angry with him.

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6Cf. Mt 7:19. (NAB)
“Now then, Sisters, since Providence has in some measure entrusted the guidance of the Company to you, you’d be very poor shepherdesses if, for want of seeing those whose bad conduct can spread to others, you allowed an entire Company to fall into ruin. Oh! May God preserve you from that!

“Now it’s a question of seeing whom we’ll place at Saint-Paul. What do you think, Mademoiselle? Whom do you have in mind?”

Mademoiselle said that a very competent person—something not common to everyone—was needed there. For that reason, it would be well for Sister Anne\(^7\) to tell us something about what has to be done there, so we can judge better.

“Well, Sister Anne,” said M. Vincent, “tell us a little about what goes on there.”

Sister stated, first of all, that the Charity was not organized as it was in other parishes; there was no assured income, and every month the Sister had to collect money from the Ladies, do all the buying, make the soup for the sick at home, give an account at the end of the month, and prepare the medicines. Also, since there are some Ladies who send for them, they must be accommodated because, if they are refused, it is to be feared that they might give nothing to the Charity. In addition, many poor persons who aren’t on the list had been coming to ask for some remedy or for other things, but the Pastor\(^8\) has absolutely forbidden that anything be given to those people because there would be too many of them, and they aren’t registered with the Charity. The Sister has to be very efficient in preparing medicines and doing bloodletting because the physician comes to the house and observes part of what goes on.

“Sister, draw up in writing the procedure she’ll have to observe and have it signed by the Pastor. Have a clean copy made and posted in a place where it can be read. Well, Mademoiselle, who do you think will be suitable for that place?”

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\(^7\)A parish in Paris, where the Daughters of Charity had served since the foundation of the Company.

\(^8\)Anne Hardemont (cf. VIII, 493, n. 2).

\(^9\)Nicolas Mazure. He was a very zealous Pastor (1633-64), but his zeal was hampered by his jealous, cantankerous disposition.
"I see clearly that a competent, intelligent Sister, who understands the people with whom she's dealing, is needed," Mademoiselle said, and right now she knew of no one else except Sister Guillemin.

"Do you know her, Sister? What do you think?"

The Sister said she didn't know her, and for that reason she had thought of Sister Barbe, but she felt that, since Mademoiselle knew both these Sisters, she had made a good choice of the one who was the more suitable.

To that Mademoiselle replied that Sister Barbe was not strong enough for the heavy work load there.

Sister Anne said she had thought of Sister Élisabeth Martin, who seemed to have all the necessary qualifications and had made up for all the mistakes she had made there. When she was told that she had been assigned elsewhere, she said that the Sister Mademoiselle had proposed was well-qualified.

The next Sister agreed, since she knew her well. And M. Vincent concluded, "Then Sister Guillemin will go in nomine Domini."

"Now we must discuss which Sisters to send to Nantes. Mademoiselle's first suggestion for Sister Servant is Sister Élisabeth of Liancourt, or Sister Barbe, who is now making the visitation at the Foundlings. Sister, which one do you think is more suitable?"

The Sister was in favor of Sister Élisabeth, as were all the others.

"And Sister," said M. Vincent, "in case we can't have Sister Élisabeth, do you think we should send Sister Barbe there?"

All the Sisters said yes.

"And if Sister Barbe can't go, or something comes up to prevent her from going, can you think of anyone else, Sister?"

The Sister Most Honored Father was questioning said she had thought of someone, but the latter was not approved by all.

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10Guillemin Chaeneau, a native of La Touraine (Indre et Loire). She remained at Saint-Paul until 1648, when she went to Saint-Étienne in Arres (Picardy) to aid the people who were sorely tried by the war. She is not mentioned in any document after 1651.

11Barbe Angiboust (cf. VII, 386, n. 1).

12Sister Élisabeth Martin.
“Very well, then,” he concluded, “We’ll stay with Sister Élisabeth and, in case we can’t have her, we’ll take Sister Barbe.”

Next, he had someone read the memo Mademoiselle had given him, which listed Sister Antoinette of Montreuil,13 Sister Catherine Bagard,14 Sister Perrette of Villers,15 Sister Perrette of Sedan,16 Sister Marguerite Noret,17 and Marthe of Saint-Jacques.18 None of the Sisters had anything to say about Mademoiselle’s choice but found it excellent.

The next proposal concerned postulants to be accepted into the Company, including one who was asking to go to say good-bye to her parents. Mademoiselle said that this could be a test for her, but Most Honored Father said it was better to hold to the maxim of the Son of God, who didn’t advise it;19 whereupon, it was decided to tell her not to go.

The next item proposed was whether or not to have a parlor. Mademoiselle stated that she considered a parlor very necessary to keep all sorts of persons from coming into the house, and so that people who might come to see one Sister wouldn’t see all the others or observe what goes on within the Community, and even to prevent outsiders from entering the house.

M. Vincent asked whether Mademoiselle intended to put in a grille. She said that it would be as His Charity20 thought appropri-
ate. "The question, Sisters," he replied, "is to know whether it's advisable for you to have a parlor, and, for the reasons cited by Made­moiselle, it would seem very necessary. On the other hand, it is to be feared—particularly if there were a grille—that, with the passage of time, the Company might develop into a religious Order. There might be some Sisters in the Company itching for this, who would use this innovation as a pretext to upset the whole order God wants to be maintained in the Company. It could be an attraction for Sisters in the parishes, who might prefer this house because of that practice, thinking there would be greater regularity here than elsewhere. Moreover, even persons outside the Community might take the Company for a religious Order if they saw a parlor. So then, Sisters, see whether it's advisable for you to have a parlor."

The first Sister said that, for all the reasons given, she thought it was very necessary, but she didn't think it appropriate to have a grille, also for the reasons that had been given.

The Sisters who followed were of the same opinion, and one added that it would really be advisable to have a companion present.

"First, Sister, we have to see whether we'll have a parlor; then we'll discuss whether a companion should be present. What does M. Alméras have to say about this?"

M. Alméras said that it was good to have a parlor, but it should never have a grille because that would smack of religious life, and it might come to that some day, if anything that could give such an impression were not avoided early on. Then, too, since our Sisters in the parishes are free to converse, it might seem that there was greater recollection here. As for a companion, he didn't feel that was necessary because the Sisters in the parishes most often go about alone. When newcomers would see Sisters conversing only in this way, they might think they were lost when they happened to be alone with men. It would be well to accustom them to this so they won't feel strange on occasions when they have to go somewhere alone. To avoid any danger, however, it would be well to keep the door open at all times so that persons passing by could see in and those in the parlor would act as they should.
Speaking again, M. Vincent continued: "Well, Sisters, I think it's good for you to have a parlor, but it's not expedient to have any grilles. Were people to see that, they'd say: 'The next step is the cloister.' And perhaps with the passage of time some Sister might say, 'We would do much better to become nuns.' The others would hear her, and we don't know what might happen. That's not to be feared right now, but if there's some way to remedy what could happen, it must be done; for, dear Sisters, that would be the exact opposite of what God is asking of you.

"As for a companion, we won't decide that right now; we'll have to think about it. Meanwhile, I ask God Himself to preside at this Council meeting. May He be the soul of it and allow it to deliberate only through Him. May He grant it light, discernment, and strength of will, and, since He has willed that one of the virtues be called counsel, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit, may He grant it to you by the same Holy Spirit."

Sub tuum praesidium...

157. - COUNCIL OF JULY 5, 1646

"The topic for this Council meeting, dear Sisters, is modesty in dress, especially in the headdress. Exterior modesty is like a mirror of everything that's within. By it people judge whether our souls are well-regulated or not, and by it what occupies our minds can be known.

"Assuming this to be the case, Sisters, it's now a question of seeing whether the Sisters in the Company wear their dress and headdress properly, make appropriate use of them, and whether anything is slipping in which they shouldn't be doing. For the Daughter of Charity who is careless and does not wear her headdress the way she should, and is complacent about this, shows that her mind is filled with something other than God because, if she..."
were truly filled with God and had no other desire than to please God, she’d be careful to act in the way God is asking her to behave. On the contrary, if, by concentrating on arranging herself in some fashion that’s inappropriate for her but flatters her, she does this often and even continues to do so, oh! it’s easy to surmise that it is to please someone else, and that would be a serious—a very serious—evil.

“Tell me, Sister, if you know anyone in the Company like this.”

The Sister replied that sometimes certain Sisters let their hair show, but she thought it was because their hairline was naturally low, and that might be the reason why their headdress didn’t fit closely enough to cover it. She was unable to give the exact number of these Sisters.

The following Sister agreed, and the third one added that some Sisters were careless about that.

Mademoiselle added that there was a rather large number of them, and she had even heard that some of them were showing affectation in this.

When Most Honored Father heard that, he said:

“So, the question right now is to see whether it’s advisable to say something to them about it. There seem to be pros and cons for this.

“The reasons in favor are that, since your Company seems to hold a place in the Church of God, only what is modest and well-regulated should be permitted in it. And, as we’ve said, modesty is the indicator that reveals the impulses of the soul. That’s one reason in favor of saying something to Sisters who are careless about this.

“Another reason is that, if they are doing it intentionally and are self-satisfied about it, this should in no way be tolerated.

“A third reason is that seeing Sisters who let their hair show could damage the reputation of the Company. Mon Dieu! What more can we say? For, there’s no vanity more dangerous than that involving hairstyle, since it adorns the face. Ah no! There’s none worse.

“These, then, are the reasons that seem to prompt us to say something to them.
“On the other hand, you said that maybe they don’t think there’s any harm in it, and this could cause them to think so. They might take things the wrong way, become angry, make a fuss, and be put off. For this reason it might seem better to let them continue as they are and not give them any reason to think there’s anything wrong, where perhaps they’re unaware of it.

“Sister, do you think we ought to say something to them?”

The Sister replied that she thought we should, no matter what their reason for doing it: if they were doing it without thinking they wouldn’t take it badly; if they were doing it through affectation, they wouldn’t want this to be apparent and, therefore, would correct themselves.

The others agreed with this.

Then M. Vincent replied, “I praise God with all my heart, Sisters, for the insight He’s giving you, making you realize that this should be rectified. In no way should it be allowed. Oh no! Everyone must be as she should be, and that’s what the Church prescribes. The canons state that a priest may not be allowed to say Mass if his hair isn’t trimmed properly, and the Church even insists that someone do it for him, in spite of him. Well then! God be praised! Let’s go no further. We have to show to whom we belong. So then, it’s well for them to be told about this. How to do it remains to be seen.

