

Fr. JOHN B. LENOTTI



Master of Novices

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**IInd Superior General
[1871-1875]**

CONFERENCES
on the
**FOUNDER'S
ORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONS**

Translation into English:
Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS
2004

Electronic Edition:
Tereza Lopes [Lay Stigmatine] - 2014

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DOMESTIC EXHORTATIONS

on the

FOUNDER'S ORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONS

SECTION 1:

COMPENDIUM RUDE

SECTION 1:

The Founder's Compendium Rude

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Fr. JOHN BAPTIST LENOTTI
DOMESTIC EXHORTATIONS
 on the
ORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONS OF THE FOUNDER

Historical Preface¹

From the early Chronicles of the Congregation, it is known that a Novitiate was erected on **February 28, 1857**, a Saturday afternoon, at the House of the Most Holy Trinity in Verona, near the *Stimmate*. At that time there were 13 Novices². Fr. Lenotti was named the Novice Master. He was still there on November 4, 1863, the 47th anniversary of the coming of the Founder and his companions to the House of the *Stimmate*.³ Eventually, Fr. Marani, Superior General would assign him as Prefect of Studies, as is known from a Document dated **July 27, 1865**, being succeeded by Fr. Richard DaPrato.⁴ These Conferences on the Constitutions probably began with his work as Master of Novices, and continued over these 8 years. However, this does not exclude other dimensions of his broad and competent service in the Apostolic Mission he offered to God through the Community.

The third fascicle of Vol. 3 of the *Collectanea Stigmatina* is a collection of the Exhortations and Instructions which Fr. John Lenotti delivered over the long years that he was assigned to the formation of young Stigmatines early in our history: he served as Novice Master, Director of the Student House, Prefect of Studies, all before becoming Superior General. Most of the Exhortations contained in this source are found in little notebooks that would have been in vogue in the old school of the *Stimmate* of that era – each one of these presented a challenge to the good Father to fill them entirely. A part of these, however, are found on separate sheets of paper – remnants of what were perhaps scrap paper – these were held together in a kind of folder, but not sewn together. This seems to be a lived indication of the Poverty Fr. Lenotti personally lived – as he quoted from the example of the great servant of God, the Ven. Fr. Balthasar Alvarez, SJ, one of the Confessors of St. Teresa of Avila. The Divine Master revealed to her what a privileged place that good Priest already enjoyed in heaven, as a rare human being, who had cultivated such a high grade of perfection. He stood out among his own contemporaries – and there were some great saints in his epoch!⁵

¹ The great Stigmatine Historian, Fr. Joseph Stofella, has provided abundant reading material on the life of Fr. Lenotti, Superior General from 1871-1875, when he died on his birthday, September 5, 1875, at the age of 58. [These notes are taken from cf. **CS Vol. III, pp. 388-569**].

² cf. CS III, pp. 88, ff.

³ O.c. pp. 91. ff/

⁴ l.c., p. 94

⁵ Fr. Louis duPont, *Vie du P. Balthasar Alvarez*, translated by Fr. Marcel Bouix. Paris: 1873.

Regarding Fr. Lenotti's Exhortations, or Instructions, the most numerous group of them is that which is dedicated to the explanation of the Constitutions of St. Gaspar Bertoni. In fact, as Fr. Charles Zara [one of his very first students] attests, that Fr. Lenotti spent many years in explaining the Founder's Rules to the Community. He was also among the first to offer some reflection on them. These compositions have been placed here more or less in accord with the order of the Constitutions themselves, as they unfold. Among these papers, we can find certain points just jotted down, outlines of further reflections, fragments, rather notable developments, complete – or nearly so – treatments of these treasured Rules of the Founder. However, it should also be remembered, Fr. Lenotti did not always write down these discourses in fulfilling this domestic ministry of his. Very often he had to adapt somewhat in haste, and even up to the actual moment of delivery he seemed to jotting down some further thoughts for this normal exercise of his public Apostolic Ministry. Who ever would have thought that one fine day that those poor scribbles of his would have seen the light of day, squeezed out of him, as though under a wine-press!

Therefore, Fr. Lenotti's writings do not manifest a systematic order, nor are they a complete treatment – rather, there are many noticeable gaps in his writings, developments that are not always exhaustive. At times, one may note even a certain dryness and an insufficiency in his notes. He makes frequent recourse to the authoritative teaching of others, and employs expressions which, at times, are far from what our modern taste would be. And yet, if there is ever a time when the Lord's invitation: *collect the fragments so that they will not perish* - was to the point, this saying has an almost irresistible application in these writings. The authenticity of the spirit of our Saintly Founder can reasonably demand that in a Congregation planned by him, we could **not find anywhere, any other person, or expression or work beyond and above this privileged son whom the Founder himself formed with his own hands**⁶: The person, the word and the work in Fr. Lenotti all come together in carrying out that mandate which he had received from his Father General, Fr. John M. Marani: his challenge was to **'transmit, as conscience demands, into our young candidates the spirit of the Reverend Father Gaspar!'**⁷

For Fr. Lenotti, this was indeed a matter of his delicate conscience! This dominated in him always – and in responsibility of assisting in forming consciences to tend toward that perfection in the specific manner of Stigmatine consecrated life, which is the vocation of each religious in the Community. Fr. Lenotti presents expertly that perfection required of an *Apostolic Missionary*: each Stigmatine is called from on high, in order that he might not depart from those traditions of the Canonized Founder, and to live that example as evidenced in his first followers. Fr. Lenotti himself

⁶ In a certain sense, it seems as though Fr. Bertoni himself formed young Lenotti - so many of the other early Stigmatines came as already ordained priests – but John Lenotti was blessed with the privileged first formation of Fr. Bertoni himself

⁷ cf. CS I, p. 283; CS III, pp. 76, 133.

experienced this always as a stimulus along the way of making himself sharper, even to the very end of his life and appearance before God's Tribunal.

In all of this, there does not appear any sense of personal distinction, or self-concern or any juridical pretext. His entire thrust is to overcome all obstacles, and to seek always those reasonable means to the achievement of holiness.

All of this from the heart and pen of Fr. Lenotti who had nothing to do ever with any pretext for his own important role in the lives of many young Stigmatine candidates. He thought he might elevate the state of the Coadjutor Brothers, even by taking the brooms out of their hands, himself and other humble instruments of their work, in order to join them: this was the style of Fr. Lenotti, Priest, Novice Master, who was always quite at home in these humble tasks. Even as Superior General, he was most pleased to see the Fathers occupied in humble tasks around the community: it seemed to him that at such a sight, for him this was a return to the times of St. Gaspar! Such *humble exercises*, were meant for the Stigmatines of every level. He shared in the concern for those who might aspire to a higher grade of membership! The only sane ambition was for that of a higher degree of perfection: for this perfection there would never be required state examinations, nor university degrees – as useful as these could be, and in such full accord with the Founder's ideal⁸.

There is no wonder, then, that due to the strict agreement that Fr. Lenotti had made with God that he would propose with all candor a full level of perfection in the living of the vow of Poverty. My considered guess is that he had fixed in his heart those characteristic words of his revered Father and Founder: these are the words that Fr. Lenotti had touched upon in his own life, also in order to render them contemporary to his own story, noting that these principles have an invincible authenticity. He used to quote Fr. Gaspar to his students:

'Let us remember that we really are poor; and that if there is anything in our lives, it is not ours, but all belongs to the Lord. Let us keep uppermost in mind that we have not come here to live as lords, but as poor men of Jesus Christ.'

There certainly must have come into his mind those good corrections and penances that in this regard, Fr. Gaspar did not spare from his sons. Fr. Lenotti's great challenge was that he had to form other sons of this Founder, men who would always be worthy of him⁹.

⁸ Cf. CF # 68.

⁹ Cf. *Summ. Add., Doc. XX, p. 176*. Still today the substance and the spirit of those words of St. Gaspar might be considered as 'integral' as noted in various of his Constitutions regarding the example of Christ and the early Church [cf. CF # # 259; 272, 273]: this spirit of the Apostles around Christ - a Stigmatine form of the 'Christological Constellation', finding our point of gravity in Him - is solidly behind the ideal of the

It is our view that also in these Exhortations and Instructions of his, Fr. Lenotti shows himself almost to be *connaturally* that man who had well incarnated in himself that principle from St. Thomas Aquinas, suggested by Fr. Bertoni. This is most evident in a reflection of his that he made on the Founder's Constitutions, **Part IV, c. 2, n. 1 – CF# 49** :

In this religious, clerical Sodality, the purpose of which is not only to contemplate, but to hand on to others what has been contemplated, there is required not simply ordinary knowledge, but rather one that is perfect in those matters which pertain to faith and morals. And as a result, it is also necessary that the religious clerics commit themselves in this religious state to the acquiring of knowledge of this kind.¹⁰

There is particular interest also due to the well-known Thomistic formula – in the thought and expression of St. Gaspar, even our least religious Institute is not in that same level of excellence perhaps in participating in its own humble manner, in that definition which St. Thomas offers for his own **Order of Preachers**: *this is a state of Religion which is instituted to contemplate, and to hand on only what has been contemplated through communicating doctrine and preaching*¹¹.

It seems certain that this contemplating, and handing on to others only that which has been contemplated, in the humble and simple life of our Fr. Lenotti, were truly¹² the two permanent moments of his entire life, as its inspiration and his ultimate expiration. Fr. Colossio, OP, hoped that a campaign could be instituted that this Thomistic formula might always be noted in its integrity, and undivided, in that it so well explains the life that Fr. Lenotti lived in a personal life-long commitment. Fr. Colossio went on to note in his quoted article that in its integrity this Thomistic

Missionarii Apostolici. . The challenge of Poverty, and all other aspects of the Stigmatine life, always needs to be re-meditated in this light. It was the distinct merit of the Constitution Commission elected by the **XIIth General Chapter** in 1911 that it had worked out a formula of this kind with regard to Poverty for the Chapter of 1914: which touched their proposal up lightly and this appeared as Const. N. 95, of those first Constitutions that had been printed following the Chapter of 1917. This was the style also of quoting the ***Common Rules*** [of St. Ignatius] where in treating with our neighbors once more the example of our Lord Himself is cited in support. **Both examples: that of Jesus Christ and that of the Apostles** – are also in the Constitutions of our Founder, as noted here. Over the years the work of that Commission of 1911 does show that those descendants of Fr. Bertoni did try to develop this as our ultimate ***Compendium*** - the Apostolic Church: **Apostolic Missionaries** in the ***modus, of the Apostles and Christ***. This was the challenge of St. Paul to the Corinthians: *Be imitators of me – as I am of Christ!* [1 Co 4:16]. All light comes from Him All who strive to formulate the Constitutions would do well to keep in mind the examples of Christ and the Apostles

¹⁰ This **CF # 49** is taken almost *verbatim* from F. Suarez, SJ, *De Religione Societatis Iesu*, **Bk V, c. 1, n. 10 – p. 803 a**

¹¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, **II-II, q. 188, a. 7 c.**

¹² Here Fr. Lenotti quotes an article of a Dominican contemporary of his. Cf. In our time, Fr. Innocenzio Colossio, OP, in *Rivista di Aскетica e Mistica*, fasc. IV-V, 1961, p. 381

formula well expresses the proper relationship between the interior life and that of the ministry in the Apostolic Mission, the balance between the contemplative and active aspects of life. The second members of this formula, i.e., the *tradere* - is not there *in the manner of subtraction, but in the manner of addition*. Thus, it seems to students of Stigmatine history that this beautiful formula was almost as his ‘second-nature’, without his perhaps ever fully realizing it, was lived in the life of the humble Fr. Lenotti.

In the pages that follow, there is no distinction made between those Conferences which Fr. Lenotti gave to his beloved Novices, and those which he delivered to the wider Community. Fr. Lenotti’s Conferences also point out that with the Founder’s death, his Rule and spirit did not pass away with him – these conferences offer a concrete proof that the Founder’s paternal design did not fail in the efforts of his sons to bring it to fruition.

Some of these reflections indeed merit the name of *Exhortation*, encouragement to live the ideal – others seem to have been inspired by some occasion or other, liturgical, disciplinary, or domestic. Might it not be said that that there are not lacking to us matters that of indeed particular interest to us a century and a half after his death?