“Sister, how do you think we should go about this?”

The Sister replied that she thought it should be done gently, giving them no reason to think we felt they were doing it deliberately, but that we supposed they didn’t have the convenience of a headband to keep their hair in place.

The second Sister said it would be appropriate to tell them informally that they’re not wearing their headdress properly and that we’d be glad to teach them how to do it.

The third Sister agreed with the above.

Mademoiselle added that sometimes they were told what had been said in a conference on that very matter, namely, that they were serpents, and might it not be advisable to repeat this to them. This sounded like a good idea, as also that it might be appropriate for one of the Council members to do it; she could remind them of it
at the right moment because they could have confidence in her. M. Vincent said that this could sometimes be done; nevertheless, as far as possible, reprimands should be reserved to the Superioress.

Mademoiselle also said that another form of immodesty was not having their shirt sleeves fastened, which is the reason why many of them often have too much of their arms showing.

M. Vincent said they should really be careful about this and, when a fault like that came to their attention, a conference should be given on it.

The second proposal was to see whether two of our Sisters should go to visit the sick every afternoon. Most Honored Father made the following suggestion:

"Sisters, we have to see whether it's advisable for two of you to go every afternoon to visit the sick poor of the parish to comfort them. There are some strong reasons urging us to adopt this practice, and others that seem to discourage us from it.

"What would favor our prompting you to do so is the fact that visiting persons who are poor is, in itself, an action very pleasing to God. These visits can be most helpful for the sick, who may often lack instruction. Our Sisters who bring them their medications in the morning can't take much time to stop and talk with them because they have a large number of persons to see. That can even be very useful for us because our Sisters will be formed in visiting the sick and in speaking with them. They will even be able to find out if the Sisters responsible for taking care of them are doing their duty properly.

"Those are four reasons that seem to urge us to adopt this practice, for the glory of God, for the help it gives the neighbor, and for our own interest considered in the same glory of God and the service of the neighbor.

"On the other hand, it may seem inappropriate for Sisters to go to visit and comfort the sick. In addition, the Church itself reserves that to priests, other parishes don't do it and are satisfied with Sisters who serve in the usual way, and the Pastor or his assistants might be displeased and think we were trying to encroach on what is their responsibility. They might say: 'That's taking too many liber-
ties. Isn't it sufficient that Sisters who have to serve the poor bring them their medications in the morning and their meal at dinner time, without others going in the afternoon to cheer them up? They may say that, Sisters, along with other things I’m not aware of. Some of our priests have been designated for that, and I remember that in the beginning we discovered that the Pastor or his assistants had become alarmed by it, with the result that we had to send someone to ask permission to continue.

“Now, Sisters, see whether, for all these reasons, it might be more advisable not to do that. What do you think, Sister?”

The Sister replied that she thought it was fitting for the reasons given, and that two of those that seemed to militate against it could very easily be resolved, namely, the one stating that it isn’t appropriate for women, which can be answered by the fact that it’s our calling; and the other, claiming that other parishes don’t do it, which can be answered by another, namely that our community is established in this parish. She had nothing to say about the orders of the Church and the interests of the Pastor.

M. Vincent said that the Church didn’t order this but neither did it forbid it, and he asked the next Sister what she thought. She replied that, for all the reasons already stated, she felt it was very useful to do it and, since there were always medications to be brought in the afternoon, maybe the Sisters responsible for making the visits could bring them. That way, it wouldn’t look like they were going for some other purpose, and they wouldn’t fail to comfort the sick, would learn how to speak to them, and find out whether the Sisters looking after them satisfied them.

The next Sister added that, so that things wouldn’t appear that way, she felt it advisable not to go every day but only a few times a week.

When M. Vincent asked Mademoiselle what she thought, she said she had envisaged this practice as something very helpful for the patients as well as for the Sisters. She also felt there was no reason why it couldn’t be done every day because in other parishes

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1 Saint-Laurent parish.
there are Ladies who go to visit the sick daily and, since there are no Ladies in this parish, the visits of our Sisters take the place of that. Nevertheless, for the reasons stated, she felt it proper to do it in the way proposed, and thought the suggestion made by a Sister of bringing the medications while visiting the sick was very expedient. She also thought it a good idea for a new Sister always to accompany an older one, and if we changed the Sisters frequently, people wouldn’t notice that there were others than those who were there to look after the poor.

Continuing what he had been saying, Most Honored Father went on: “I praise God, Sisters, and I always have reason to praise Him for the insights He gives you to guide you always to do what’s best. Ah yes! Visiting the sick will be most useful, and it’s very good that the Sisters who visit them bring them the medicines that should be brought them in the afternoon. I’m even more pleased at your moderation in not going every day. That could inconvenience the house, which might not always be able to supply Sisters. Then, too, the patients themselves might be wearied by it. It’s better this way. It’s also quite appropriate that a new Sister go with an older one. The new one will listen and be formed by what the older one says, and will do the same when she’s designated to go with someone newer than she is.”

When M. Vincent asked the opinion of M. Alméras his Assistant, the latter thought all of the above very appropriate and said that, if things were done the way that had been decided, he didn’t think the Pastor or his assistants at the church could take any umbrage; on the contrary, they would have reason to be more satisfied with the help being given to their sick, seeing that someone was being sent in the afternoon to find out if they were satisfied with the Sister who had taken care of them in the morning.

Then Most Honored Father sent for Sister Élisabeth Martin and Sister Henriette from Saint-Germain.² When he had them sit down, he said to the first named, “So, Sister Élisabeth, why have you come?” And she replied: “To do God’s Will.” Delighted with this

²Henriette Gesseau (cf. VII, 247, n. 3).
reply, M. Vincent turned to M. Alméras and said, "Well, Monsieur! What more could you want?" And turning back to her, he said, "Well, Sister! God be praised that you have come to do His Will! An important occasion has arisen, namely, the establishment to be made of your Company to serve in a hospital in one of the well-known towns of the kingdom, and Divine Providence has chosen you to be the Sister Servant." She replied that she was very incapable of this, but our venerable Father went on to say:

"Right now we're trying to see if a Daughter of Charity, who is going to be the Sister Servant of six or seven Sisters in a new establishment in a faraway region, needs one or two Sisters to serve as her Council. There are pros and cons for this.

"One of the reasons in favor of it is that, being far from Paris, she has no one whose advice she can ask about how to act with the poor, her Sisters, and the Administrators. If something unforeseen arises, about which the Sister Servant has no knowledge, she'll be perplexed and not know what to do. Several problems may arise at the same time and she'll be even more perplexed. One head can't suffice for everything. If she has shared things with one or two Sisters, who will confirm her opinion, she'll be more reassured and her mind will be at ease.

"Besides, the Sisters are there to obey the Administrators; there's no need of advice for that. A servant in a household doesn't seek advice as to whether she should do what her master tells her. In addition, when the Sister Servant asks the advice of one or two of her Sisters, she might not find it practical and might act otherwise, for it should be noted that, when the Superioress asks for advice, it's her privilege not to do what has been suggested if she thinks it better to act differently. Should this occur, the Sisters might perhaps be displeased to see that their advice was spurned. Moreover, the other Sisters might be jealous of those belonging to the Council, and that could cause some division. For all these reasons, therefore, it seems that it might be better not to have a Council. What do you think, Sister?"

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3The town of Nantes.
The Sister answered that she thought it advisable to have one for the reasons given, and it was not to be feared that the other Sisters might be jealous of those named to the Council, since they would be well aware that this was the choice of Superiors.

The others said that they felt the same way and that it would give the Sister Servant great peace of mind.

They then discussed whether one Sister would suffice, or if two were needed.

One Sister said that ordinarily one should be enough, and if some business matter came up that required another, the Sister Servant could summon a second one.

The next Sister thought that one was enough because, if there were only six Sisters, and the Sister Servant had to summon two of them, half of the community would belong to the Council.

The other two Sisters agreed with the first one, namely, that ordinarily there should be only one Sister, and two for matters of great importance. Mademoiselle also felt inclined toward this.

When asked his opinion, M. Alméras stated that he thought it would be very good if, for more important matters—which might come up perhaps only once every six months—the Sister Servant would call in a third Sister. This could even be done without the other Sisters realizing that it was in order to ask her advice.

The fifth matter proposed was to decide whether their Council meeting should be held on a fixed day or only when needed.

The first two Sisters questioned stated that they thought the Council meeting should be held when needed and not on a fixed day because sometimes unforeseen business came up that had to be settled promptly.

The next Sister was of the same opinion, adding that if such affairs should arise, finding a solution for them couldn't be put off until a fixed Council day. The last Sister also agreed.

When Mademoiselle was asked for her opinion, she said she felt it would be well to have a fixed day in order to make it more authentic and that they should keep to that order, foreseeing some of the matters that might arise. If something urgent came up, nothing would prevent them from meeting to see what should be done.
Those who saw the Sister Servant and certain Sisters often speaking together might not always think it was for business matters; on the contrary, however, if they knew there was a regular day set aside for that, they would be inclined to give greater credence to it.

When M. Vincent asked M. Alméras for his opinion, he said that, until then, he didn’t see the need to hold Council meetings more often than the occasion required; but after hearing the reasons put forth by Mademoiselle, he thought it advisable to meet every week. If the Sisters had something to say when they came together, they would do so; if not, the Superioress might say: “Sisters, we’re here because it’s our regular day and the Rule calls for it, but I’m not aware of any business for the present, so let us adjourn until next week.”

Then M. Vincent began speaking: “It has been decided, then, that ordinarily there will be only one Sister for the Sister Servant’s Council, or, if she isn’t there, the Sister Servant may call another, who will be named for that purpose. If she has something very important to settle, then she may summon both of them. She can call the third one quietly and ask her: ‘Sister, what do you think of such or such a thing?’ in such a way that the others don’t notice that she’s doing it to ask her advice. And there’s no reason to fear that the others will be jealous; oh no! don’t think our Sisters are so imperfect, or that a difference of opinion will cause division, for God will preside there to see that matters are decided according to His Will.

“But I’m still not convinced that this Council meeting should take place on a fixed day, or whether it should be only when there’s a need. It’s to be feared that an appointed day might seem too much. The Administrators might say: ‘Today is your Council day; what did you decide?’ or something else inappropriate. We won’t settle that; and I’m even taking back what I said recently, that it should be held here every week. Some Communities have it only every two weeks—or even less frequently. We’ll see about that. Also, the term Councillor is a little pretentious; we should do away with it. The usual word is Assistant.”

4A cross here indicates that the passage after the blessing, near the end of the minutes, should be inserted here.
“Oh! God be praised! But what shall we give Sister Élisabeth for her journey? For each of us has to give her a present. Let’s see what virtue we have to give her.”

The first Sister gave her the love of God. The second gave her charity, which consists not only in the love of God, but also that of the neighbor, especially of the poor persons she will have to assist and the Sisters she will have to guide. The third Sister gave her humility, as being very necessary for her. The fourth gave her patience in all the setbacks that may occur. Mademoiselle gave her cordial support for the Sisters. When M. Alméras was asked for his gift, he said he had thought of giving her charity, but seeing that it had been taken, he then chose patience, which had also been taken, but he wished for her in addition a patience that is cheerful and good-humored, content to endure always whatever God willed.

M. Vincent continued: “Those are quite a few treasures, Sister, and I hope you will have them to the full. What I desire most especially for you is the accomplishment of God’s Will, which consists not only in following what Superiors ordain—although, as you have said, that’s a sure way of doing it—but in responding to all the inspirations God sends us. Sister Marie Despinal was very faithful to that, and it’s what I’m going to ask God for you.

“We still have some advice to seek regarding whether or not we should recall to this house a Sister with whom one of the Ladies is dissatisfied.”

When he was told that one of the Sisters knew her, he questioned her. She said she knew that this Sister was very self-willed, so much so that it was impossible to make her change her mind; furthermore, she was somewhat worldly.

When he heard this, M. Vincent said: “Those are reasons for recalling her to this house; however, one contrary reason is that, when the Ladies see that because they have indicated that she doesn’t suit them—for it isn’t because she’s not a good Sister but because not everyone pleases that Lady—if, I say, we withdraw her because of that, they may find an excuse, at the slightest thing they dislike in

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5Sister Marie had died in May 1646.
another Sister, to complain about her and to demand that she be removed. Sister, see if you still think it advisable to recall her under the circumstances."

The Sister who said she knew her answered "yes," and that a stay at the motherhouse would greatly help her to correct her bad disposition, for she wouldn't be so free to annoy people there as she would be with only one other Sister.

The next Sister said that, for all those reasons, it would be very advisable for her to return to the motherhouse, and that if it wasn't done too quickly—and since the Lady didn't say it openly—the latter couldn't claim that the Sister was recalled because of her.

The other Sisters concurred with this. Mademoiselle said it could be handled so discreetly that the Lady in question would notice nothing.

Most Honored Father thought that was excellent. He wanted to propose someone to replace the Sister, but seeing that it was too late, he said: "Oh well! Mademoiselle, you'll find someone."

Then he knelt, said the Sub tuum praesidium, and added: "Sisters, I ask Jesus Christ to be Himself the thanks offered to His Father for all the graces He bestows on your Company. May He be pleased to continue giving us the grace to know and to accomplish His Holy Will. Benedictio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi..."

I had forgotten to put in its proper place the discussion concerning a confessor for our Sisters in Nantes. M. Vincent stated that a priest of excellent reputation, formerly the Lieutenant-General in Nantes, who had become a priest not for any benefice but solely out of devotion, had offered to serve our Sisters in any way possible.

"So, Sisters," he said, "see whether this priest should be the regular confessor, or whether the Sisters should ordinarily go to another, and only occasionally to the priest I mentioned. He’s a very upright man, a man of prayer, and very interested in your Company."

All the Sisters agreed that, if this priest was willing to go to that trouble, such an arrangement would be very advantageous to our Sisters.

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6Couperie des Jonchères, who was the confessor of the Visitandines, also became the confessor and advisor of the Daughters of Charity in Nantes.
Mademoiselle proposed that, while accepting this, it would be well for our Sisters to go to an extraordinary confessor sometimes during the year. Most Honored Father said that this was necessary and was permitted four times a year to religious by the Council of Trent.\

I had also forgotten to state at the beginning of this discussion that when M. Vincent saw Mademoiselle stand to address him, and all the Sisters with her, he said: “Excellent! and I think it’s also a good idea, when the Sister Servant rises, for all the others to stand as well.”

158. - COUNCIL OF OCTOBER 25, 1646

After Most Honored Father had invoked the Holy Spirit as usual by the *Veni Sancte*, he asked what matters were to be considered. Thereupon Mademoiselle said that a young woman from Angers had been in the Company about a year, and during that time, had been a great example to all our Sisters, assiduous in observing all the Rules, and faithful to all the customs. She didn’t hesitate to do the most menial tasks, and waited upon the sick with exceptional kindness; above all, she was most prayerful, to the point that some said she was too withdrawn. She had left the Company in consequence of a serious illness that had affected her mind; and when she continued to imagine things, she herself asked to withdraw. The Company took her at her word, fearing that this might continue.

No sooner had she returned home than she regretted leaving and expressed a strong desire to come back. She shared this with Abbé de Vaux, who looks after our Sisters in Angers, and he wrote us

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1Marie Gonain had come from Angers with Élisabeth Turgis in September 1644 to begin her postulancy. In September 1645, she was suffering from depression and returned home to Ingrandes, situated between Angers and Nantes. By 1646, when her health had improved, she requested and was granted readmittance to the Community.

2Guy Lasnier, Abbé de Vaux (cf. VII, 493, n. 3).
several times on her behalf. Even during her visits to Paris, she always expressed a desire to be readmitted. No matter how often she was refused, she still persevered in that hope. Ultimately, Mademoiselle said that, when she was passing through Angers this good young woman came to see her again with her very great desire. Since leaving the Company, she had had several opportunities to become a nun, to which she paid no attention but always continued to work in the service of the poor, going of her own accord to the hospital at the times she knew they were cared for; and she earnestly asked to be readmitted into the Company, either at the Paris Motherhouse or in the Nantes or Angers hospitals. She’d bring her own property, be an extra Sister at no expense to anyone, doing her duties like all the others, as far as her health would allow.

Turning to Most Honored Father, Mademoiselle added that she had promised her in Angers that she would explain her plan to His Charity to see what could be done for her. In reply Most Honored Father said, “This is a case, Sisters, in which there are reasons for accepting her into the hospitals in her own region and other reasons that suggest she shouldn’t be accepted at all.

“The reasons that favor receiving her are that charity seems to require it. She ardently desires to return, and to refuse her would seem to be contrary to charity. A further reason is that she didn’t leave of her own accord or because of distaste for her vocation or its works, but because of illness—an illness that deprived her of freedom of judgment. Another motive is that she soon repented of having left, as is clear from what she told Abbé de Vaux about her wish to return, in which she has persevered ever since. There’s also the good example she has given the Company. Now, for all those reasons, it would seem that she should be readmitted here.

“The motives for receiving her for Angers or Nantes are almost the same as for here; there’s the motive of charity, which we should practice everywhere. Moreover, it seems that, should she fall ill again, if she’s living in her native area it will be easier to place her in the care of her relatives, who will be close by, than to send her away from here, which would also cause her considerable expense. Besides, being located in her own region, she’d be able to go during the
day to the hospital to serve the poor and return home in the evening. So, for all those reasons, I think it more advisable to accept her in Angers or Nantes, and not in Paris.

“As for not readmitting her at all, it’s likely that, being unable to stay the first time, she’ll do nothing a second time. Experience teaches us that, of all those who leave and then return, not a single one stays. I have seen many leave us and many return, who have made all sorts of appeals and expressed marvelous desires, but couldn’t remain after all that. That’s because they don’t have a vocation and aren’t prepared to do what’s required; they don’t know how to be submissive and are prone to anxiety. Because of that, they can’t stay any more than they did the first time. So for that reason we should consider ourselves fortunate not to have this young woman any longer. If she does have this desire, perhaps God is giving it to her to perfect her through the work she’s doing. Consequently, it would seem better for her to remain in her own region, going to serve the poor by day and returning to her home in the evening. We have a Rule that forbids associating any outsider to the Company. Therefore, to avoid complications, it would seem best not to take her back at all. What do you think, Sister?”

The first Sister felt that she shouldn’t be readmitted. The second was in favor of accepting her in Angers. The third, fourth, and fifth were of the opinion that she should be taken back because of the good example she’d give in the house; added to that, since she’d bring her own property, she wouldn’t be a burden. It seemed more advisable to admit her in Paris than elsewhere, because, should her illness recur, she might create problems for our Sisters; also, being a little anxious by nature, she could get sufficient advice to recover.

Most Honored Father asked his Assistant what he thought. “Monsieur,” he replied, “while you were speaking, I recalled what M. . . . told me lately about a Dominican who was in a convent in a city belonging to the Sultan. One day, he became intoxicated after drinking too much wine. No longer rational, he said he wanted to

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3Lambert aux Couteaux, who had been named Assistant of the Congregation of the Mission in July 1645. He replaced Antoine Portail, who was making visitations.
become a Turk.4 The persons with him made him repeat that several times; seeing that he persisted, they took him to the Governor, to whom he reiterated what he had said to the others. The Governor reminded him that he was a monk, but he said it was all the same—he was renouncing his faith and wanted to become a Turk. They removed his habit at once and clothed him in Turkish attire and a turban. The next day, when the effects of his wine had passed and he came to his senses, seeing himself amid the Turks and dressed like them, he was quite astonished and began to ask 'Where am I?' 'Don't you realize that you’re a Turk?' they replied. ‘Me?’ he said, ‘God forbid! I’d rather die a hundred times!’ They reminded him of all he had said and done. He remembered nothing, but kept saying that he was a Christian and a monk. The Governor explained the tortures for this and gave him two days to reflect. At the end of that time, he continued to proclaim himself a Christian and a monk, and died confessing this. Two or three years ago, the Greeks ransomed his body, paying two hundred écus for it.

“Now, Monsieur, that thought came to me while you were speaking about that good young woman, considering that, when she asked to leave, her judgment was impaired, and, since she has always persevered in asking to return, it’s to be believed that she didn’t go of her own free will; accordingly, she shouldn’t be refused readmission. That’s why, Monsieur, in my opinion she should be granted it, and in Paris rather than elsewhere, for the reasons given.”