The reader himself may make a personal reflection. It may be in reading Fr. Lenotti’s style, one may become somewhat irritated: the old Master of Novices has the tendency to draw himself under the wings of a favored author of his, a Jesuit Father Lancisio. It is evident that Fr. Lenotti in jotting down these notes well over a century ago, that he was not in competition for any literary reward: nonetheless, he has made a solid contribution to the history and the authentic life of the Stigmatine Community. Regarding this Fr. Lancisio, it might be recalled here that there can be noted in the Method of Studies taught to Fr. Lenotti, before and after he was ordained a priest, by his own venerated Father, St. Gaspar Bertoni, we are told: *Also for spiritual reading every day, he had me read from the Venerable Father Lancisio* – this would be Fr. Nicholas Lanczyki, SJ, who died in 1652¹³. Fr. Bertoni had suggested this reading to Fr. Lenotti. In those times of the Founder – and for sometime following his death - in addition to the public, or common spiritual reading, there was also conducted personal spiritual reading throughout the Community. And the fruit of that reading is most evident in Fr. Lenotti.

It might be noted here that the four fascicles of papers which follow, this are almost consumed in writing – some of what follows is also taken from other fonts of his, all hand-written by Fr. Lenotti – and all of these were intended for the exclusive use of the Stigmatine Community of that time. Thus, to include all of this material is

¹³ Fr. Lanczynski wrote: *Opuscula Spiritualia*, Antwerp 1650, 2 Volumes. About 1700 pages in all!

the motivating intention here – and this has added considerably to the amount of material available. From this, there has been suggested the idea of drawing up an entire work that indeed might bear the Title: “**Father Lenotti’s Volume.**” Even with this, his contribution would not be totally consumed, exhausted within this one set of writings – who can place any limit on Divine Providence? The author of this Historical Introduction, in the year of this writing has reached the 77th year of his life¹⁴ - and while enjoying presently good health, the good Lord could take him from this endeavor as he sees fit, even this very day. But, there are others, in full strength, and young men who are coming along – Whoever is alive, might see to further this work along!

Fr. Joseph Stofella, CPS¹⁵



¹⁴ Fr. Stofella is noted as having been born on November 13, 1885 – and would die three years after these lines were written, at the age of 80, on March 22, 1966. [The American translator of these lines is rapidly approaching 73 years of age – about 100 days to go!]

¹⁵ The former abbreviation of the Congregation, for our young members was: *Congregation of Stigmatine Priests* – the Chapter of 1964, strived to make this more inclusive: *The Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata.*

What follows here is an *Introduction* – also written by Fr. Stofella as a more immediate presentation of the Domestic exhortations and Conferences which follow.[cf. CS III, pp. 393-398]

INTRODUCTION

The Domestic Exhortation

After our Preface presented on the previous pages, it is only right that there should be added here a further *Introduction*, as seems to be required by the circumstances intrinsic to the collection of notes being offered here. It is helpful to make known what was understood by earlier generations of Stigmatines by the ***Domestic Exhortation***: this was the instrument of which Fr. Lenotti made such competent use in the religious formation of our first Stigmatine Communities.

The ***Domestic Exhortation*** is an institution in Stigmatine life dating from the Founder himself, even though it was not his invention: its origin goes back across the centuries, to the very dawn of the Monastic or Religious Institute in this world. It is well known that St. Gaspar Bertoni took this up, as he did so much else, from the **Company of Jesus**.

Among the ***Rules of the Offices*** there are – in the Company of Jesus – also rules for the Rector, and under this following heading: ***Concerning the Spiritual Care of our Own Members***, there is this following Rule:

Either every Friday, or every other Friday, the Rector personally – or someone else in his stead - will give an Exhortation to our Members which will present well the very nature of our Institute, in what would concern the observation of the Constitutions and the rules, fraternal charity, humility, patience, mortification, and those other virtues, especially obedience: however, at times there can be had in the place of this Exhortation, a certain conversation [collatio : Conference] concerning these matters.

Regarding this second alternative – which was facultative and only rarely employed – does not merit our spending much time on it: as such a gathering would take nothing away from the original character of the usual, periodic ***Domestic Exhortation***. Rather it seems that it might be said that the Jesuit Rule was referring to the venerable ***Collations*** of the old Fathers of the Desert, as we see embodied in Cassian, and this simply confirms their character and their importance.

What is under discussion here, then, is that Domestic Exhortation either weekly or every fifteen days: either every Friday, or every other Friday. This Rule of the Company of Jesus passed, precisely as is, into the Rules for the Director which Fr. Lenotti produced as Superior General: with the exception of one sole variant in the

form right at the beginning: *Either every week, or every other week, on the day established*.¹⁶

Among the means which our saintly Founder indicated for us – or put better, prescribed for the spiritual progress our Members, right after his listing of the daily spiritual practices which are summarized in prayer [those in common, meditation, Mass and the Office, Spiritual Reading the Three-fold Examen] – there is immediately mentioned the following:

The first means of achieving Spiritual Progress is prayer.

In addition to the daily, common prayers and those that are obligatory, and which are contained most especially in the Divine Office and Mass, to be celebrated when this is possible, by divine grace, attentively and devoutly, the following prayers are offered:

Every morning, meditation before Mass for one half hour. Then, Spiritual reading after lunch for twenty minutes.

The three-fold examination of conscience, namely, in the morning as soon as one awakes; at noon; and before retiring at night.

One should listen to sermons [concio] which are publicly delivered in our churches, as well as at home, for the purpose of exciting devotion... [CF # 47].

It seems that the Legislator here was thinking naturally of that preaching every Friday honoring the Five Wounds¹⁷, a devotion also known as the Devotions for a Good Death : this involved a sermon, conference, each week and seems to be what Fr. Bertoni intended in his CF # 47: ... *sermons at home for the purpose of exciting devotion*... While it does not specifically add ‘weekly’, but its being paired with the public form of preaching, makes one naturally think of a weekly Domestic Exhortation. This is all the more possible because when the Founder was actually composing his *Original Constitutions* - in the 1840’s – this practice was being observed in the living of the Community life, as is clear from a number of indications that have come down to us. One of these in particular would be a bit of information St. Gaspar sent along to his beloved Fr. Louis Bragato, away in the Court of Vienna, dated, September 26, 1840:

*...I can tell you that from Monday onward I preach every day in the House, in the Oratory, after Matins...*¹⁸

¹⁶ Cf. CS III, p. 281, 20.

¹⁷ Cf. Letters to the Roman Pontiff of St. Gaspar, especially his third one to Pope Gregory XVI in 1844, in someone else’s hand-writing – [cf. *Epistolario*, pp.344, ff.]

¹⁸ cf. *Epistolario*, p. 324

This ‘Oratory’ of which the Founder speaks, had been inaugurated and opened in that year, 1840, and it was near the Founder’s room at the *Stimmate* – unfortunately it was later torn down.¹⁹

Fr. Bertoni’s text was promptly inserted in Fr. Lenotti’s *Regulae Communes*, just changing the case ending of *concio*, to the accusative, objective, case *concionem*, and rephrasing the sentence this way: *all shall listen to* - to conclude it. Whatever these small changes might be, the practice goes far back in our history, as noted above in the texts [*each week, or every other week*] – this was a weekly, or every other week, exercise. The whole purpose of the *Domestic Exhortation* – and thus, also its content - remains designated with the Founder’s words: *for the purpose [sake] of exciting fervor*. This was worked out in a project by Fr. John Rigoni, in 1880, entitled *The Formula of the Institute and the Constitutions with Appendices*. This was done in the hopes of obtaining eventual approval from Rome. So, too, under the pen of Fr. Richard Tabarelli in a Plan worked out by him nine years later, in 1889 for the same scope, this exercise of the regular *Domestic Exhortation* is retained. There is a slight difference in the wording introduced by Fr. Tabarelli: in place of the Founder’s words describing the purpose of this [*ad fervorem excitandam*], Fr. Tabarelli wrote [*ad pietatem fovendam* : for the sake of exciting piety]. The frequency of the Domestic Exhortation was retained, *at least twice a month*.²⁰

The new formula entered, then, in the re-editing of the *Common Rules* which had been prepared then for reading at table. The substance of the legislation, as everyone sees, did not undergo – or at least, did not seem to suffer - any substantial changes: however, there might be noted there could be seen a slight concession, with the switch from the word *fervorem* to the word *pietatem*. However, in the word *pietatem* there were assumed – or at least the legislator intended to reassume – all those duties that are essentially imported by the obligation of tending toward perfection. The sentiment of that obligation of tending toward perfection was meant to be retained alive and well in the community.

And this is what emerges clearly from all these Exhortations – of which traces of them remain in our Archives – even though these are not literary master-pieces. Nonetheless, of all of the early Stigmatines who composed these Exhortations, still found in our Archives in Verona, those of Fr. Lenotti remain in the very first place,

¹⁹ The choice of the title of the *Transfiguration* is interesting – particularly in our time with the Holy Father, John Paul II, adding this to the *Mysteries of Life* in the praying of the Rosary – Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, October 16, 2002 – and he quotes Paul VI’s expression that the Rosary is the *Compendium of all the depth of the Gospel message in its entirety* [cf. RVM #2; cf. also *Marialis Cultus* of Paul VI]. The *Transfiguration* was noted on the way toward Calvary – and beyond toward the Resurrection. Fr. Stofella seems to have deeply regretted its being dismantled].

²⁰ These matters are treated in the 9th General Chapter and the following – the Congregation was approved – but the Constitutions not yet – just prior to the opening of the stormy 12th General Chapter, in September 1890.

and these have been published as translated here ²¹. There are some fragments and traces from the pen of Fr. Richard DaPrato – then, there are rather numerous exemplars from the pen of Fr. Mark Bassi ²². There are also a few others, not many of them, but very well thought out and solid in doctrine, found among the *Domestic Exhortations* of Fr. Peter Vignola, addressed to the Community of the *Stimmate*, when that was not a very large community. Then, there are a few of a more modest level, composed by Fr. Bartholomew Perazzani, for the small House of Parma, and for our Students, housed then in St. Teresa's, Verona. And finally there are those *Exhortations* – perhaps in the style of Manzoni – that were willingly listened to willingly by the old Community at the *Stimmate*, addressed to the Members by Fr. John Baptist Tommasi, later our Superior General ²³.

It would be useful to cast a glance at the Capitular Commission chosen by the **18th General Chapter** of 1911²⁴. Their responsibility was to review and recast the Constitutions to submit to the Holy See in the hopes of obtaining approval for them. This group presented its finished work to the **19th General Chapter** of 1914.

In their finished work, the Domestic Exhortation – long legislated for *to be held at least twice a month* - does not appear, other than equivalently under a number asking for a Monthly Day of Retreat. However, for this, there was presented a very serious and well spelled out plan. Their text in this regard was: *to these pious daily exercises [in the Monthly Retreat] there is to be added at least a sermon for the sake of furthering the religious spirit*: therefore, the Exhortation would be held only once a month: but this text of 1911-1914 offered also an alternative: *or some opportune reading that should be held for one half hour*. From the style of this writing, it would seem that this text was derived from authoritative texts.

There is little doubt, then, that the old practice of the *Domestic Exhortation* is presented here in a descending phase. However, in the **19th General Chapter** of 1914, it simply disappears from our legislative texts. The Project proposed by the Capitular Commission for the Monthly Retreat did not reach the new rendition of the Constitutions. There thus disappeared also the word *sermon [concio]* that was quite reduced nor was there felt any need to place an alternative. This is the text that resulted from all these changes, as was found in our old Constitution n. 131:

²¹ cf. CS III, pp. 388-569

²² cf. CS II, pp. 230, ff.

²³ As Superior General, Fr. Tommasi published a number of his *Circular Letters* and in these one may note lengthy passages taken from his *Domestic Exhortations* delivered to the Community at the *Stimmate* of which he was Superior.

²⁴ Fr. Octavian Piccoli was Chairman- and its members were Fr. John B. Zaupa; Fr. Joseph Fiorio; Fr. John Baptist Castellani; Fr. Paul Sozzi.

Every month, on the First Friday, or if that day should be impeded, or some other more opportune day, all the members, removed as far as will be possible from their earthly cares, will give themselves over to spiritual recollection.

This remained the definitive formula for years.