After that, M. Vincent asked Mademoiselle for her opinion. She replied, “I had thought, Father, that it would have been more advisable to accept her for the hospitals in her own region, but, for the reasons that have been stated, I think it more suitable to receive her here—not that it’s to be feared she might return to her family in her bouts of illness because she doesn’t do that even now, but only because, if she should get sick, it might inconvenience our Sisters. Here, we can keep her busy, sometimes in one village, sometimes in another. I don’t recall her anxiety being so great as to cause a prob-

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4The term “Turk” is used here to mean a member of the Muslim religion.
lem, apart from her illness. Sometimes she was a little distracted, and I think that was caused by being too intense at prayer, but they say that's over now. That came about because of a priest who was directing her, who aimed at a very lofty kind of spirituality, making everyone under his guidance do the same, but it was too much for the mind of this good young woman. I was informed that she has given up all that and has since become quite moderate, so much so that, with God's help, I hope her example will edify the Company and she'll do good here."

After that, Most Honored Father said: "I would have sided with our Sisters who felt she shouldn't be allowed to return. Since, however, the majority agrees that she should come back, I willingly accede, asking God to bless the resolution adopted and to give this good young woman all the graces she needs. Let's move to another matter now, please."

Mademoiselle then said that one of the Sisters assigned to nurse the galley convicts had to be changed because those two Sisters with very different temperaments don't get along. "But," she said, "because one of them has to know how to write, I think we'll have to leave Sister Nicole, the present Sister Servant, there. She has been in the Company only eight months and has been at this house only a very short time. She was with the foundlings, where she did well enough, but, since she was put in charge, she has become authoritarian and follows only her own ideas. That's why I thought we could put Sister Marguerite Guyon there to watch her, see how she controls herself, and teach her how to be submissive because Sister Marguerite seems to have sufficient intelligence and leadership to do all that discreetly."

Whereupon Most Honored Father said, "There are two aspects of this matter to be considered: one, whether a change is necessary;
and two, whether Sister Marguerite Guyon is the person we need for that place. Has she been Sister Servant elsewhere?"

It was answered that she had, and had done very well. "Well, Sister," said M. Vincent, "how do you feel about that?"

A Sister replied that she thoroughly approved; so did another Sister, but said it was to be feared that the Sister who had formerly been Sister Servant might be unwilling to submit. Another stated that any of us unwilling to submit wouldn't be a true Daughter of Charity; for that reason it would be good—since she was of such a disposition—to place someone over her to try to keep her in check, and she felt that the Sister proposed was the one to do it.

The others agreed, as did Most Honored Father's Assistant and Mademoiselle, so the matter was settled as follows: "I thank God, Sisters, to see that you're unanimous in following common sense, for it makes sense to separate those two Sisters. The problem that may arise is that the Sister may not be able to submit and may be indiscreet. Let's try it, however, with the option of changing her if it becomes obvious that it's necessary. What else is there, Mademoiselle?"

"Father," said Mademoiselle, "the next matter we have to look at is that there is in this house a Sister from Touraine, a woman of good background, whose parents are said to be wealthy. She came to the Company after some reflection, but without really knowing what it was. She seemed to have some repugnance from the beginning, when there was question of taking the habit, and since that time has still continued to disdain our manner of living here in this house. Since, however, she's good-hearted and well-bred, she doesn't reveal all her sentiments. Nevertheless, when she's with someone with whom she feels free, she makes it rather clear that she's dissatisfied. When I left for Brittany, I offered to take her back home, telling her she could be safe returning with me and that if she had no intention of working in earnest she should go. She had been sick before that, had a relapse afterward, and has been ill ever since.

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7Marguerite de Turenne, from the environs of Saché, a commune of Indre-et-Loire, entered the Daughters of Charity in February 1641 and received the habit on Pentecost of the same year. Her behavior necessitated her dismissal in October 1646.
She's very difficult about food, and we can hardly get her to eat anything. She doesn't get involved in anything except a little sewing. Furthermore, we don't know what to do with her. We tried her in school, but she did nothing there. We had her with the foundlings for a while, and I was thinking about reassigning her there, but the Sisters begged me not to send her back to them. So, Father, I'm bringing her up to see if you think we should send her home.

"There's another reason that seems to be an obstacle to this. Her parents are influential and will cause an uproar about it. There's also M. de Mondion, the Pastor in Saché, who is very devoted to us; he's the one who sent her to us, and I'm afraid of offending him."

Thereupon M. Vincent said, "You must consider, Sisters, that this is a woman who shows no sign of a vocation. Perhaps she wouldn't have delayed so long to return home if she didn't fear her parents, who most likely were delighted to get her off their hands. If she doesn't make it obvious that she's completely dissatisfied, she still lets it be seen that she's not happy here and doesn't enjoy being among you. I, for one, can tell you that, from what I know of her temperament, she must have made her parents very happy not to have her with them. Living as she does, I don't think she'll ever do anything with us, but she will be able to do something and work out her salvation in the world.

"Counter to that suggestion is what Mademoiselle has stated. Her parents will consider it an insult to have her sent back to them, and M. de Mondion could become angry, because he was the one who recommended her. His displeasure may even make him less willing to get involved on other occasions that may present themselves. That's why you have to weigh these two things: first, that this young woman seems to have no vocation; and second, that her parents and M. de Mondion could be displeased. What do you think, Sister?"

The Sister replied that it seemed to her that, if the young woman had no vocation and was neither able—nor seemed to be will-

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8Jacques de Mondion, the Pastor in Saché, sent many young women of the region to be Daughters of Charity.
ing—to render any service to the Company, we shouldn’t be concerned about their displeasure but should dismiss her. All the other Sisters agreed, suggesting only that, because her parents might say we had made her ill, it would be a good idea to have them informed that she was ill, and perhaps they themselves might ask to have her back.

Most Honored Father’s Assistant and Mademoiselle agreed to her dismissal. Then Most Honored Father said, “I thank God, Sisters, that all of you have reached the same conclusion, and that’s how it should be. I thank Him again because you disregard human respect when there’s question of the glory of God and the good of the Company. O Sisters! you mustn’t have any, either. Let us always look to God and never to what people will say, when the interests of God are at stake. So then, Mademoiselle, I think you should send her home as soon as possible. Don’t keep her longer. Oh, no! the sooner, the better.”

When Mademoiselle asked M. Vincent how to go about this, he continued, “Write to her parents and to the Pastor of Saché, who sent her to you, and don’t wait for a reply. Inform them that you’re sending her back in four or five days, and be sure to have her leave. To the mother, say that she’s ill; and to the Pastor, explain the entire affair.”

When someone objected that, if her departure was to take place so swiftly it would have to be at our expense because she had brought nothing to this house, he said we should prefer paying the costs to keeping her any longer. Then he asked if there was any other business.

Mademoiselle stated that there was a young woman in Angers helping the sick under the direction of the Ladies of Charity recently established. She had a great desire to give herself to God in the Company; she was strong and skillful, had a good mind, and was promising, but was subject to an illness that was a type of epilepsy; however, her attacks were neither frequent nor severe.

“You must understand,” said Most Honored Father, “that this is a troublesome illness that may really cause inconvenience and even get worse with age. It’s an irregularity for the reception of Holy Or-
ders, so an epileptic can be ordained only with a dispensation. Since this is a young woman, however, the matter may not be so serious. I do know that a well-regulated Community wouldn’t accept her. That’s why I don’t think we should accept her either.

“So much for reasons. We might add that, being already involved in doing something she does well, it would seem better to leave her there because the most common temptation for those who are doing some good in the world is the thought that what they left behind was more worthwhile than what they have undertaken, and that often causes them to leave.

“On the positive side, she’s a sensible young woman, with good judgment, strength, and skill—qualities very necessary for a Daughter of Charity. Weighed against them, her ailment doesn’t seem so great. What do you think, Sister?”

The Sister said that she didn’t think we should burden ourselves with such illnesses. Another added that we recently had the experience of one Sister who didn’t succeed because she thought she was doing better on her own. The others were of the same opinion.

Most Honored Father’s Assistant said he didn’t feel that the malady had to be an impediment to anything, but, since the young woman was doing well where she was, he thought it a good idea to leave her there, for fear that she wouldn’t do the same here.

“And what does Mlle. Le Gras have to say?”

“Father,” she replied, “I don’t think the illness is an impediment; but, for the other reason given, I think it more advisable to leave her there a while longer because, since she’s now involved in the service of the poor but sees that she might not be able to do the same here, that might put her off. Besides, she has the applause of everyone, and she’d see that she wouldn’t be getting any special attention. If God wants her, He’ll cause her to persevere in her desire and will strengthen her with time. That’s why I think it’s a good idea, Father, to leave her where she is.”

In reply, Most Honored Father said, “I’m really consoled, and there’s great reason to hope and believe that God has presided at this little Council meeting because He has given you a similar way of thinking in deciding what is most reasonable. Well then! we’ll
leave it at that for the present, asking God to be pleased to bless this Council more and more. Counsel is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Pray for it, and never give your opinion before you have turned to God. When a matter is proposed, raise your mind to God to ask what He wants you to do and say. Oh! let’s all ask this of Him together and thank Him.

Sub tuum praesidium...

159. - COUNCIL OF JUNE 19, 1647

After having invoked the assistance of the Holy Spirit by the Veni Sancte, M. Vincent said: “We have many matters to consider at this meeting, Sisters; for that reason, I have decided to speak to you about the importance of holding the Council meeting in the way necessary to profit from it.

“Since these are important matters, it’s advisable to get more than one opinion. There’s less risk of error with several, and God gives a special blessing to advice taken for matters related to His service. That’s why, Sisters, to teach you how to discuss business, I’ll tell you that, when matters are proposed, before everything else consider the purpose, which must be the glory of God; after that, the interest of the Company; and lastly, the welfare and advantage of the persons with whom one has to deal. As regards the purpose, for example, take Sister Anne,¹ who’s preparing to go to Montreuil. To understand this clearly, look at what she’s going to do there. She’s going to open a new establishment for the assistance of the bashful poor of the town and to raise the orphans. It’s obvious why she’s going there. So much for the purpose.

“To find suitable means for implementing this plan, look to God: if this is done, will God be glorified by it? Will it be beneficial to the Community, and will the neighbor be helped by it? Then we have

¹Anne Hardemont.
Sister Jeanne² who is going off to visit our Sisters in Nantes and Angers to observe each one’s dispositions. Above all else, look to God’s interest. Many Communities consider only the interest of the Community, for it’s so great that it encompasses the interest of God. As for me, however, I think the latter certainly merits being viewed before any other, Sisters. From that starting point I think the rest can be more clearly known. Now, doesn’t it seem to you that this is the first thing to consider when we come to Council? What do you think, Sister?”

Questioned one after the other, all the Sisters replied “yes.” Mademoiselle added that there could be another fault, which would be to focus too much on oneself and one’s interests.

“O mon Dieu! yes,” responded Most Honored Father, “I almost forgot to say that, and it’s so important. Alas! we’d spoil everything if we paid too much attention to that. Sometimes, when my opinion is asked, I feel the stirrings of this self-interest, but I turn to God immediately. Wouldn’t He be offended by that? Does His glory allow it? In this way I come around to reason. It’s natural to consider ourselves, Sisters, but we have to turn immediately back to God.

“We have to beware of something else—not that I see it among us, by God’s mercy, but since we’re speaking of considering ourselves, this remark is appropriate.”

Here Mademoiselle said, “What I mentioned about self-interest, Father, comes from my own experience of the faults I have committed several times in that area, for which I most humbly ask your pardon.”

Most Honored Father had her stop there, saying, “Alas! how many times a day I, too, do the same!” And he went on: “So, Sisters, this is the fault into which we can fall if we look at ourselves too much: wanting our opinions to be followed; and, if someone else has a contrary view, wanting to have the upper hand because we know a little better how to uphold our own opinion. Oh, Sisters! To want to be thought clever because we know how to give reasons to support our opinions is an ill-regulated love of our own esteem, of

²Jeanne Lepeintre (cf. VIII, 502, n. 1).
which we must beware more than of anything else. Well, God be praised! I hope that He in His boundless kindness will grant us the grace for this.

"Now we have two matters to discuss: the journeys of Sister Anne and Sister Jeanne. I think we should begin with Sister Anne. Mademoiselle, have you thought about whom you'll give her as a companion?"

After Mademoiselle replied that the Sister who had been suggested was the one she felt most suitable, he continued: "Do you have any guidelines for journeys?"

Mademoiselle said that it was our custom to pay our respects to the Blessed Sacrament in the churches of the places where we stopped and to visit the sick, if there were any; to instruct along the way children or poor persons, taking with us for that purpose rosaries, holy pictures, and catechisms. When we had to stay at inns, we never ate at the general table but went to our own room.

"That's very good," said Most Honored Father. "In the past I was amazed at how the Jesuits never take a trip without having in writing all they're supposed to do, and it's even in their Rules. Since then, however, experience has taught me that this is extremely necessary, for a person can't fail if he observes his regulations.

"So, here we have Sister Jeanne, who is leaving for Nantes, going to a house she has never seen, and among people she doesn't know. Won't she be very pleased to have in writing the orders she's supposed to follow? Someone may say that those are business matters, and when dealing with an intelligent person, it's enough to tell him or her; but, believe me, Sisters, having it in writing is the surest way.

"So then, we have Sister Anne on her way, too. What will she do when she arrives? First of all, what route will she follow? There's the Calais coach and the one that goes to Abbeville; one passes

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3Marie Lullen, born into a comfortable family in Le Mans, served the foundlings in Nanterre before being sent to Montreuil in June 1647. After her death at the end of 1650, a conference was held on her virtues (cf. vol IX, no. 46).

4Various letters from the beginning of 1647 indicate that many conflicts beset this community. Jeanne Lepeintre remained there as Sister Servant.
through Montreuil and the other doesn't go that far. Don't you think she should take the one that goes there? I think it would be better.”

Since everyone agreed, he continued, “When she gets there, will it be better for her to stop at an inn and send someone to inform the Comte that the Sisters are there, or shall they go directly to the château to meet with him? If they were nuns, they would have to send a servant, but since these are Sisters who come and go in the world, I think it's better for them to go there themselves. The other way would be putting on too many airs for Daughters of Charity; don't you think so, Mademoiselle?”

Mademoiselle and the Sisters replied that it would be better for them to go to him.

“So then, now we have to see who will be responsible for the bashful poor, and who will take care of the poor children. What do you think, Mademoiselle?”

Mademoiselle said that, since Sister Anne had a great deal of experience in serving the sick, she thought it better for her to be the one to care for the bashful poor; and since Sister Marie Lullen knew how to work with children who were in the hospital, she would do well with them. They could, however, help one another, so that, when a need arises, one won’t say to the other, “That’s not my business.”

At that, Most Honored Father said: “For a long time I have been hoping—and I really do wish—that our Sisters would reach such a degree of respect among themselves that persons outside the Community would never know which one is the Sister Servant; for, Sisters, since God is but One in Himself, and in God there are three Persons, without the Father being greater than the Son or the Son being greater than the Holy Spirit, it should be the same for Daughters of Charity. They should be the image of the Most Holy Trinity; and even though they are several, they should form but one heart and one mind. Among the three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, even though their operations are diverse and attributed to each one in particular, they are related to one another, without im-

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5Charles de Lannoy, who died in 1649.
6Cf. Jn 10:30; 14:10; 14:20. (NAB)
7Cf. Jn 17:21. (NAB)
plying that to attribute wisdom to the Son and goodness to the Holy Spirit deprives the Father of these two attributes, or that the Third Person lacks the power of the Father or the wisdom of the Son. In like manner, among the Daughters of Charity the Sister who is with those who are poor must be in close contact with the Sister who looks after the children, and vice-versa. Furthermore, I wish that, in this respect, our Sisters might conform themselves to the Most Holy Trinity so that, as the Father gives Himself entirely to the Son, and the Son entirely to the Father, from whom proceeds the Holy Spirit, likewise the Sisters might be totally one for the other to produce the works of charity attributed to the Holy Spirit, in order to have a kins­ship with the Most Holy Trinity. For Sisters, you can see that the person who says charity says God. You are Daughters of Charity; therefore, as far as possible, you should conform yourselves to the image of God. This is the goal of all Communities that aspire to per­fection.

"And what is there in God? There is equality of persons and unity of essence. And what does that teach you, except that all of you, such as you are, must become one and equal. If there has to be a Superior—a Sister Servant—then she should be an example of virtue and humility to others: the first at every task, the first to throw herself at the feet of her Sister, the first to ask forgiveness, the first to set aside her own opinion to follow that of another. That's what the saints did; that's the advice they gave to those aspiring to their Order; and that's what must be done by everyone who wants to lead a life of perfection. For what the Bishop of Geneva8 said about Peter and John, he said of all other Communities; and what he taught Peter and John, you should do. Oh! may God in His goodness be pleased to make it so. Don't you think that would be well, Mademoiselle?"

Mademoiselle answered that she certainly desired it.

"Then please receive Communion tomorrow for that intention—and you, too, Sisters—asking God to give this Spirit to the entire Company."

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8Saint Francis de Sales.
They all showed that they desired this.

“Well, that’s enough for today. I didn’t expect to dwell on that topic, but for a long time I’ve felt impelled to say these important things to you. So then, God be praised! I’ll say good evening to you. The other matters can wait until tomorrow. We’ll be seeing one another again.”

“Sub tuum praesidium...”

160. - COUNCIL OF JUNE 20, 1647

“Yesterday¹ we spoke about Sister Anne’s journey, the route she should follow, her conduct on the way, what she’ll have to do concerning the Count on her arrival, and even how she should act with her Sister.”

Thereupon Mademoiselle said, “Father, I think we need to discuss how our Sisters should act with regard to the Count because, since he doesn’t have important business there and is fond of this establishment, he’ll be with the Sisters quite often.”

“Sister Anne,” said Most Honored Father, “should consider the Count as a Lord whom God has established there to govern in His place and who has full authority; moreover, he is one of the finest men of his rank; that’s obvious from his zeal in establishing this work. So, Sister owes him respect as a great Lord, obedience as a Governor, and every kind of submission as a benefactor. He must be considered in God and God in him, with all possible respect, honor, esteem, and deference.”

“But, Father,” said Mademoiselle, “one thing may happen: since the Count is so extremely frank and open that he would share his thoughts with a child, he’ll easily voice his opinion to our Sisters. And since that may seem like a sign of trust, we easily allow ourselves to speak freely, and without considering the difference be-

¹Council meeting of June 19 (cf. Doc. 159).
between their station and ours, we sometimes fail in respect by taking too many liberties with them.”

“Oh!” said M. Vincent, “that’s a very good point and really needed to be said, for the Count is the best man alive. If he sees that you’re the least bit interested, he’ll unburden his heart and tell you everything. Your duty is to listen with respect and always keep him apprised of what’s going on in your establishment. Never, however, complain about your Sister. Always let him see that there’s a good understanding between you, for he’s very astute. No sooner would you say something about your Sister than he would want to speak with her. The result would be that, by talking with her, he would oblige her to talk, for that’s what happens when we tell our business to persons outside the Community. Then he would be put off, would complain here and there to others—to M. D. L, and M. . . . , and to people to whom he spoke about his project. He would say freely: ‘those Sisters aren’t what I thought they were; the Spirit of God isn’t there; they don’t get along; there’s no union between them.’ Oh! he would say that openly.

“So watch out for that, Sister; never complain to him about your Sister, speak only well of her to him and never otherwise. I can’t sufficiently recommend to you respect and discretion with regard to him. He’ll visit you often, perhaps, and Mademoiselle had very good reason to raise this issue. If you please him, he’ll sing your praises; if you don’t, he’ll tell you so frankly and complain about it. So, Sister, be very careful to satisfy and edify him, and respect what he tells you to do, as if it were God Himself speaking.

“I recall that, when I became part of the household of the General of the Galleys,² I took the resolution to look upon him as if he were God, and his wife as the Blessed Virgin, and to do everything they directed as coming from God and the Blessed Virgin, and I can say that, if I had any success there, I attribute it to the intention I had on entering their service. Likewise, Sister, if you consider God in the person of Comte de la Noie, God Himself will bless your way of acting, and you’ll succeed in it.”

²In 1613 Saint Vincent had undertaken the education of the sons of Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi and his wife, Françoise-Marguerite de Silly.
"Very well, Father," said Mademoiselle, "and what about the sick? If he wants to change something in the system observed there, shall the Sisters follow his wishes, as for example, to distribute more food, or to hand out money instead of food, or something else? Do you think it advisable for them to take Regulations for the Charity with them?"

"Of course they may take them, and if he asks for them, they can simply say to him, 'Monsieur, this is what is done elsewhere.' And if he wants them to act differently, they'll do so."