However, then came Canon Law, and the Code of 1917, with its Canon # 509 2: ***The local Superiors will take care... 2° that at least twice each month there should be had a pious exhortation to all the members of the religious family.*** This expression: ***at least twice a month*** brings us back to our own past history. Beyond this clarification – for, it is clear that there is presented here a minimal limit, and which permits [as the text reads, ***at least twice a month***] – and even encourages to go a bit beyond that which is imposed – the formula is really generic, and it is found in the universal Code obliging all religious to observe this prescription, provided we do not lessen our Stigmatine piety. Yet, each one of us might retain for ourselves to re-discover our own specific traditions. Our Superiors might indeed go back to recapture our own healthy traditions, and they could rightfully leave aside the Canonical injunction ***at least twice a month***, and base themselves on the authoritative challenge of the Canons themselves. ***Twice a month there should be a pious exhortation delivered to all the members of the Family.*** Our Constitutions, then, of 1925, picked up on the formula of the Code of Canon Law. What had been forgotten then, after reducing the ***twice***, to ***once*** – the Code challenged us to re-discover our own healthy early Stigmatine tradition.

At a certain point in all this trajectory, the Community issued a ***Capitular Deliberation***, which over the years was almost automatically renewed. It began under one form and the appeal is to go back to one of our better traditions. In seeking the best formula, would we go back to the wording of the Founder himself [cf. CF # 47: ***for the purpose of exciting fervor*** - or, at least that later expression: ***for the fomenting of piety?*** Or, to the wording: ***for the furthering of the religious spirit?*** The ***Capitular Deliberation*** read: ‘In the act that recommends early the Domestic Exhortation, twice a month, prescribed by Constitution 139, there should be indicated the practical fulfillment of this prescription. Especially in the Houses with fewer members, there should be some hint as to its practical realization. Rather than a formal discourse, in such cases it could be simply the recalling to mind of those points of religious discipline of which here is the greater need.’

Fr. Lenotti would remind us that a recalling to mind of some disciplinary prescription should not be put off until the assigned time for the Domestic Exhortation. Nor should the Domestic Exhortation be pumped up as some kind of a formal discourse, delivered with great pomp and splendor. A formal discourse would have to have its own head, its body as well as its tail, or conclusion: in this sense the Domestic Exhortation has to have some order to it. In order for it to be efficacious, it

needs to give some heed to the dignity of the one giving it and the ones who are listening to it. And it should go on for some 20, or 30 minutes. The Capitular Deliberation suggested that the Domestic Exhortation should be a recalling to mind, and not something else.

This Capitular Deliberation offered only a certain indication: however, it is an indication that is somewhat limiting, which comes from on high. Would anyone believe that it is not a prescript that commits us? Fr. Lenotti was a zealous Director, *who had at heart the good of our Institute*, and really wanted to give to the pious Canonical Exhortation the purpose and content that had been indicated by the Saintly Stigmatine Founder. In other words, his hope was to re-enkindle in a positive manner the essential fervor of the community's tending toward perfection. His challenge was to accomplish this in a world that only to some extent experienced this as a problem. In our day an age, such a project might only meet with smiles and good natured criticism: is this not just a material fulfillment of an old rule.

To draw this Introduction to a close, it is our hope that the example of Fr. Lenotti might concur efficaciously to restore to the Canonical exhortation its original character. It was meant to be a recalling to mind of those points of religious discipline – each Director would have at his disposition numberless occasions for this. Rather, let us yearn not to lose the opportunity of doing something *for the purpose of inspiring the religious spirit, or piety* – or, to use the expression our Founder used in his *Original Constitutions*, # 47: *for the purpose of exciting devotion*. Also in this matter, to turn to the 'old ways' would certainly mean making real progress ²⁵.



²⁵ Fr. Lenotti points out the real contribution that Fr. Peter Vignola made in this regard. He succeeded Fr. Richard DaPrato [+ October 17, 1872] in the direction of the House of the *Stimate*, during that period when the early Community was still dispersed due to those enduring difficulties with the Government. On November 28, 1872, Fr. P. Vignola opened his series of Domestic Exhortations with these words: *For the first time, I have the happiness of speaking with my companions in obedience to the Very Reverend Superior, and the fulfillment of my office, in order to exhort one another mutually and virtuously to operate according to the norms. So I feel the need of taking inspiration by saying a word on this our state in life and on the spirit with which we ought to procure to inspire one another in this state.*

These are some of the themes touched upon by Fr. P. Vignola: 1. On the Religious Spirit; 2. On the Spirit of Perfection; 3. On Compunction and Penance; 4. Humility; 5. Obedience; 6. Poverty; 7. Purity or Chastity; 8 Devotion. Who could deny that today we might still be in great need of reflecting on such matters?

PART ONE
FR. LENOTTI AND FR. BERTONI'S COMPENDIUM RUDE

**I. HOW ONE SHOULD DERIVE FRUIT FROM THESE
DOMESTIC EXHORTATIONS**

Domestic Exhortations are listed among the means of perfection – they are like an alarm-clock, and a lamp along the path of virtue - There is needed the desire to cull some profit from them and to remember their ultimate purpose – It is necessary to apply to ourselves these truths, and to make a treasure of them by applying them to ourselves. It is necessary to reduce the ideals into practice.

By the singular Mercy of God and by the sweet and admirable paths of His Providence, we were drawn from the tumultuous sea of this world, where according to the views of the Saints and of the Divine Scriptures – with all the scandals, and all the noise, the dangers of our own perdition, and the many obstacles to virtue. From all these, we have been placed in the sure port of the religious state, where there is still that danger of becoming lost, as there are the even greater means to enable us to keep us safe and sound in the divine service, and to walk forward in virtue.

Now, among the means that our Saintly Founder offers to us, in order to keep us far from defects and enabling us to make progress in virtue and in perfection, there are those weekly Spiritual Exhortations – *a sermon delivered at home for the purpose of exciting devotion* ²⁶ - which serve continuously that can awaken us, in order that we do not fall asleep along the paths of the spirit. These *Domestic Exhortations* serve as a lamp enabling us to see those obstacles that might be encountered: *Your word is a lamp for my feet* [cf. Ps 118:105]. It is like a stimulus in order to make us run carefree along the path of virtue.

Otherwise, the Prince of Darkness, our infernal enemy, who remains every day at our side, and is engaged in pondering and presenting himself under a thousand disguises to our harm for our eternal ruin – or, at least, to impede us from making any advance along the way of perfection. Unfortunately, he also seeks to bring it about that even this means – that in and of itself is so efficacious - might lose its force and become for us, if not just useless, at least, that it be of little advantage, as just a routine to fulfill, or that we show up just out of habit, to observe an external ritual – and perhaps even as a brief relief from the hard studies or work of the day, without any real desire to draw only very little fruit from them.

And in the first place, the Demon brings it about that the exhortations a little at a time, come across as something ordinary and that we come to them merely out of

²⁶ Part IV, *Concerning Progress*, Chapter I – *Concerning Spiritual Progress* - n. 1 – CF # 47.

habit, to fulfill a ritual, or perhaps derive some relief from our challenging studies or hard work, without any vibrant desire to get something out of them. But, it should not be this way.

Let us think – with Rodriguez²⁷ - how the ancient monks would approach this ancient exercise: with what desires and even yearning, they would approach this whenever they would assemble for those spiritual *collationes* or conferences that they delivered among themselves! And what good provisions they would take away from them in order to ruminate on them in their cells. Now, with such desires and yearning we, too, ought to participate in these Domestic Exhortations and Conferences, and then they will indeed bear fruit in us. Food consumed with a good appetite is a sign of health and of a good bodily disposition. To experience nausea is a sign of illness. Let us go to them at least in order to hear God spoken about: ***He that is of God, hears the words of God. Therefore, you hear them not, because you are not of God...*** [cf. Jn 8:47].

Another strategem of the Demon is to convince one that in these Exhortations, one hears only the usual and ordinary things, that are already well known. Do you see how the Prince of Darkness deceives us? Why are these Domestic Exhortations considered to be ordinary? Why are they given anyway? You know that Domestic Exhortations are not organized so much to present new and extraordinary truths, those that are elegant and rather curious. They are given for no other purpose than to bring back to our memories those common and ordinary matters that we have before us each day, and for increase our fervor regarding them. And it is with this presupposition that we ought to go to them, and to listen to them.

And so I ask: Do we keep these ordinary matters before our minds at all times? Do we practice them, observe them? Therefore, how is it, then, that we can go to listen to these truths unwillingly that are so necessary for us? And how is it, in spite of having heard them repeated so many times, why have we not yet brought them all into execution? If, after hearing these same matters repeated time and time again, we are still lacking in their observance, what would be our situation if there were not those who would remind us of these and every once in a while tried to inspire us to live them better? The living voice of one who speaks to us in the name of God, and of the Superior, is more valuable than reading us: as the natural water from the sky is more valuable than running water.

The Demon seeks to impede us from deriving that fruit from this exercise also by having us apply whatever is said to others, rather than to ourselves. The beam in our own eyes, and the speck in the eyes of others! It is true that when one speaks of a defect it does not always mean that this is a part of our own household – but, there

²⁷ Part I, Treatise I, c. 18.

are times when faults are brought up as a precaution and to take care to avoid it: ***before sickness, take the medicine!*** [cf. Si 18:20] – this is so that it will never come to us!

In like manner, the one who delivers the Domestic Exhortation should never have anyone in particular in mind – and so, too, the one who listens should never think that the discourse should be applied to others, but always to oneself. Each and everyone, my brothers, ought to apply to himself all that is said. What sense would it make to have all succulent foods placed on the table, and you were all seated around it, if you do not reach out for a morsel to put it into your mouths? What would it matter if one has the medicine before him, and does not make use of it? Of what use would balm be unless it is applied to one's own wound, without his applying it to what he perceives to be someone else's?

For example, in the Exhortation it is said that we have not come to religion to do our own will, but rather that of Someone else – we know that the religious life is a life of abnegation, of sacrifice, of penance: and then, once we get here, we want to do everything in accord with our own life-style we look for our own comforts, we do not wish to undergo anything, to suffer anything. What we need to produce are deeds, and not just words! And let us strive to keep it in mind, especially anything that might make the deepest impression upon us. And let us think of it as a kind of warning from God for our own spiritual well-being. Let us hope that all that is said would not go in one ear, and then right out the other – and then just as soon as the Domestic Exhortation has been concluded, we remain ***like an erased black board***, and the birds – rather, the Devil – take our grain away.

Therefore, when the Domestic Exhortation has ended, we need some time for recollection. That Rule that is found in some religious communities²⁸ is an excellent one that after the conclusion of the Domestic Exhortation, the Novices ought to remain for a half hour in order to reflect, and to ponder over what has been said. I do not intend to oblige you to do this, but my appeal is that at least you do not allow the thoughts to fall into oblivion or forgetfulness, and that during recreations there never comes up a single idea from the many that have been heard. Or, what would not be good, if one companion sought to bring up one point or another, his companions would not be open to him, and would allow his points to fall, without accompanying his view – I would hope that nothing of this sort would ever happen.

Therefore, what would become of us if in the exhortations we allow ourselves to remain distracted, by thinking of other things, or about our study, or our tasks, and

²⁸ Fr. Lenotti, like the Founder himself did so often, taps in here to the Ignatian tradition. Fr. Lenotti is making use here of the old Jesuit ***Rules for the Master of Novices***, but he did not mention the 'space of one half hour' found in the Ignatian rule.

the like, even though with our body we might appear quiet and attentive? It is necessary to listen with attention and to come to some practical resolve: ***But, be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*** [Jas 1:22]. Let us keep in mind that we will have to render an account to the Lord for every exhortation, and indeed for every word that we hear. Let us also remember that people in the world do not have this grace, and that therefore ***unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required.*** [Lk 12:48].

In brief, my brothers, let us listen to this Word of God with an authentic religious spirit, with a spirit of humility, recognizing that we have great need of it. Let us listen with a spirit of compunction, of love, of generosity, with genuine commitment – and in this way, we will derive the desired fruit and we will give joy to the Lord and we will move ahead in virtue.

II. WHAT A RELIGIOUS IS IN GENERAL, AND WHAT IS A RELIGIOUS IN OUR CONGREGATION

He is a man who totally abandons himself for the service of God and his own salvation – He is one totally committed to the exercise of the virtues – He is one who seeks the divine will and the good pleasure of Jesus Christ, his Model – He is dead to the world, and therefore, blessed- In particular, the Stigmatine is a religious soldier – He needs a spirit of sacrifice, generosity, zeal.