"Father, what shall they do at present at the hospital? I don't know whether it's the Count's plan for them to go into it right now. He told me he had a room prepared for them, but he didn't say where. I think it's somewhere else, perhaps, because he doesn't want it to be apparent that that's why they're going there; nevertheless, I think he's planning for them to train the young women."

"They have two—even three—things to set as their goal," said Most Honored Father. "First, they must reflect that they're going to a place to which they are called, and where it's likely that God will be glorified by this; after that, they'll either be set to work in the hospital or they won't. If they aren't, fine! they'll be happy to be placed elsewhere; if they are, in the beginning it will be only to train the young women, following the way it's done here. Be very careful, however, not to let it appear that you're so much as thinking about the hospital, but be very reserved, give good example, and don't interfere with anything. There are some young women there now for the care of the children. If you're there, and they remain to work under you, as the Count claims, treat them with great kindness and cordiality and put up with everything; oh yes, Sisters! put up with everything because they've been there for some time, perhaps, and had hoped to remain there. It looks as if it may be a disgrace for them or for their families if they were to leave, or if someone else came in to reform them. That's very important, Sister. You have to empathize with them and realize that, if they're not chagrined by it, they're at least distressed. That's why you have to tolerate every-

---Servants, with a laywoman as supervisor, had been caring for the sick and the children in the Montreuil-sur-Mer Hospital."
thing that resentment and sorrow may cause them to say or do against you. No matter where we go, there’s always a bitter cup to drink, and we have to be resigned to that.

“When we were in a place to which some religious had called us,\(^4\), we were determined to put up with any annoyances that might come to us from them—and we had plenty. All that is past now, thank God—or at least there are very few misunderstandings—but five or six years had to pass, with many contradictions. The Superior of the religious\(^5\) regretted his decision. If he met someone in the city who said to him, ‘What were you thinking about? You’ve done harm to religious life,’ that was enough. If, when he returned from town, the porter didn’t open the gate fast enough, that was all he needed. If someone in town remarked: ‘I went to see you.’ Oh! what a disaster! And what had to be done? Alas, Sisters! I had to go throw myself at his feet, ask pardon for everyone who had displeased him, and take the blame once again. He would calm down, and then, on another occasion, it would begin all over again. I think he saw me at his feet over fifty times. But wasn’t that necessary? Fair enough! They’re the ones who assured our livelihood. A little suffering was a cheap price to pay for it.

“Now then, Sister, what I especially recommend to you in regard to those good young women is to humble and abase yourself; and, if they accuse you of any fault, admit it and ask their pardon. Nothing wins hearts as that does. Recently that good man told M. Lucas\(^6\): ‘Sometimes I had regrets, but that poor man used to come and kneel before me, and that won my heart.’ So, Sister, humble yourself with regard to the Count, too; for, if you don’t, he’ll see it very clearly and won’t hide it from you.”

“Father,” said Mademoiselle, “as for the system followed in the hospital, I think it’s almost like what is done at the Foundlings. If it’s not the same, shall they change something?”

“Don’t change what is good,” said our good Father. “No matter where I go, my maxim is to change nothing that isn’t bad to adapt it

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\(^4\)Saint-Lazare, of which Saint Vincent had taken possession on January 8, 1632.

\(^5\)Adrien Le Bon, former Prior of Saint-Lazare.

\(^6\)Antoine Lucas, Superior in Le Mans (1647-51).
to my own style. I much prefer to adapt myself to it because I think, 'Who am I to want to order and change things? The people who did them had their reasons for doing them that way, and they sought advice; and should I upset everything by doing things my way? Oh! I much prefer to adapt myself to them.' I say the same to you, Sister; try gently to remedy what you consider bad and prejudicial to the glory of God or the salvation of the neighbor; but, as far as possible, don't touch what isn't bad.'

At that the Sister to whom he was speaking said, 'Father, the Count told me to observe what was going on in the hospital and see how it was administered so I could report back to him, but that upsets me because I really don't want to be a talebearer.'

"Sister," said Most Honored Father, "the things that happen there are either good, bad, or indifferent. If they're good, don't be afraid to say so; if bad, tell the truth about them but be very careful not to be mistaken, and be really certain before mentioning them; and report things as gently as possible. If they're indifferent, don't say anything at all, or, if you're asked about them, if the Count wants to be informed and you have knowledge about them, tell them as they are, without adding anything. We must always consider God, Sister, and never ourselves. If God wants you to stay there, He'll be well able to provide the means without your seeking them; if He doesn't want you there, then you mustn't want it either.

"Is there anything else to discuss?"

Mademoiselle proposed the question of the Sisters' confessor, saying that there was a priest at the hospital who had charge of the boys, and she felt that the Sisters shouldn't go to him for confession because of the possible dealings he might have to have with the children. To this M. Vincent replied, "Since I don't know the priests in that region, it's really difficult to say to whom they'll go, but they definitely shouldn't go to the priest at the hospital; and he should even live elsewhere. With regard to priests, Sister, never have any communication with them outside of confession; for we see the evil

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7Anne Hardemont, who was participating at the Council.
8In Nantes. Difficulties within the community had been exacerbated by the hospital chaplain, who was the Sisters' confessor.
caused by this, and it’s only too true that the majority of disorders arising in religious Communities are caused by us clergymen. Show them great respect and great reverence, but don’t get involved with them. As for the confessor, there are all sorts of religious there, but I think it’s better for them to go to one of the good priests of the parish. Don’t you think so, Mademoiselle?”

She answered “yes,” and then remarked, “Father, there’s something to be said now about the way our Sisters should act when they’re together. Wouldn’t Your Charity consider it advisable for them to spend some time together each day—half an hour or so—to share with one another what they’ve done and the problems they’ve encountered, and to talk over what they’ll have to do?”

“O mon Dieu! yes!” said Most Honored Father, “that’s a real need: close communication with one another; sharing everything. Nothing is more necessary. It unites hearts, and God blesses the advice received, with the result that things go better. Every day at recreation you can say, ‘How did things go with you, Sister? Such and such happened to me today; what do you think about it?’ You can’t imagine what pleasant conversation this makes. When, on the contrary, each one does her own thing, saying nothing about it, that’s intolerable. There’s a Sister Servant in the Company who causes incredible pain to her Sisters because she’s like that. For my part, I find that, in places where we have poor beggars of the Mission, if the Superior is open and shares matters with the confreres, all goes well. If, on the other hand, there’s someone who’s aloof and uncommunicative, that could close hearts, and no one would dare to approach him. So, Sister, that’s a real need: nothing should happen, nothing should be done or said, unless each of you knows it. You must have this mutuality.”

Then the Sister inquired whether, when she had to go to speak to the Count, she shouldn’t first ask her Sister’s opinion, to which he replied, “Yes, Sister, and, if possible, you should speak to him only when the two of you are there together. Sometimes, since he’ll come to see you, perhaps both of you can’t be there; in that case, don’t refrain from speaking to him, but, if possible, don’t ever go alone to his house. And for any other business whatsoever, Sisters,
always seek one another's advice and, take my word for it, you should always try to follow your Sister's opinion rather than your own. The Bishop of Geneva used to say that he would rather bend his will to that of fifty other people than to try to adapt the will of one single person to his own. I knew a Councillor of the court who had been a Huguenot, and who, after his conversion, attained great perfection. Although he was a Councillor and up in years, he never did anything without seeking advice. If no one else was about, he would send for his valet, 'Come here, young Pierre. I have to attend to a certain business matter; what do you think I should do about it?' His valet would answer, 'I think you'd do well to act this way.' 'Fine, Pierre; right you are. I'll follow your advice.' And he told me that he felt God blessed matters in such a way that any business he carried on in that fashion was successful.

"So much, then, for Sister Anne. She'll have to write. If she encounters any other difficulty, she'll inform us, but it won't be necessary for her to say anything about it to the Count. She can just say, 'We'll think about it, Monsieur,' and, in the meantime, she'll write to us. In the beginning, she should write at least every two weeks. Afterward, when everything is well established, she can do so once a month, as a rule.

"Right now, they'll have to have great humility and submission with respect to the town authorities—and even the people—showing great honor and respect; in a word, trying to satisfy everyone in order to win them over to God. I'll be glad to speak to those two Sisters together before they leave."

Mademoiselle asked whether the Sisters should prepare their meals there the same way we do here because perhaps people might want them to have something better.

"Oh! that could very well be; however, Sister, you should always follow the custom you see observed at the Motherhouse. The Count may very well tempt you—yes, tempt you—to see what

9The Sisters left on Wednesday, June 26, but Saint Vincent, who had to leave Paris suddenly, was unable to meet with them before their departure. Saint Louise and the two Sisters were very disappointed that they could not receive his blessing (cf. Spiritual Writings, L. 213, p. 205).
you'll do, but simply excuse yourselves saying, 'Monsieur, we don't do that.'

"Father," Mademoiselle went on, "what about the money remaining from their journey? Wouldn't it be well for them on their arrival to give it to him?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle, that would be very well; it's good for him to witness that simplicity. Sister, you can say to him, 'Monsieur, we were given such and such an amount; we spent only so much; here's what's left over.' You must get on with him in a manner that pleases him, for he has great respect for the Company; and if the slightest thing offends him, he won't be silent about it.

"Now then, Sister Jeanne writes will really need four minds. If she could take along Mademoiselle's, that would give her great pleasure. Right, Sister? Well, I don't think I have anything else to tell you just now. We'll have to see you later."

The next question was whether a Sister from Loudun, presently placed in Angers, should be dismissed. She had made it clear that she wanted to leave; besides, she had such a nasty disposition that she often went three or four days without speaking to anyone and wouldn't eat. Some Sisters thought she should be dismissed since she was asking to go and was so ill-humored that, even if she herself hadn't asked, there would be good grounds for sending her away.

"Generally speaking," said Most Honored Father, "everyone who expresses a desire to leave should be sent away. When one of our men was leaving us, he said to me, 'If I had any advice to give you, Monsieur, and knew how to give it, I would tell you that, as soon as someone tells you he wants to leave, he shouldn't be kept any longer, for he'll only have a bad influence on the others.'