Just as an artist ²⁹who ought to produce a painting, or a portrait, or one would make a small model of a work to be produced, as it is sometimes called, in order to then transfer this onto the screen. Or, some would draw up a rough outline in order then to finish it, or to perfect it as the subsequent parts unfold ³⁰. And so, allow me, my beloved brothers, that I – before coming to explain part by part the various rules that the Lord has given to us through the pen of our saintly Founder - might put together here before you, as a kind of outline and a sketch, the model of that religious life that these Constitutions present to us. Why, then, are these rules important? The reason for them is to form by means of them an authentic religious and an **Apostolic Missionary**.

²⁹ The world of art was also one employed among his examples by Fr. Bertoni - cf. *Memoriale Privato*, February 26, 1809 – *we need to make a portrait within ourselves of Jesus Christ; CF ## 223: admire the beautiful colors the Holy Spirit has used in painting our gifted confreres* – from Suarez, p. 955 a. [This Constitution was quote by Pope John Paul II, when he received our General Chapter in Audience, in February 2000]

³⁰ This almost seems to be Fr. Lenotti's description of Fr. Bertoni's *Compendium Rude*, CF ## 1-8.

Let us see, then what a Religious is meant to be in a general way; and what a religious should be in our Congregation.

First of all, what is a religious? A Religious, of any Religious Congregation, or Monastery, is a man who has been called by God, has turned his back on the world, and has given himself over entirely to God's service, in order to put his soul in security. A Religious is a man who, in order to obey God's voice in order to save himself, has the courage of leaving behind father and mother, relatives and friends, his own comforts and ease in life, honors and riches and whatever the world has that is desirable, and chooses to hasten in order to place himself into the hands of obedience, and under the sweet yoke of a Rule, in order to have thereby a more sure means for his own eternal salvation.

What, then, is a Religious? He is a man released from every earthly concern, a man crucified to this world; he is a man who has to undertake the struggle against his own passions, one who needs to flee even the smallest defects, in order to practice virtue. In brief, he is one set on the way to acquire perfection. *Therefore, good brother, do not be slack, in so far as you can, in insisting upon good deeds: attend only to this, that you have become a monk, and therefore do what monks do!* ³¹.

What, then, is a Religious? He is a man for whom mortification is like the salt that flavors all his actions, so that they might be pleasing to God: he is a man who flees laziness, and who loves fatigue; he is a man of penance, one who does not seek his own comforts, his own ease, who is convinced that he has not come to Religion in order to have everything that is pleasing to him, but one who has come in order to suffer for Jesus Christ; he is a man of patience, who puts up with those privations, which in every state of human life whatsoever, even that of a king or monarch, these are found everywhere in this vale of tears: ***patience is necessary for you!*** [cf. Heb 10:36]. And if this is necessary for the poorest peasant and farmer, as it is for the most august monarch, is necessary also for a man in the state of religion, because suffering is found just everywhere. A Religious, then, is a man who has sacrificed to God his own will and his own freedom, in order to enjoy that freedom of the children of God: this is the sacrifice, the most acceptable to God that can be found.

The religious man, then, is a person who seeks always the divine will, and the good pleasure of God: in order to bring joy to Jesus Christ, the religious endures fatigue; in order to please Jesus Christ, the religious practices mortification in good, sleep, illness; and so, he is one who values prosperity as adversity and directs all toward the service of God, receives all from His hands, as resigned to the Divine Good Pleasure. The Religious is one who in order to please Jesus Christ exercises charity toward his brothers. He is a man who draws close to God; he is poor for Jesus Christ,

³¹ This Latin quote is from the Book, *On the Manner of living well* - c. 8 – but, the citation is not exact.

and thus offers his vow of Poverty; he is one who is chaste for Jesus Christ, and offers Him his vow of Chastity; and yet, this Religious is a person who is always animated by hope founded on God, and which will never fail him: *And everyone who has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My name's sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting* [cf. Mt 19:29].

In brief, a Religious is a man dead to this world, and therefore blessed: *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord...for their works follow them* [cf. Rv 14:13]. So, this is what a Religious is, and what each Religious man ought to seek in each and every religious family: and this is what we should be, too. In fact, this is the end that we proposed to ourselves in entering and the reason why we came here: and that is to attend to the interest of our own salvation, to do penance for our own sins, and to struggle hard to become perfect. Let us compare ourselves with that model: by the grace of God, we have to thank God that the spirit of humility, of mortification, of patience, and obedience, etc., that we do find in our own House. However, whatever is lacking is what we need to procure: not a great deal more is needed: a bit more prayer, a bit more humility, and so on, and we will obtain our purposes.

But coming now in particular to our own Congregation, what is, and what should a Religious of this Congregation be – even though it is so small – yet, it is a work coming from the hand of God? What should an Apostolic Missionary be?

He ought to be not only a religious, but a religious-soldier; and moreover, he should have the spirit of a soldier: a valiant and faithful soldier, animated by the spirit of sacrifice, a spirit of generosity, a spirit of zeal, for the glory of his King and for the good of the republic.

Such, my brothers, ought to be the spirit which animates us in his Congregation. A spirit that is first of all, one of sacrifice, for which the soldier suffers fatigue, journeys, hunger, cold, and the like. A Missionary who is in love with himself, and with his own comforts, with concerns for his own bodily welfare; a Missionary who is excessively delicate, a Missionary who would never want to endure any suffering, for whom suffering remains a barbaric and savage language – what kind of Missionary could such a person ever be?

There is needed a spirit of generosity: the soldier offers himself being ready to remain at his post, whether in the camp, or in the field, and to overcome the obstacles and to meet head-on the hostile swords and blows. This is what the Missionary is, one who is not afraid of dangers, who has no fear of hard work when it is a matter of rendering oneself an apt instrument of the Divine Glory and for the good of souls. He

needs to be one who is *ready for all* ³². The Missionary needs to be ready to overcome obstacles, and one for whom every recollection and contrast or misfortune is never able to defeat him, to discourage him. The Missionary in this sense is one who conquers all – he has a great heart which is precisely one that makes even the Devil afraid.

He needs a spirit of zeal: the soldier would face death for his home-land, and for his king. So, the Missionary ought to have zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls with good example, and with prayer, which is worth more than a thousand words, and with **studying to make himself an able instrument** ³³. The soldier is not alive to his profession only when he is already on the field of combat, all readied for the battle to ensue – but, he remains a soldier when he bivouacs in his quarters, or, on the Parade Ground ³⁴ in order to manage his weapons and to prepare himself for any eventuality. So, we Missionaries are this not only when we exercise ourselves in **our ministries in the battle field, i.e., in the pulpits for the Missions, or in the Confessional, or at the lectern in the parishes** ³⁵ – but, also when we remain at home to purify ourselves from our sins, to render us suitable for our ministries with study, and with the practice of virtue, and the like.

Therefore, let us strive to have this spirit of sacrifice, of generosity and zeal. And let us do all that we can from our part. Let us offer, with the Widow of the Gospel, the two mites [cf. Mk 12:42]: while those who had the great establishments and extended properties offer great things: as for us, let us offer that which we can. And the Lord who looked at the heart of that widow, will also look at our heart and will accept what we offer.

Mary and Joseph wait to see... from us: and let us heed their expectancy, let us correspond to their desires.

³² This is the slogan attributed to Fr. Marani. It has a biblical background: *And the king opened his treasury, and gave out the pay to the army for a year: and he commanded them that they should be ready for all things* [1 M 3:28] – *Admonish them to be subject to princes and powers, to obey at a word, to be ready for every good work*. The saying applies well to the *varia et propria munera vocationis suae*, which Fr. Bertoni notes in his CF # 185.

³³ Fr. Bertoni insisted much on knowledge that was not ordinary, not mediocre – cf. e.g., CF ## 49, 50, 159.

³⁴ Fr. Lenotti speaks here of the *Campo di Marte* - interestingly enough also the address of the location of Fr. Bertoni's home parish, *S. Paolo in Campo Marte*.

³⁵ As will be seen a bit further ahead, Fr. Lenotti seems to have a broad view of the **Apostolic Mission**, simply in his listing of the different aspects of it. St. Ignatius provides three lists for the various and proper ministries to which the Society is committed: in his *Formula* # 3; Part IV: c. 8, nn. 400-414; Part VII, nn. 637-653. For Fr. Bertoni, he provides a broad list in his Part IX of his Constitutions, ## 158-186.

III. CONCERNING THE OBSERVANCE OF THE RULES

We are Soldiers of Christ- The regular Disciple - The Rules serve as the break-water for the Law of God and the help to observe it – Diligence in minute observances - From these come perfection and predestination – the example of St Leonard of Port Maurice – Exhortation.

Labor as a good soldier of Christ Jesus [2 Tm 2:3], the Apostle wrote: endure fatigue, travail, hard work, fight as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. As we saw the last time, we ought to be missionary-soldiers: so, we ought to think as addressed in a special way to us those words: *labor as good soldiers of Christ*: work hard, endure fatigue, travail, fight as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. And even if some one is mixed in the company who is deceived, down-hearted, and defeated, and who turns his back and deserts his company, goes out from his squadron – then, all the more ought we to go ahead as generous men, as strong in the committed militia and in the battle, to accept fatigue, to fight on in the interests of our soul, for the souls of our neighbors, and more than anything else for the Lord of the Lord: *...set up a wall for the House of Israel...* [cf. Ezk 13:5] – following the counsels of the Apostle: *Let every man abide in the same calling in which he was called* [cf. 1 Co 7:20]. Let us not lose courage, since the Lord is with us: *If God be for us, who is against us?* [cf. Rm 8:31].

Since it is indispensable for the soldier, and his most strict duty, to accept military discipline, its observance is rigorously demanded and with supreme severity it must be fulfilled. An undisciplined army cannot fight with any realistic hope, it cannot bring honor to its prince, and it cannot obtain victory and triumph.

And so, my brothers, this is the way it is with us. Religious discipline is absolutely necessary to give glory to God and to be able to fight his battles. And there is no doubt that a Congregation that is well ordered, by the observance of its rules is turned into a terrible array against the spirit of the world and the devil, it is like a *terrible as an army set in array* [cf. CT 6:3, 9]. Now, this discipline is determined for us precisely, directed and is maintained by the rules, without the observance of which one is not an authentic religious.

The rules, my beloved brothers, are – according to Rodriguez - like ‘a rampart for a city: because just as a city is better protected when it has not only a wall, but also a rampart...so, God has granted this grace to religious communities: He has girded us and armed us first of all with a very strong wall of His Law and His Commandments. And in addition to this, then, He has also provided another wall, or rampart, viz., with the Rules and Constitutions of the Religious Community. And thus, when we are assailed by our enemies – which they bring about us as the battle continues – the most

they can do is to break down and leave on the ground only a part of this rampart. However, the principal wall of God's Law and Commandments remains always intact, and we are saved.'

'Religious communities have even more than this rampart with the rules and evangelical counsels, which greatly help to keep the commandments of the law of God. And so for anyone who might make Religious Profession to observe the perfect of the Counsels succeeds very easily in the observance of the Commandments: and on the contrary, anyone who chooses not to observe the Counsels, nor attend to his perfection, only with great difficulty will he observe the Commandments of God. Thus, the Saints note that the rules and Counsels that we profess in the religious state are not a burden, but rather a help, in order to bear better the weight of God's Commandments.' Therefore, the Rules are not burdensome, because they may be compared to wings of birds enabling one to fly – provide legs as for the animals of the earth to walk. Rather, they render the religious who faithfully observes them a happy and content man: because where there is order, there is also peace.

Let us guard ourselves from that diabolic temptation of neglecting some of these as of no consequence, as mere *minutiae*. Just confer St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori's, *True Spouse of Jesus Christ*, where he states: 'he would convince us to pay little heed to them. All the rules ought to be considered as something important, also because all are ordered by God and approved by the Church as a means of religious perfection, to which all persons consecrated to God ought to aspire continually. This is because the lack of observance of the Rules [even of the small ones] put in disorder the whole religious Community and the entire Community. It is certain that in that monastery where the little matters are carefully attended to, fervor reigns. However, where these matters are not held as important, the spirit is either already lost, or little by little it is becoming lost, and will eventually be totally lost.'