"Nevertheless, Sisters, sometimes there are passing temptations, as in the case of a good Capuchin I used to know. Once, while he was still a novice, he was attending Vespers. Since he had been a famous hunter, the pleasures of the chase came to his mind. All he did

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10Jeanne Lepeintre was sent to make a visitation of the Nantes house.
11Jeanne from Loudun was a problem. She had arrived in Angers at the end of 1644; although she was the subject of discussion at this Council, she was still there in 1654.
was think about horses, hounds, and birds; he was pursuing a hare. In a word, that's how he spent the time of Vespers. When he came to himself, he was really amazed. 'What's this?' he said. 'You want to be a Capuchin and here you are, returning from the chase. You're not fit to be a Capuchin; you should leave.' And off he went to find his Prior saying, 'Father, have them give me my clothes; I want to leave.' 'What's wrong, Brother?' said the Prior. 'O Father, I'm not fit to be a Capuchin; I just came back from Vespers; and all through the Office I never left the hunt.' 'What, Brother? You went hunting during Vespers? And were you in the choir?' 'Yes, Father, but all I could think about was the chase. That's why I beg you to have them give me my own clothes, for I'm not fit to be a Capuchin.' 'Well, tell me, Brother,' said the Prior, 'when you were hunting like that, when you were pursuing the hare, did you cry out, "Oh! the greyhound! Oh! the greyhound!"' 'Oh no! Father; I didn't say a word.' 'Well then, it's nothing, Brother. You'll make a fine Capuchin.' And so he remained, lived to a ripe old age, and attained great perfection.

"I said this, Sisters, to inject a little humor into our meeting, but also to tell you that, when we recognize the deceits of the devil as in that case, there's no danger in trying to help those assailed by them. But, when we see that these come from the persons themselves and they persist in them, then such persons must be removed.

"When Sister Jeanne\textsuperscript{12} passes through that place, she'll see that Sister and how she is disposed. She'll also see what Abbé de Vaux and M. Ratier\textsuperscript{13} think about it and will let us know, and we'll tell her what she'll have to do on the way back."

Next, three Sisters were proposed: two to be sent to Nantes\textsuperscript{14} and one to Angers.\textsuperscript{15} Then M. Vincent said, \textit{Sancta Maria succurre miseris}, etc., and gave the blessing in these words: "I ask Our Lord

\textsuperscript{12}Jeanne Lepeintre stopped in Angers on her way to Nantes.

\textsuperscript{13}This priest took Abbé de Vaux's place with the Sisters when the Abbé was absent from Angers. M. Ratier died in 1662.

\textsuperscript{14}Those chosen were Jeanne de Saint-Albin and Jacquette. The former, a widow, returned to Paris at the end of 1650. Tempted to leave the Company in 1655, she weathered the trial. She died in Montmirail at the beginning of 1661.

\textsuperscript{15}Madeleine Bécu left in July for Angers and stayed there for about three years. Three of her brothers entered the Congregation of the Mission (the priests Benoît and Jean, and Hubert, a Brother); her sister Marie preceded her in the Company.
to give you His blessing to carry out all the things that have just been decided so that they may be done in the manner that will be most pleasing to Him.

*Benedictio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi.*

161. - COUNCIL OF OCTOBER 30, 1647

"Sisters, we have to deal with certain needs that Mademoiselle has noticed in the Company; if action has to be taken concerning them, it’s better to do so now than later on. Things haven’t yet gone too far. Mademoiselle Le Gras is still alive. What we do at present will remain forever; but, if we let things become outdated, when, later on—thirty, forty, or fifty years from now, if the Company lasts that long—someone might try to correct them, it will no longer be possible. People will say, ‘That was done at the beginning; that has always been; M. Vincent was there, so was Mademoiselle Le Gras, and they approved of doing things that way.’ That’s why, Sisters, if there’s something to be done for the perfection of this Company, it must be done as soon as possible."

Mademoiselle Le Gras questioned whether it’s advisable for our Sisters in the towns and countryside who teach school to take both boys and girls and, in the event that they do take boys, to what age they will keep them.

“There are many reasons in favor of that. First, it can do a great deal of good, imparting the rudiments of piety to these young children, who might otherwise never be instructed. Second, this seems to be a necessity because in most localities there’s no schoolmaster. In the third place, the parents want this, and they seem to have good reason for it because it’s to be desired that their sons be at least as well instructed as their daughters. For that reason, in most of the places where they are, they pressure our Sisters to take them. In the fourth place, there seems to be nothing to worry about regarding the

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schoolmistress; such very small boys can't be a source of temptation for her. There doesn't seem to be any danger. These are four reasons why it seems suitable to take them.

"Contrary to the above, we have a royal decree forbidding this and a similar ruling from the Archbishop. Another reason is the one why the prohibitions were issued. The devil insinuates himself everywhere, and we've seen such bizarre incidents that it seems necessary to eliminate any occasion for them. A while ago, in a nearby village, some girls were going to class in a teacher's residence. A priest over sixty years of age, he was so unfortunate as to assault them and committed sin. He was condemned to be burned. The sentence was executed, and the documents in the case were burned along with him. Now, although I don't know that anything similar happened to any women—and people aren't saying that it did—we do know what the devil could do. This happened to a schoolmaster who had a few little girls as pupils. We must fear for ourselves what we see happen to others.

"In the third place, suppose we did take boys. We couldn't keep them very long, and it would be a big problem when we had to send them away.

"In the fourth place, we shouldn't take them, according to the laws and prohibitions issued by the King and the Prelates, which seem to point out to us God's Will; and, in fact, we must believe that His Will resides in what they ordain for us. Since our Sisters should be the first to carry out lawful orders, it would be worse for them to take them than for anyone else.

"So, these are four reasons why it seems our Sisters shouldn't accept boys, contrary to which you have four others: first, it can do some good, and would be a pity not to do it; second, it even seems a real necessity since there's no schoolmaster; third, the parents want it; and fourth, there seems to be no danger to fear for either the schoolmistress or the children. I might even add a fifth; namely, that you're already doing this with your little foundlings. You have boys and girls, so it would be no worse for the Sisters to take them in villages where they teach school. What do you think, Sister?"
The Sister felt that, as long as the boys wore smocks, they could be admitted because there seemed to be a need for it and there was nothing to fear. Another Sister thought they should never be admitted, for the reasons given.

Mademoiselle mentioned some problems because of which she had sometimes allowed boys to be admitted; namely, that at times a little girl couldn’t attend school unless she brought her younger brother with her, since their mother was not at home to look after him.

M. Lambert,¹ Most Honored Father’s Assistant, thought that, in such cases, the little boys could come but should return home once they had learned their prayers, and the Sisters would not teach them how to read.

After listening to the various opinions, Most Honored Father gave his: “I think it will be well for us to follow the regulations made about not accepting boys at all. The King made that decision after seeking advice. The Prelates are guided by God, and they gave this mature consideration, doing so for reasons that should prevent us from doing it. To do the contrary would be to expose a Sister to danger. In addition, even though there seems to be no apparent risk, we couldn’t prevent the thoughts they might have if the devil interfered, and grave disorders might arise.

“Second, even if you were to accept boys, you couldn’t take them younger than six or seven years of age. It wouldn’t be suitable to keep them after they had reached eight, and even that would be too old. Sending them back home after a year’s schooling, just when they’re beginning to learn something, would be very painful. To dismiss their children from school then would be like extracting a tooth from the parents.

“In the third place, there would be constant disputes. Our Sisters would have to contend with the parents of those they sent home and the parents of those they were unwilling to accept, and there would always be something that had to be straightened out. It would be impossible not to displease someone.

¹Lambert aux Couteaux.
"In the fourth place, even though they were to admit only the younger ones, there might be some free spirits stationed in distant places who would accept older ones and might cause scandal for the Company.

"For all those reasons, Sisters, it will be well not to admit them at all. Two or three of us feel the same way. It should be left at that."

The second question proposed by Mademoiselle was to know whether we may take boarders at the Paris Motherhouse and in the country. Some think this could do a great deal of good both for the young women we would take and for the house as well. The girls would receive good moral training; principles of virtue would be instilled in them early on, and, while they were still young, many evil tendencies could be broken that might ruin them if they were not carefully uprooted. As concerns the house, perhaps some of those raised among you may want to remain here. It's not rare to see girls who, in their youth, had been boarders in religious houses, have a vocation to become nuns. Who knows what God might do?

"Another reason is that we're being strongly urged to take them; the parents wish it, and it's very hard to refuse them in the places where our Sisters work, especially in the rural areas.

"An added reason is that taking boarders is no inconvenience, provided they have separate beds, for in no way must they be allowed to sleep together.

"It would probably bring in a little money to the house. They could pay a fair rate. Children don't cause great expense. So then, it seems in many ways that this could be arranged and would be no inconvenience.

"On the other hand, you have to remember that having boarders to discipline is a great concern to Sisters who already have their patients to nurse and schools to staff. They owe all their time to the poor, and taking in boarders would be to use it otherwise.

"In the second place, think of the heavy work it creates because it requires great care.

"These, I think, are reasons contrary to taking them. Weighed against them, you have to consider the good it could do, the advantage the house could expect from it, the desire of the parents, and the
slight inconvenience caused by taking them in. What do you think, Sister?"

The Sisters felt that, for the trouble caused and the opportunity given to the Sisters to break or become relaxed in their Rules, it was more fitting to refuse boarders than to admit them. In addition, they didn’t think there was much profit in it.

Mademoiselle judged it impossible to take them in at the Motherhouse in Paris and in all the parishes, but in the rural areas it seemed almost a necessity, since most of the Ladies who found establishments or contribute to them suggest and desire this, and they themselves are the ones who bring them to our Sisters. As for the inconvenience, since our Sisters are less busy in the country than elsewhere, it shouldn’t cause them too many problems. And for the possibility of breaking the Rules, those who were strongly attached to their practice wouldn’t allow themselves to be led astray, whereas those who might be capable of breaking them would do so anyway. Since some already have boarders for whom the Ladies themselves are paying, it would be very difficult to send them away; that might offend the Ladies and cause them to abandon everything. For all these considerations, Mademoiselle thought it advisable to take some in certain places in the country.

Despite the reasons given, M. Lambert, M. Vincent’s Assistant, thought they shouldn’t be admitted since the personalities of the Sisters sometimes clash, and they’re not so even-tempered that they don’t have slight differences. If those girls should notice this, they could ruin the reputation of the house. Furthermore, since our Sisters have very little time for their spiritual exercises, they would, of necessity, be thinking about their boarders instead of making their prayer. They would have no freedom; the boarders would observe everything they say and do, since there’s no place to give the girls separate accommodations.