From such observance are united one's perfection and predestination: just confer, *True Spouse*. St. Francis de Sales offered this grand principle: *the predestination of religious souls is bound up with the observance of their rules*. And St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi used to say that the observance of the rules is the most direct path to eternal salvation and holiness... The Holy Spirit states: those who hold discipline in no account [i.e., their rules] are unhappy, and hope in vain in their fatigue, since their efforts will remain without fruit.'

How meritorious these matters are! And then, do we not all have so many debts to pay to satisfy God? And what has He not done for us? And where are we?

Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice retained in his own high esteem, and kept careful vigil, not to fail even in some minimal prescription, concerning that which pertains to the common observance. He was accustomed to saying that particular

prayers and the other exercises of devotion and of piety and of mortification that were customarily done by religious beyond what the rules demanded, are all good things. However, for Communities, the best of all, and the most necessary to do well, and from which never to dispense oneself, but to follow perfectly always, would be that of observing exactly all that one's own religious community prescribes. He was, therefore, most exact in carrying out with all solicitude and diligence whatever is contained in the rules and whatever is commanded in the Constitutions of his own community. And no matter how small certain matters might be, the fervent spirit of Father Leonard never refused them as such. Rather he would always say to his companions, exhorting them to be exact in the good customs of religion: 'Whatever might be pleasing or displeasing before the eyes of God does not merit the name of something minimal.' Other maxims he used to share with his co-disciples: 'If now that we are young, we do not take into consideration even the minor matters [he shared this while he was still a student] and we fall advertently into light transgressions, this will mean that when we will more advanced and when we will have greater freedom, we will make light of the big failures, and we will have little regard from falling into major transgressions' [cf. his *Life*, c. 3].

For St. Lawrence Justinian, the ordinary maxim was that a religious should tremble in the presence of the least transgression.

And so, my brothers, before we go over these matters one by one, also this year, let us strive to observe our principle requirements in an outstanding way- these would be meditation made with the proper additions, as regards duration and diligence, each day with a new sense of commitment, without ever being discouraged. The same goes for the Mass; the particular examen on our principal defect, and the like, on our confrontations. And for this, let us ask the help of the Spiritual Father. Let us reflect on our modesty, particularly that of the eyes, our poverty in asking permissions, and our obedience at the first sound of the bell – and all these matters.

Let us band together, much like when soldiers come to line up for a march. And remember that God ***will save a humble people***. [cf. Ps 17:28].



IV. *COMPENDIUM RUDE*

1. **The Objective of this Community is to be: Apostolic Missionaries for the service of Bishops.**

2. **The Manner of Achieving this Goal:** *[the Apostolic Missionaries are] to work under the direction of, and dependent on the Ordinaries of those places in which the Missions may be offered. The Missionaries are to be totally submissive to these Bishops, concerning all that pertains to the exercise of their Apostolic endeavor. The Missionaries are to receive beforehand from them their permission, along with the necessary faculties, always observing the guide-lines set down by these Ordinaries concerning the places and the time in the exercise of their apostolate. [From the Decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation, December 20, 1817].*

3. **Weapons: The Divine Word and Prayer**

The End – The Manner: As the Company of Jesus is with regard to the Pope, we are we towards the Bishops, without binding ourselves by vow to individual Bishops. – *Prepared for all* - **The Weapons:** the sword of the Word of God and the armament of Prayer. The saying of Fr. Carafa – Exhortation.

Beginning to read our *Original Constitutions*, we read that which our Saintly Founder puts at the forefront.

It is seen clearly that Fr. Bertoni's intention would have to have been that of instituting a Congregation, which like the Company of Jesus is in a special manner dedicated, directed toward the assistance and the dispositions of the Roman Pontiff, would be that of being dedicated and determined in a very special and outstanding manner to the service of Bishops; however, with this difference, that while the professed of the Company of Jesus make a Vow of Obedience to the Pope, our Members do not make the Vow of Obedience to the Bishop, but seek in every way that they can, to help him, to assist him obsequiously, in a particular manner to be dedicated to him. Since it is one matter to vow oneself to the Pope who has the administration of the entire Catholic Church, it is another to be committed to a Bishop in this way. For, by dedicating oneself to a single diocese would mean to restrict also the sphere of our ministry. We would then be *Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of a Bishop*, and not of the *Bishops*: indeed a single Bishop could, in such a case, by sending us here and there, now one confrere, and then another, this would destroy us and consume us. This, then, is the essence of our Institute, its end and the manner of obtaining it ³⁶.

³⁶ This is a very important text: the model for Fr. Bertoni's *Compendium Rude* seems to have been the *Formula* of the Society of Jesus. The nine numbers of this *Formula*, contain 'Five Chapters', perhaps the original Ignatian jotting: 1. the **End** of the Company and its Fundamental Regimen; 2. The **Special Obedience** to the Supreme Pontiff; 3. **Obedience within the Company**; 4. The **Poverty** of the Company; 5. **Miscellaneous**: no specific habit; no service in Choir, etc. Fr. Lenotti's emphasis in this comparison he makes is the special obedience the Stigmatine owed to Bishops [in the plural]. This is the *Stigmatine Modus* - there is an

This is a great commitment, as you see well as well as the excellence of this end: **to serve**³⁷ **the Bishops, whom the Holy Spirit has placed to rule the Church of God** [cf. Ac 20:28]. We are called to be the successors of the Apostles, and companions of all Missionaries dispersed³⁸ all over the world.

But, as we have said other times, we have to be Missionary-Soldiers, **disposed for anything: *parati ad omnia!***³⁹. We are called to proceed through the level paths as well as through the steep ascents, we are soldiers in peace as well as at war, in prosperity as well as in adversity and tribulations. We are called, in all of the above, to remain firm at our post, and to defend ourselves from the enemies and to wage combat in the wars of the Lord. Therefore, for this we need weapons.

The principal weapons of the Missionary are two: the Sword of the Divine Word and the Sword of Prayer.

The Sword of the Divine Word: ***the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of god*** [cf. Ep 6:17]. This is that sword, that is more penetrating than another sword with two cutting edges: ***for the Word of God is living and effectual and more piercing than any two-edged sword*** [cf. Heb 4:2], which penetrates even to the most intimate part of the soul, and wounds and conquers. And this, my brothers, it is necessary to learn to handle well, with studies and with holy lectures, and to use it well, according to the circumstances: **in the confessional, in the prisons, in the pulpit, on the platform, from the altars, in the Exercises, Missions, Oratories, Retreats, familiar conversation, etc.**⁴⁰, animating it with the Spirit of the Lord, Who always ought to be

interesting study on the Ignatian *Modus* : *Appunti di Spiritualita'* 12. ***El modo nuestro de proceder – il nostro modo d'agire.*** [Conference of Fr. General, January 18, 1979. Fr. Stofella has noted that the Founder's CF # 185 articulates the headings left as incomplete sentences in the *Compendium Rude*. It seems that for Fr. Leonotti the *essence* of the Stigmatine Community is this qualified *obsequium* – service of the Bishops.

³⁷ It may be of some interest to note the Fr. Lenotti renders *in obsequium*, as **to serve**[cf. also CF # 3]: St. Ignatius wrote his Constitutions in Spanish, and the words; *servir, servicio, servo* recur over 1,000 times. In translating these Constitutions into Latin, the faithful Secretary of St. Ignatius, Fr. Polanco, varied between *servitium* – *auxilium* and *obsequium*. It seems that Ignatius was moved by the **Servant of the Lord**, that **Christ had come to serve, not to be served** : cf. Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45; Jn 12:26.

³⁸ This is Fr. Bertoni's geographical abandonment, ***quocumque in dioecesi et mundo!*** [cf. CF # 5.

³⁹ This is Fr. Marani's oft-repeated motto – and it is interesting to see Fr. Lenotti using it here in a very broad application of the various services to which the Community is committed in the Apostolic Mission – the priestly services very often appear in the plural: ***actions; labores; media; varia et propria ministeria; missiones; munera; opera.***

⁴⁰ **Etc.!!** – once more *Missions* appear as one part of a list, and not even mentioned first here – Fr. Bertoni offers his list in his **Part IX [cf. ## 158-186]** of the Constitutions, where he develops in 7 Chapters the ***varia et propria ministeria*** of our Apostolic Mission. St. Ignatius has three separate lists for his ***quodcumque Verbi Dei ministerium*** : ***Formula # 3; Part IV, c. 8, nn. 400-414; Part VII, nn. 637-654.*** The discernment to judge which aspect of these varied and proper ministries' of the Apostolic Mission is the law of *magis*, what is more needed, good, universal, the greater glory of God, the larger number of needs [cf. CSJ nn. 622, ff.]. It is hard to understand what is sometimes referred to the Stigmatine lists from the pen of the Founder as a ***genericita' rischiosa***. St. Gaspar's well remembered visit to the Altar of St. Ignatius [MP, September 15, 1808], speaks of promoting the Glory of God ***by the same paths, even thought not in all those manners*** [the word here is *modi*]

in our hearts, so that the inflamed Word might proceed to move and to enkindle the hearts of the faithful.

The other weapon, the other sword is prayer. My brothers, this is what I really want to reaffirm: that we might fix well into our minds the great need we have of prayer and that we would give ourselves over to it with great fervor.

Prayer, as you know, is that canal through which the Lord has determined to give us his graces: prayer is that means which, even alone, obtains all: ***and being but one, she can do all things***⁴¹: prayer is the key to God's treasures. It brings a sweet violence to God's heart.

Prayer unites us with God, it fills us with courage, with lights, with strength. What good can we do, both for ourselves as well as for others, if the Lord does not endow us with His help and grace? Our words would be gone with the wind. It was a familiar saying of Fr. Vincent Caraffa that to convert souls, *a good person of prayer is more suited than a most accomplished orator*. He used to call prayer *the proper task in leisure, and the real leisure for one's tasks*.

The Moabites and the Ammonites were congregated against Josaphat, the King of Juda. He did not lose heart, but had recourse to God with all his heart., with his people and his children. They went into battle not with the sound of trumpets and drums to excite the soldiers, but with the Canticle of Praise for the Lord. And God brought it about that the enemies would kill each other among themselves, and none escaped from death. So, the soldiers of Josaphat had no other task other for three whole days than carrying off the very rich spoils. And so, still singing their praises to the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem⁴².

So, my brothers, prayer is so necessary to fulfill the scope of our vocation. Let us pray much for our brothers are on the Mission⁴³, and more for the increase and progress of our Congregation. Prayer is our ***refuge from the trouble which has encompassed us*** [cf. Ps 31:7]. Let us pray much, then, let us trust in god, and He will not fail to bring us help in our needs: ***He flew on the wings of the wind*** [cf. Ps 17:11]: thus, God flies to respond to whomsoever prays to Him: ***I have called upon You... and You have heard me...*** [cf. Ps 85:7]⁴⁴: ***no one has hoped in the Lord and has been confounded...*** [cf. Si 2:11].

that he was able to employ..."Fr. Berotni also uses here the image of the Word of God as a sword. The Jesuits have a broad spectrum of possible apostolic services – this seems to be the parallel Fr. Lenotti is drawing.

⁴¹ cf. Ws 7:27 – here this text on the fruits of Divine Wisdom is accommodated to Prayer.

⁴² Cf. 2 Ch 20:1-30.

⁴³ It is interesting that Fr. Lenotti has left this word in the singular – in many communities, to be 'on the Mission, means the men are carrying out their Apostolic tasks for the Lord. The allusion here is to our Stigmatine **Apostolic Mission**.

⁴⁴ Fr. Lenotti has made an accommodated use of this verse: *I have called upon You in the day of my trouble: because You have heard me*. It is close to Ps 4:2: *When I called upon Him...God heard my prayer...*

V.

**WITH TOTAL GRATUITY, THE APOSTOLIC MISSIONARY WILL
SERVE GOD AND THE CHURCH [CF # 3].**

The gratuitous service of the observant Missionaries – The Example of the Son of God - Serve God and the Church, our neighbors – The example of St. Ignatius – the Founder and Fr. Marani – Exhortation.

Right here, my beloved brothers, we have one of the more essential, and fundamental⁴⁵ rules of our Institute: to serve God and the Church, and all for no remuneration: *gratis* .

In the first place, we are Missionaries-Soldiers, as we saw another time. However, precisely because we are soldiers, we have to serve⁴⁶. The soldier ought to serve God, our King; Jesus Christ, our Captain and Leader; the Church, our Christian Homeland. We are not, therefore Missionaries to command, but to serve: let us keep this uppermost in mind, my brothers. *The disciple is not above his master, nor is the servant above his lord* [cf. Lk 6:40]. Also the Son of God, the Head of all Missionaries, *is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister* [cf. Mt 20:26], *taking the form of a servant* [cf. Ph 2:7] – he served for 30 years in a work shop; He served in His preaching even to the washing of the feet of His Apostles; and He served His Divine Father and human beings and serves also now in the Most Blessed Sacrament, humbling Himself under the species of bread. Thus, the Missionaries and apostolic men, in order to be ready for the needs of our neighbors, *become all things for all, that we might save all for Christ*. [cf. 1 Co 9:22]. Let us not withdraw from hearing confessions, from distributing Holy Communion, from preaching, instructing, administering the Sacraments and WHATEVER ministry God would will⁴⁷. We are Missionaries, but Servants. Let us not have any repugnance, and the like: let us serve also under the weight of fatigue and tribulation.

And first of all, let us serve God and the Church: to please Him, seeking not to disgust Him with our defects, attending to our perfection, with the mortification of ourselves, with patience and with the observance of the vows and of the Rules.

⁴⁵ Fr. Lenotti makes a broader use of the word *essential* - perhaps here in parallel with the word *fundamental*. An early General Chapter, responding to Fr. Vicentini [cf. **IXth and Xth General Chapters**] , declared that the *Compendium Rude* contained the “**Fundamental Rules**” of the *Original Constitutions*.

⁴⁶ As has been noted, St. Ignatius was blessed with a Mysticism of Service. In writing his Constitutions originally in Spanish, Fr. Polanco in putting them into Latin used three separate words: *servir* – *auxiliari* – *obsequi*, the latter becoming Fr. Bertoni’s favorite. The under-lying emphasis can be the **Servant** of the Lord. [cf. also **CF # 3**]

⁴⁷ And once again, Fr. Lenotti offers a list – here he seems to be alluding to the *quodcumque Verbi Dei Ministerium* in St. Ignatius’; *Formula 1* – and in Fr. Bertoni’s **CF # 162**, under the *Means by which this Institute promotes the Salvation of our Neighbors: Verbi Dei quodcumque ministerium!*

And we are to serve the Church: our neighbors with prayer, good example, **studies**⁴⁸, preaching, **etc.** What an honor this is, what glory is this not for us! And what excellence is there not required for all this!

And we are called to **serve gratuitously**. What kind of a soldier are we meant to be? ***Who serves as a soldier at any time at his own charges*** [cf. 1 Co 9:7] – no, ***gratuitously***. The stipend in the other world will be all the greater.

What has Jesus Christ done? All was ***gratuitous***, even in behalf of His enemies. The Apostles did everything ***gratuitously***: rather, St. Paul labored for his own livelihood, etc. We too serve without remuneration. As the saints have also done.

The lack of self-interest serves as a great magnet to draw hearts to God. This lack of self-interest also enchants human beings who are so drawn to self-interest and personal gain. Especially in our own times in which no one does anything for nothing. The lack of personal self-interest enchants our neighbors, and is experienced in the Missions: they can never make a complaint.

This was the situation of St. Ignatius and his companions on the Day of the Assumption when they took their vows. They obliged themselves not to demand anything from their work in order to remain free in their ministry. They were also able to stop the criticism of the Lutherans, who accused the ministers of God from dispensing holy realities in order to enrich themselves.

And this is what we are challenged to be. The Lord gave to our venerated Founder this spirit of a lack of self-interest. And he rigorously observed it, being faithful even to the point of being scrupulous. He refused gifts, inheritances, and the like, and the same spirit is evident in our present Father Prepositus: nothing ***for any ministry, in response to the work that has been offered***. Let us thank the Lord that all the less that we receive from our fellow human beings, then, all the more will we receive from God.

So, let us be inspired by this Constitution, to serve the Lord courageously. Let us be humble toward all, because we are their servants: but, together let us always have the great esteem for our vocation and not be afraid: because who knows what are the plans of God upon us, and our Congregation? His Providence, if we are faithful, will lead us towards the execution of His most holy and most sweet will.

⁴⁸ For the varied Apostolic Mission [*per varia et propria ministerial* - CF # 185] there is needed particularly a **more than ordinary knowledge**, one that is not mediocre, but capable of illumine minds, which are in darkness; resist heresies; **to explain the reasons for the faith**; to resolve moral questions, to satisfy all in any theological doctrine. Due to the *obsequium*, perhaps in union with **LG # 25**, the **Stigmatine theologian** is called also **to assist the Magisterium** in explaining its reasons for its teaching, documents.

VI.

4. THE APOSTOLIC MISSIONARIES ARE TO REMAIN IMMUNE FROM ALL DIGNITIES, RESIDENCES, BENEFICES, AND THE PERPETUAL AND PARTICULAR CARE OF SOULS.

5. THE APOSTOLIC MISSIONARIES ARE TO BE READY TO GO ANYWHERE IN THE DIOCESE AND THE WORLD.

They are to remain immune from all dignities, etc. – to avoid pride and in defense of humility – In defense of the religious spirit – A heart as great as the world.

The Rule that our Founder has placed in our Congregation is this: to be really immune from dignities, residences, benefices and the perpetual and particular care of souls and of religious sisters and nuns: this is a rule that shuts off any approach to ambition, to vanity and to other inconveniences to our way of life.

Regarding residences, this would mean that a member would come to be absent for long periods of times, and even perpetually from the Congregation, with great harm to himself and to the Institute. In addition to the fact that the better and more suitable individuals in this manner would be taken from the Congregation which would become despoiled of them.

There are three very beautiful reasons in support of this Rule that our venerated Founder took from St. Ignatius, and which is both so fitting and necessary for our Institute.

1. In the first place, our Founder wanted to root us well in humility, and to keep always immersed in it: therefore, the confreres are to be *immune from dignities, etc.*, as Jesus put it to His own Apostles: *I saw Satan, like lightning, falling from heaven* [cf. Lk 10:18]. The Lord makes use of the humble: *He looks down on the low things* [cf. Ps 112:6; cf. Also 138:6], and *He resists the proud* [cf. Jas 4:6]. Pride is the most fatal moth of Congregations. Therefore, also St. Vincent de Paul recommended humility so much to his own sons, and humility in each and every individual because the Congregation is composed of individuals. If the individuals are always humble, then so will the Congregation be. Pride brought confusion to the Tower of Babel; and so proud would bring this confusion into the Congregation with ambition, and would eventually impede the building up of it, because *unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it*. [cf. Ps 126:1]. Humility, my brothers, will be our defense against the blows of the adversary while humility is the foundation of our perfection, humility will protect us in that very little we have accomplished up to the present and will increase this. Therefore, my brothers, let us love humiliation. Let us not yearn from dignities – let us respect the religious of other communities, holding ourselves to be the least of all, and we are indeed the least, the very last of all. If we

provide for ourselves a deep root of humility, do not entertain any doubts that the tree will grow.

2. The second reason is to maintain always in us the religious spirit. If we should ever have to spend long stretches of time working, outside of the Congregation, outside the surveillance of the Superiors, of the example of our brothers and of the regular discipline – dissipation, distraction little by little would filter into our hearts. And just think of the harm: even to the point of being able to lose one's vocation, as has happened sometimes in our Congregation.

So, since even in the work of the Missions, it is necessary to intersperse these with those returns into the Congregation, there is thus maintained the religious spirit of poverty, of obedience, etc. Unfortunately, how many religious are ruined and lost with their remaining too long far from their Superiors! Therefore, Jesus Christ said to His Apostles: ***Come apart into a desert place and rest a little*** [cf. Mk 6:31].

3. The third reason is to keep for the Congregation her better subjects: this is something that is most important, especially for its government. In order to honor residences, these men would come to be away for long stretches of time, and taken from the community.

The Founder instead, added on another of the rules to this, corresponding to the preceding: ***The Apostolic Missionaries are to be ready to go anywhere in the Diocese and the world.***

We were not made to remain still, but we need to be ready as soldiers are, and disposed to help out everywhere, and not in anyone diocese, and also throughout the world. The reason for this, if any one of our men would be of the opinion that there is already plenty to do in our own city and diocese, without going about and spreading ourselves and distending ourselves also into other areas, they would show quite clearly that they do not have the spirit of our Institute.

Therefore, there is needed a heart as broad as the world! And it is now pleasing to the Lord to keep us limited and humbled. But, beyond this, He has given us the grace to help out in various dioceses. We hope that when the opportune time will come, established by Providence, that He will also grant us the grace to grow. His plans for this Congregation we do not know them. We must in the meantime have much courage in our hearts and to be very generous, and to entrust ourselves to God: if we are not found lacking, God certainly will never fail. But, if we wish to be disposed to go anywhere in the world, it is necessary that we begin to be indifferent regarding our rooms, clothing, food, our trips, and in everything.

VII. COMMON LIFE

What is intended by this – The sons of St. Philip – Common life in heaven and in the beginnings of the Church – Source of Peace and love for God, and of example for our neighbors – Is perfection – Pius IX and the Father Prepositus – Exhortation.

Another means ⁴⁹ which our venerated Founder prescribed for us in order to achieve the scope of our Institute is common life: *vita communis* .

What is intended by common life? Common life in the strict sense of the word means that life in which many live together, and all that there is in the house and in the monastery, all is in common, all may participate in everything available, and no one is the master of anything, and no one has the ownership of anything, nor is there any singularity, nor particular, exclusive, perpetual use: in brief, this is authentic poverty.

Therefore, among the sons of St. Philip, who are not religious but secular Priests, and who do not profess Poverty, each one recognizes what is his own, each has his own *peculium*, each has to pay for his own room and board; and so, there is not with this common life as described here.

Common life does reign in heaven among the blessed and the saints: all participate in one and the same good: God ⁵⁰. All enjoy this good: it is the same beatitude for all: and thus, there are charity, union and peace. Of the ancient Christians ⁵¹, it is related in the Acts of the Apostles that they *held all in common*, because all brought of their substance and deposited it at the feet of the Apostles – cf. Rodriguez on this point – and placed everything together [cf. Ac 4:32]⁵² ‘And Saints Cyprian, Basil, Jerome and others, say that at that time the faithful made a vow of poverty: and they prove this with the punishment meted out against Ananias and Sapphira [cf. Ac 5:1-15], who, for having hidden a part of the price of their possession were castigated with a sudden death. This is a sign that they had made a vow of

⁴⁹ Along with the ‘*End*’, ‘*Scope*’ of the Congregation as presented by Fr. Bertoni, there are various *means* to achieve the various aspects of the **End**, variously described: as primarily for the glory of God and the salvation of oneself. Then, there are the *means* to obtain the salvation of oneself, of one’s neighbor: these may be spiritual, juridical, ministerial [this is studied at some length by Suarez] - our discussion for many years has been on the principal ministries, the *apostolic means*: is it one central aspect of the Apostolic Mission, or the various and proper ministries? Fr. Lenotti’s response in the previous Exhortation seems to be the customary list of possible ministries which St. Gaspar Bertoni intended.

⁵⁰ There is evident here the eschatological dimension of authentic common life.

⁵¹ Fr. Bertoni often refers to **the Apostles with Christ**, and the **early Church**: CF ## 252; 261; 272; 273.

⁵² Fr. Bertoni found in this example of the **early Church** the ideal for his *Original Constitutions* : cf. CF ## 189; 226; 232.

poverty – because if they had not done so, they would not have suffered so great a castigation.’⁵³

In the same way, there ought to be common life among us, which is a font of peace with oneself, with one’s neighbor, with God. It brings peace to oneself, because with the common life there are not those attractions for more goods; with one’s neighbor, because there is no: ‘this is yours, and his’, often the source of arguments and real disputes; and thus, all commit themselves to remove the disorders in the house. Common life brings peace with God because this detachment for possessions produces a greater love for God. The Apostles left their boats and nets and then they were totally of the Lord and for their neighbors. The non-believers saw the early Christians with this common life and their sharing of goods, and this was how many were converted. And so we, for this purpose of converting, and the like – [let us follow their example].