Most Honored Father, taking up the discussion, said, “I feel the same way, Sisters; namely, that you shouldn’t take them. Oh no! not at all. In the first place, the good to be done by instructing them well is not to be considered, since, if it causes a Sister to break her Rule, that’s a greater evil. To think it may produce good candidates for the
Company is very rash. I've never observed that persons who have been boarders in religious houses remained there; they're usually weak people, not good-hearted, and the nuns don't want them. The Bishop of Geneva has allowed the Visitation nuns to take some, but there must never be more than six. If he felt this would have done a great deal of good, he wouldn't have restricted them to such a small number.

"Moreover, if they come from good homes and pay a fair amount for board, they have to be treated differently from yourselves. It's inconvenient to prepare two menus. If, to avoid the trouble of fixing two separate dinners, our Sisters—since there would be only two of them—were to think of eating what their boarders eat, they would deviate from the frugality of their house, which is the soul and life of the Daughters of Charity. Yes, Sisters, frugality is the soul of your Institute. You subsist by it, and will subsist as long as it exists among you. But, as soon as you grow slack and no longer are satisfied with soup, bread, and cheese, oh! farewell to the Daughters of Charity! Don't even mention them again. For this reason, then, it's certainly advisable—and even necessary—for us not to take them either in the country or in Paris."

Mademoiselle asked permission to speak, explaining to him that, regardless of the social standing of the boarders, they were informed when they took them in that they would eat the same food as our Sisters.

"No matter, Mademoiselle," said Most Honored Father, "for there are other reasons to the contrary that have been given—and very important ones—namely, the difficulty the Sisters may sometimes have in getting along with one another. If a girl should become aware of this, she'll tell everybody about it. Next, if a Sister has gone a long way to carry remedies to the sick, no sooner will she return home than, instead of thinking about making her examination of conscience, she has to think about her boarders, and all the time she could be devoting to God she'll have to spend looking after them. Perhaps you'll tell me that, since there are two Sisters, the one who teaches the children could easily teach the boarders as well. But that's not everything. The laundry and cleaning must be done;
the children must be dressed; someone has to keep an eye on their conduct. If the Sisters have several patients, and both of them leave the house, the boarders will be in danger; any number of accidents could occur. There are other persons who risk nothing by taking boarders because they’re totally devoted to that. Leave matters as they are and don’t take any anywhere. As for the Sisters who already have some, they can keep them, for fear of upsetting the Ladies too much; but they must not accept any others.”

For the good of the Company and the progress of our Sisters, especially since, in the regular conferences, they sometimes don’t accuse themselves of anything, or don’t express it properly, or mention only the smallest part, often keeping silent about what would be most necessary to say, Mademoiselle Le Gras asked whether it might not be well to have a Sister whose duty would be to say, if another Sister failed to accuse herself of a certain fault, “Sister, in a spirit of charity, I remind you that you committed such and such a fault, which you forgot to mention.”

“I believe that’s done in several well-regulated houses and is very helpful. What do you think, Sister? Do you think it would be advisable to do that in the Company?”

The Sisters thought it would be very useful and, when Mademoiselle was asked, she said she had felt it was a necessary practice because she saw that our Sisters were gradually becoming careless in not mentioning their biggest faults and were taking it amiss when reminded about them. She said that, if at least there was a directive about this, they would have to abide by it, and she hoped they would be more careful in correcting themselves.

Most Honored Father was then informed of what we do at the regular conferences, of which Mademoiselle gave him a brief report, after which he said, “Oh! that way the accusation is free; but, as Mademoiselle is suggesting, the Sister responsible—or even Mademoiselle—will mention what they forget to say.”

Questioned as to how he felt, M. Lambert replied that, among the Jesuits, this was done during reading in the refectory. The Superior would give the reader a list of the faults he had noticed, and the reader would say them aloud; they had no other way of reminding
one another. They succeeded so well in this that their progress in virtue was visible, and he felt that this practice, as they observed it, could only be very worthwhile; consequently, he felt that it was apropos to introduce it into the Company.

After M. Lambert had expressed his opinion, M. Vincent continued, “Then you all agree that it would be well to do that? Oh! God be praised! So do I. Have you spoken about this to our Sisters? Do they know you’re thinking of doing it?”

Mademoiselle told him that, before informing His Charity about it, she had proposed it to the Sisters in a conference and had given them time to pray and reflect on it. Then, as a follow-up, she had asked for their opinion in a subsequent conference. All those she questioned—by far the majority—seemed to desire it.

“That’s very good. It now remains to be seen how you’ll do it. First, there’ll have to be a Sister placed at the Motherhouse responsible for bringing to your attention the faults she notices. You’ll draw up a list of them, which you yourself will read at the conference the first time. Afterward, that could be the duty of the Sister who represents you. These Sisters will have to be the outstanding ones, the pillars of the house. I repeat, they should be the first ones.”

Thereupon Mademoiselle told him that she thought she had to be the one. “Oh! that’s not necessary, but, as I told you, it can be the leaders, the most dedicated Sisters in the house.”

Mademoiselle intervened again to find out whether the Sisters might not perform some little acts of humiliation.

“Oh yes! it’s certainly right that, when they recognize their faults, they do some little penance. We’ll give you some notes on what might be suitable. We still have to consider the dismissal of a young woman from Le Mans and one from Normandy.”

Thereupon Mademoiselle gave the reasons for dismissing first the Sister from Le Mans, especially since she herself had asked to leave because of some incident in a parish where she had been placed. They had kept her to see whether she could adjust, and, in fact, she was fairly well disposed right now to remain in the Company, but, since she was melancholy by nature, as soon as anything happened to upset her she would stop eating and speaking and
would become ill, as she had been for two months. There was no sign of a fever but she had been nothing but sad and chagrined for a month. In addition, she seemed to have weak lungs. It was decided that she should be sent home.

As for the Sister from Normandy, she was a good young woman who for a long time had wanted to enter the Company before being accepted. She was very gentle, but extremely slow and sluggish. She was also in very poor health and had been ill since her retreat, as she had been shortly before her entrance into the Company.

On this question, Most Honored Father said, "In well-regulated houses, very close attention is paid to the strength of the Sisters. There are many religious Orders where a complete physical examination is given. Now, if there's such close observation in religious houses, in the Company, where you have to work much harder, no one can be accepted who may be a burden to the house. If Sisters aren't very strong, they may have some useful talent such as being able to teach school and render other services. Does that Sister know how to read?"

Seeing that the little she knew gave no grounds for hope of her being of service for very long, particularly because of her slowness, it was decided that she should be sent home.

Taking advantage of the presence of M. Lambert, Mademoiselle brought up a third Sister, who had been in the Company for over four years and had always been ill, but often the cause of her illness was not clear. Besides this, she had never given evidence of loving her vocation, always choosing malcontents as her companions. She was neither devoted to nor careful in the observance of her Rules, seeming to want to please herself and to spare herself in such a way that it was felt that, if she could have found a better opportunity elsewhere, she would have taken it. In addition, there was something to be feared in leaving her with our Sisters any longer because of the bad example she was giving the others by doing nothing at all.

Someone mentioned the length of time she had been at the Motherhouse, what she knew that could be helpful there, and how her departure might affect people, who were upset by the belief that we got rid of Sisters as soon as they became ill, she being their example of this.
Thereupon our Most Honored Father remarked, "As soon as you see someone who acts listlessly, continues as she is, and doesn’t correct herself, there’s no hope for her. The infirm who are kept by Communities must be examples of regularity, virtue, and modesty, whose love for their vocation and their punctuality are the reasons why they’re kept. Otherwise, that would ruin everything; for persons who do nothing and aren’t well-balanced have more effect on weak minds than others who are good. That’s because the mind has a tendency toward evil and would rather side with such persons if it’s not firmly anchored in virtue, than it would favor the virtue of the one who could help them. Consequently, I think it’s necessary to dismiss this Sister. Since, however, she has been at the Motherhouse a long time and doesn’t openly appear to want to leave, it will be fitting to suggest this to her and, while reminding her of her ailments, to try to help her make up her mind to leave. You might tell her that, when she’s in another place where she’ll have less work, she’ll feel better. No matter what, we have to dismiss her.” This was agreed and done.

"Now we have to see whether to assign a Sister for the formation of newcomers. It seems to me we’ve already discussed that. It’s a matter of great importance for the good of the Company and has always been our practice. Previously it was done in several places, particularly at the Hôtel-Dieu, in the following way: a newcomer was entrusted to an older Sister to be trained and looked after; but the “nieces” became so attached to their “aunts” (as they were called) that partialities arose, causing disorder in the houses. So, it was thought more appropriate to appoint a Novice Mistress; they were all placed together and the place was called a novitiate.

"If anything is necessary for the advancement of the Company, it’s this. Who is your choice, Mademoiselle?”

Mademoiselle then reminded him that it had already been decided that it would be Sister Julienne Loret.

So he continued, “O Sister, what do we want to do with you? This is the first and most important responsibility after that of the Superiorress. It’s a question of forming young women who can serve God in the Company, helping them to put down deep roots of
virtue, teaching them submission, mortification, humility, and the practice of their Rules and of every virtue. Well, then! we'll give you some guidelines on how to proceed, for you'll have to have them carry out some exercises privately and have a separate place for them, if there's some way of doing so.

Thereupon, it was represented that we couldn't give them separate sleeping quarters and it would be difficult for the newcomers to make meditation and say their prayers separately, especially since the Sister assigned them as Directress recited prayers for the whole Community. Most Honored Father approved of that, provided that at an appointed time of day they would come together for an instruction by their Directress, according to the Rule he would draw up for us, and he added, “You’re deeply indebted to God, Sisters, oh! really deeply indebted (I don’t know who will thank Him for this nor who will be able to do so) because His Goodness takes care to purge the Company of subjects who may do harm to it, and furnishes the means to perfect those who remain in it! That’s admirable. For your part, Sisters, you must thank Him as much as possible and be very faithful to Him.”

He then said Sancta Maria succurre miseris, and gave the blessing as follows: “I ask Our Lord in His goodness to deign to animate you with His true Spirit, so that everything you do and say may be to render Him the service He expects of you. In this confidence, I now pronounce the words of blessing: Benedictio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi. . . .”

162. - COUNCIL OF MARCH 22 [1648]

At the short meeting of March 22, M. Vincent addressed various topics proposed for the good of the Company by Mademoiselle, who began as follows:

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1This Council meeting was held after that of October 3, 1647, which named Julienne Loret Seminary Directress (in charge of the formation of new members), and before October 18, 1648, the date of the burial of Sister Elisabeth Turgis.