However, this common life can be more or less perfect according to its rigorous or broad manner with which it is observed. And in this way, Poverty can be more or less perfect. Among us, the common life, our Venerated Founder wanted it to be perfect: he always wanted it this way, and he himself was its most rigorous observer. Clothing was meant to be all in common. No one can have anything of his own choice from the wardrobe keeper. And that which one has today, tomorrow may be given to someone else. All is in common: the rooms were exchanged [from one to another ⁵⁴]. They took their meals in common, as their recreation was in common – all shared everything and no one was the master of anything. What a beautiful ideal this is! What for tune it is for a Religious Community, or Congregation where common life reigns! And how fortunate those where it is not had! One could not say much more than say poverty is there, but not much more. Where there is no common life, the saints tell us, it is better not to go there: they did not advise anyone to enter such a community.

The Supreme Pontiff, Pius IXth, in an audience with our most revered Father *Prepositus*, who had not expressed his satisfaction concerning this, expressed the satisfaction that he experienced on hearing that among us there is a perfect common

⁵³ For this exegesis, Fr. Lenotti quotes Rodriguez, Part III, c. 1, n. 1.

⁵⁴ Speaking to Religious Sisters, Fr. Lenotti expressed himself thus: ‘ Now, this common life is a representation of the celestial life – rather, that is its genuine type and its perpetual reward. In fact, St. John Chrysostom thus spoke of it against those attacking the monastic life. In Book III: *Those who remain in the monasteries, choose a living together that is celestial*. And he immediately gives the reason for this: *for all things are in common for them*. In fact, every good is held in common there; even all those blessed Spirits share it, they possess and enjoy the same Good: God Himself! There is for all the same beatitude. And precisely as they approach that blessed common life, in so far as they were endowed with this mortality of ours, the Apostles and the first Christians who, under the direction of the Apostles had all things in common, and no one said that anything belonged to anyone of them. This example was followed by Religious, especially those who under St. Mark the Evangelist established in Alexandria the foundations of the cenobitic life.

life! And so, my brothers, if we did not have anything else about which to find consolation on being in this Congregation, and to thank Him a thousand times over solely for this, how great should not our gratitude toward Him be!

It is our task to guard it, this common life, with every diligence, and to make every effort so that through our own fault there not be introduced any abuses. And so, for heaven's sake, we need to ask for permissions: we should be most attentive about this, and not dispose of things at our own whim – without permission, we are not to give away anything, nor receive anything.

Let us keep in mind that the ruin and the destruction of common life – and therefore, of religious poverty – are not introduced over night, but little by little. Let us keep watch, therefore, that the Devil, on one occasion having received a pretext, and in some other situation an excuse – sometimes it is because of sickness, other times because of certain sudden attacks of it, and still other times with truly unsavory interpretations, with stretching leniency to the beyond – and still other times, out of human respect – let us say 'no' to all encroachments, and always to ask for the necessary permissions.

Let us look to the saints! How jealous they were of poverty! Our Parents of such happy memory! Mary, Jesus, Joseph in the Home at Nazareth!



VIII. THE PERPETUAL EXERCISE IN EVERYTHING OF OBEDIENCE, CHASTITY AND POVERTY. [*Compendium Rude* # 6].

We are now in the Christmas Season, with a devout Crib – no matter how reduced – right before our eyes.

The Infant Jesus: *Learn from Me* the practical exercise of the Religious Virtues – Victims of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty – Examen – The Example of the Infant Jesus.

This Infant, from this hay on which He lies, goes on saying – especially to us Religious – ***Learn from Me*** [cf. Mt 11:29].

What should we learn, o Blessed Jesus? ***Learn from Me.*** But, what is it that we should learn from You, o Infant Jesus?

Learn from Me: the perpetual exercise in everything of Obedience, Chastity and poverty This is what I want you to learn from Me, o students of the Apostolic Missionaries: a perpetual exercise of obedience, chastity and poverty in everything. [I would wish that you would learn] to practice **this most important Rule** that Your Founder places as **the principal means to obtain the scope of your Institute**⁵⁵.

What a holy rule this is! And what beautiful words! Just ponder these words, my beloved brothers! Let us weigh them one by one, because they merit this and they are most worthy of our reflection.

The perpetual exercise: All exercise demands a repetition of acts of that particular virtue which one needs to exercise, and a repetition of habitual acts.

Whoever exercises a liberal, or mechanical art, and the like [repeats these acts every single day]. So, it is required that we should repeat each day the acts of Obedience, of Chastity, and of Poverty, and to obey habitually, to be habitually chaste, and to be poor habitually. And not only this, but we need also to be exercised also in these virtues.

The perpetual exercise: therefore, this exercise must continue from morning until evening, even sleeping and eating. Should we perhaps prolong this for one month? For a year? No: these are too little. For three years, then? This too, is not enough: it is needed for the duration of one's whole life, forever.

Some time ago, we dedicated ourselves to the Lord with Vows of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty: therefore, this was not meant to be just for a time, as may be done in certain Congregations, but always, right up to the very last breath we are consecrated to the obedience of our Father *Prepositus*, and of those who by him are charged with directing and commanding; [we are consecrated to] Chastity, and so forth, and to poverty as well. And so, we are not vowed to be a little obedient, chaste, poor and just a little bit according to our own style...

What a beautiful thing! ***For Your sake we are put to death all the day long!*** [cf. Rm 8:36]: we are Victims for God! Do you not see this Infant was seen by St. John: ***And I saw...a Lamb standing, as it were slain...*** [cf. Rv 5:6].

Obedience: therefore, obey not only in the matters we like, but also in those areas that are contrary to a natural preferences: ***in everything.***

⁵⁵ Fr. Lenotti sees this Rule on the observance of the Evangelical Counsels as *the principal means to obtain the scope* of the Institute, which is, of course, the sanctification of the members, *perfectio suiipsius*. [cf. also CF ## 47 and especially 48].

Chastity: a chastity of the eyes, ears, in the practice of modesty of our every movement: *in everything*.

Poverty: a poverty, *in everything*: in dressing, in eating, in drinking, in sleeping, in one's gait, in all things: *in everything!*

But, do we really practice this our rule with exactness? This perpetual exercise of ours, how is it going? Are we truly disposed to obey perpetually, *even unto death*... are we indeed so much in love with castigating, and mortifying our flesh? Are we indeed lovers of suffering? Or, rather do we seek our own comforts in an excessive manner? Are we so in love with poverty?

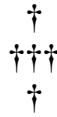
Let us give some thought as to what this Infant is saying to us: ***Then said I: Behold I come: in the head of the Book it is written of me: that I should do Your Will, o God!*** [cf. Heb 10:7].

And He was subject to them [cf. Lk 2:51]: he let Himself be directed, placed, borne, and the like, wherever they wanted.

My Beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands...He has gone down... to feed among the lilies [cf. Ct 5:10]⁵⁶. This is the way Solomon depicts Him in the Canticles.

I am poor and in labors from My youth... [Ps 87:16]

Have courage: ***learn of Me*** [Jesus says to us]; let us learn this *perfect exercise*, and so on: let us dutifully resolve to maintain that which by vow we have already sworn to the Lord to observe.



⁵⁶ Cf. also 6:1 = not noted here.

IX.

THE PROGRAM OF LIVING WHETHER REGARDING FOOD, OR⁵⁷ CLOTHING AND LODGING, WILL BE IN HARMONY WITH THE MORE OBSERVANT CLERGY AMONG WHOM THE MISSIONARIES LIVE, FOR THE EDIFICATION OF THE FAITHFUL, BOTH REGARDING CHRISTIAN PARSIMONY AND EVANGELICAL POVERTY.

This rule in takes nothing away from the spirit and the practice of Christian and Religious Mortification – Fr. Lenotti's Motto was Let us continually carry around through penance in our own body the Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ - The Mission of the Son of God and the wisdom of man – The example of the saints – We have offended God: we need internal and external penance – The spirit and acts of compunction – the Example and warnings of the Infant Jesus - to pay our debts means to anticipate the Justice of God – *Execute judgment and justice*: otherwise, God will do it. Once the rule was read, Fr. Lenotti went on:

You see well that our Venerated Founder did not prescribe for us anything singular and extraordinary of our manner of life, regarding lodging, food and clothing and the like. Since our main task is to help of our neighbors, we ought to find ourselves continuously among our neighbors, and so there should not be anything about us that would frighten them⁵⁸.

⁵⁷ This *Compendium Rude 6* is placed as it is here at the head of the Exhortation which then follows, in the very hand-writing of Fr. Lenotti. However, Fr. Stofella only removed the *etc.* that is found after the second *sive* in order to follow the Founder's Latin through to the end. However, what follows may perchance delude the reader, in the sense that the expected explanation of this text of the Founder in the end, really does not occur here. Rather, its place is taken by a kind of exhortative caution, merely occasioned by this text, but which remains marginal to the development of his thought. Fr. Lenotti speaks here rather of the permanent necessity of **the spirit of penance**.

It seems that Fr. Lenotti was overtaken here by a concern of his: that sooner or later, some confrere would misunderstand this *Program of Living* and its limits, and would take up forthwith the expression *the more perfect, observant clergy* and what follows immediately afterwards *Christian parsimony* and *Evangelical Poverty*. Fr. Lenotti's fear was that this rule would be understood to render the regular observance more comfortable. He goes on: 'This is indeed not what the Founder intended!' And then he adds that there remains in play the spirit of Christian penance – or, mortification – to which all Religious are held even more than others would be, as a duty of their state in life. For his part, Fr. Lenotti wrote along side of a meditation on the *Crucifixion* of the Lord, for the Retreat that he preached also to our own men, taking inspiration from a motto that might be characteristic to him: Let us continually carry around through penance in our own body, the Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is quite clear that his own teaching and witness he directed along this path: we will follow this in the indications he has left behind in his manuscript.

With regard to the Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ - included in the official title given to the Congregation at the approval of the Constitutions in September 1890 – would be in full accord with one of Fr. Marani's idea of calling us The Order of the Sacred Stigmata. Here we find the **Sacred Stigmata** as a vital part of Fr. Lenotti's own spirituality.

⁵⁸ Cf. Rodriguez, Part II, tr. I, c. VII, n. 2: 'Many just reasons moved our holy Father [Ignatius] to establish and to order that the **manner of living** [cf. our *modus*, in: CF # 2] of the Company of Jesus should be common as regards external appearances, because all the means have to be in proportion to the end. And since the end of the Company of Jesus is not only to attend to one's own profit, but also to the spiritual salvation and profit of our

However, our Venerated Founder did not intend by this Rule that there be done cast aside every penance, and especially that *spirit of penance*, so often preached by Jesus Christ in the Gospel with His words *Do penance*, which was His first Sermon: *for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand* [cf. Mt 4:17] ⁵⁹.

Do penance: this was the Summary, the **Compendium**, the end and the scope of the whole Mission of God's Son in this world: i.e., to invite men and women to penance and to the changing of their customs, the restraining of their passions, to a mortified and holy life, and from all this they would thus merit to enter into the Reign of Heaven. By His death, He is about to open this for them.

This is authentic wisdom, this is the end, the goal, the ultimate human good: do penance, and with this penance to acquire for oneself the reign of heaven, eternal glory.

The Saints animated by this voice and by this spirit of Jesus Christ, were all lovers of penance. It would suffice to read their lives to see the privations, the austerities, the fasts, the disciplines, the discomfort, the sufferings of every type, the penalties to which they subjected themselves.

We, on our part, by our sins have offended God our Creator, Redeemer and Father and **Spouse** ⁶⁰ of our souls: *do penance!* The Divine Judge says this with full freedom, rather He commands this to us: this is penance of the spirit, with contrition and repentance: external penance in the body with mortification. The first consists in detesting sin, and the second in punishing it with salutary acts that bring satisfaction.

About the former, I will say only this: that exercising oneself often in compunction of heart and in acts of sorrow is a most helpful exercise for the soul. There are unfortunately certain religious souls who in their meditations, in their devotions, and so on, do not like so much to think of their transgressions and defects, because it is one thing that does not give them much joy, and it is rare that they would repent of all these. The Saints did not act in this way. Their favorite exercise was that of weeping over their transgressions: *my sin is always before me* [cf. Ps 50:5]. This is

neighbors, it was most fitting that we should have a **habit in common with the Priests working in the cities**. This would insure a greater possible to be received by all kinds of persons.'

And further on: 'If we had worn a harsh habit, that spirit of any poor sinful person would have more than sufficed to make him afraid to approach us, thinking that we would thus be harsh with him.

⁵⁹ In Fr. Lenotti's text, there is a note right here: 'cf. Pinamonti and my Instruction on External Penance.' Pinamonte comes later. Here is Fr. Lenotti's own Instruction, which was presented as an Instruction to the People, which is more complete. To this there are two traces of interdependent instructions that are inter-woven: to the Nuns and to the Seminarians. What follows is from these, without changing anything, according to what the original text manifests.

⁶⁰ The espousal theme in the spiritual life was quite common among the early Stigmatines.

what David said. And *every night I will wash my bed: I will water my couch with my tears*. [cf. Ps 6:7]. St. Peter formed furrows in his cheeks from his tears.

Let us come now to external penance: but, since we are in the Christmas time, let us first say something about the Baby Jesus ⁶¹.

He lies in a rather rude cave, a wretched stable, a hay barn, and a little babe trembles with the cold. There are two animals who with their warm breath bring some heat to the stable: a woman and a man who suffer His pains with him: what a marvelous spectacle this is! This stable, my brothers, I intend that it should be our **school** ⁶²: this is the **School of the Son of God!** That hay, that barn is his professor's chair. What are the lessons of such a divine master? He speaks with His deeds, not with just words: He preaches with example, more eloquent than rhetorical devices: *Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart!* [cf. Mt 11:29]. And He wants our hearts: *My son, give Me your heart...* [cf. Pr 23:26]. But, do you believe that our love, provided that it be authentic love, would not stop at merely words, in empty tenderness? No, He wants works, and deeds. *And they that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences*. [cf. Ga 5:24] ⁶³.

What could be more suitable for an honorable and truly good man – just read Pinamonte's: *The Religious Sister in Solitude* – than to pay his debts?

'The ancient Persians had to their great shame the reputation of dying without paying their debts. And with even more reason there should be heaped on a soul the great shame of departing from this world without first having satisfied his responsibilities and his debts before the divine tribunal. Otherwise, the not choosing to pay, if not out of sheer necessity, is incurring even greater indebtedness with God, as St. Cyprian tells us: 'these are the greater crimes: to have sinned, and not to make satisfaction: to prove delinquent and not to pay up the debts.'

I feared all my words, knowing that You will not spare the offender: this is what the holy Job says [cf. Jb 9:28] – as quoted by Pinamonti: 'this means tha the Lord does not pardon in the manner of delinquents whoever does not seek to make satisfaction from their excesses. Having posited this, it is necessary to think of not incurring debts with the Lord, but, if we are already indebted, it is a genuine cruelty heaped upon oneself that not thinking to do penance: while that which could be paid

⁶¹ Fr. Stofella thinks we are dealing here either with Christmas 1849, or new Year's 1850.

⁶² Fr. Bertoni himself often used this example – such as suffering as **the School of God** – cf. *Epistolario*, pp. 109; 256, f.; 326

⁶³ Here Fr. Lenotti returns to his original thought, where he makes an immediate reference to the *Religious Sister in Solitude*, of Fr. Pinamonti. The texts noted here are those from the 'Lesson for the Third Day: On the Virtue of Penance – Means to acquire its spirit – Acts with which it is exercised.'

off with a relatively light satisfaction, it will be commuted later to pay this debt with an indescribable weight of torment.

‘It happened once upon a time that a sick man suffered from a worm infested wound. And the surgeon, in order to spare pain from the languishing man permitted him to squeeze it and clean it with his own hands. However, as soon as the doctor noticed that the sick man did not squeeze it and purify the wound sufficiently, put himself to this task and allowed the man to cry out and gnash his teeth without pity. The reason was that in this way, in the end, the wound would be cured. This is what the divine justice does with souls who are excessively delicate. Thus, it will be noted that he who fears too much a bit of pallor, what would be of those voluntary austerities, when he is then buried in a horrible blizzard, which is the rigor of the Tribunal of heaven: *They that fear the hoary frost, the snow shall fall upon them!* [Jb 6:16].

And yet, who would believe this? When the subject of penance comes up, even among certain religious souls, it almost seems as though this were a barbaric language, which they do not know, or better: which they do not want to understand. It almost seems as though there had not been promulgated that law: *Man is born to labor* [cf. Jb 5.7] : that for them, the words of Christ have no meaning: *Do penance!* Those religious souls who have no desire to do penance, show sufficiently well that they simply do not have a religious spirit. Is not the religious state one of penance, mortification? If we would want everything tailored for our own tastes, that of suffering nothing, then we should have remained home. It is not the soul alone to have transgressed the divine commands, but also the body. Rather, many times it is the body principally: so, is it not just, then, rather most just, that the body should also play its role in satisfaction, in that the penalty be in some way conform to the crime?

Execute judgment and justice [cf. Jr 22:3]: it is not enough to make a judgment, and to condemn the guilty, it is then necessary to punish him. Our body is an implacable enemy, within our own household, who is so self-satisfied that he does not bother to command himself, and so his soul will be in hell forever. Whoever is angry with his donkey does not pet it, nor caress it, but strikes it, forces it.

In addition to the voluntary penances there are those penalties that come to us from the hand of God, or which he permits that come to us through free causes, such as ingratitude from others, being the butt of jokes, contumelies, denunciations, calumnies, injustices: all these suffer patiently, with peace. Be careful rather that you pay your debts by means of them, and do not increase them stupidly by arguments, acts of impatience. God is the Creditor in our regard, Who is most discreetly loving – He has compassion on the weakness of our reasoning, and He accepts as payment also those evils that are not chosen by us, and is content that out of necessity we make a virtue.

If we do not wish to do penance of ourselves, let us recall well that sooner or later God will do it for us – but alas! How severe it will be! Let us take up the sword of mortification, of penance against ourselves, before the Divine Judge employs the sword of His tremendous Justice against us.



Fr. JOHN B. LENOTTI

Master of Novices

§§§§§

**IInd Superior General
[1871-1875]**

DOMESTIC EXHORTATIONS

on the

FOUNDER'S ORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONS

SECTION 2:

ADMISSIONS

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X. Pars I, c. III: CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE TO BE ADMITTED [CF ## 25-26].

XI. Pars II, C. III: THE MANNER IN WHICH THE NOVICE IS TRAINED [CF ## 33-39]

XII. CONCERNING CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE [CF # 37]

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XV. SPIRITUAL READING [CF # 47].

XVI. MANIFESTATION OF CONSCIENCE [CF # 47]

XVII. DENUNCIATION TO BE MADE OUT OF CHARITY [CF # 47]

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X.

FIRST PART, c. 3

[CF ## 25 – 26]

1. The Coadjutor Brothers: content with their lot as ‘Martha’ - Do their own part well – the Crucifix. The *Gloria Patri* – Fr. Lancisio’s norms - The Coadjutors participate in *solidity* with all the goods and merits of the Congregations –

2. Also for all the others: the Quest for Perfection – *For what reason have you come?* – the example of a religious – Six practical means - *I can do all*, etc.

1. CF 25: *Those who serve in temporal matters: in these candidates it is required that they be content with their Grade; that they be endowed with the proper age, strength of body for those labors that they are to carry out, who offer themselves in this particular life, and that they not be men who find excessive difficulty in understanding. Furthermore, the number of admissions of those dedicated to temporal matters is defined by the need of the work at hand, so that they will not be without commitment.*⁶⁴

Not to be content with one’s Grade is the strongest and most difficult temptation from which to be cured: therefore St. Ignatius would not allow the discontent to stay!

Let them be content with their Grade; because each one needs to be about his own business, according to the capacity of each one. In this way, all are more secure: outside of danger from vanity, and the like. Let us come to the concrete: what matters is just this that each one does his part well.

Comedians pull off a good act of imitation⁶⁵, whose praise and reward are not regulated by the personality whom they represent but from the style and charm with which each of them expresses his voice, his entire comportment, the gestures in representing another: and so, if there is one who performs better his role when representing the person of the Villain, than the one who represents the person of the Emperor – the former comes to be the more esteemed and praised by the audience, and more rewarded by the judges of the performance.

⁶⁴ [NB: for these pages, cf. **CS III, pp. 425-462**]. Regarding this Constitution, Fr. Lenotti has only left notes and jotted ideas. He was taken by the necessity that the Brothers be content with their grade – or – as St. Ignatius’ text reads – that *they be content with the lot as Martha* - words taken from Ignatius’ *Rules of the Temporal Collaborators*. Fr. Lenotti adds next his statement concerning those who are not content with their Grade:

⁶⁵ This may be Fr. Lenotti’s quoting from Rodriguez, Part I, Tr. VIII, c. 15, n. 6.

[Should the Coadjutor Brothers be over-taken by the temptation of applying themselves to studies]; let the Lay Brothers study the Crucifix: as was said to that good Cappuchin: ‘Your book, am I’, the Crucifix responded to him..

A Lay Brother who had a great temptation to apply himself to study, came to ask permission of this of St. Francis. And the saint responded: ‘My dear brother, learn the *Glory to the Father*, and you will understand all of Scripture.’ The Brother obeyed him, and never again suffered a similar temptation.⁶⁶

And just read Lancisio⁶⁷, Vol. II, ‘On the Labors of the Brothers’: their merit ... is not to seek help...When one task is completed, let them seek another...etc.

These Lay Brothers would conduct themselves as the servants of all, not certainly out of any obligation – because they are not slaves, but brothers – but, out of imitation of the saints and of Christ the Lord, who made himself a servant of all, and so forth [1°].

As for their own merit, they should know that their occupations and fatigues are the seed bed of their virtue [4°], and the source of great merits [7°]. They are much esteemed by God and wondrously rewarded by Him [6°]. Therefore, they should want to be kept very busy [8°] and to take part also in the work of others [9°]; and having completed their own tasks, they should be on the look for others [10°]; and let them not fake illness, or weakness in order to withdraw from them [11°]. Rather, let them offer themselves spontaneously to the Superiors for their every task [12°], and let them not take it to hear when others, especially the weaker among them, are only assigned to lighter tasks [14°]. Let them accomplish their duties with diligence, and as for the matters entrusted to them, let them see to it that nothing goes bad [17°], and without permission of the superior, let them not give anything to others, nor to take over anything for themselves [18°], and the like. Further, in 23° it is said: ***Let them not campaign for the priesthood***, especially for the fact that in the Company of Jesus the Lay Brothers share all *in solidity*, - precisely through the humble tasks – in the universal merit that the Society wins with her every ministry.

2. CF # 26: *The required characteristics in those who are admitted for the spiritual ministries: a certain capacity for learning, traits of good judgment, and a sufficient tenacity of memory; that they seek for all virtue and spiritual perfection...*⁶⁸

⁶⁶ St. Bonaventure, in his *Life of St. Francis*.

⁶⁷ It is known that the two Tomes of this celebrated Jesuit’s *Spiritual Works* - published in 1696 – were assigned for the spiritual reading for Fr. Lenotti by St. Gaspar. His full name was Nicholas Lanczycki, SJ, a Lithuanian [1574-1633 – became a Jesuit in 1590]. Cf. the reference to him in ‘Method of Studies’, attributed to Fr. Lenotti, in: **CS III, p. 24.**

⁶⁸ Fr. Lenotti offers the Italian Translation in a footnote here.

Let us stop here to reflect, because these words of the greatest importance. Therefore, those who enter into our Congregation, whether they come as Priests, students, or lay brothers, they ought to attend [to the quest for every virtue and perfection];[they ought to be] seeking for every virtue and all perfection.

In fact, if every Christian is obliged to tend toward perfection - ***be you therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect*** [cf. Mt 5:48] – and St. Ambrose affirms here: *When I say Christian, I imply one called to be perfect* ⁶⁹. While such an obligation proceeds from the precept that we all have to love God with all our strength: how much more, then, will not a Religious be held to this, who in a special manner has been called by God to perfection and is consecrated to God! And all the more are we held to tend toward perfecting ourselves, because in the way of the Lord it is certain that whoever does not advance, falls backward, and places himself in danger of falling into sin.

Even more do we religious have the obligation of walking toward perfection, and this due to the greater graces and divine assistance that we receive, in order to make us saints. This is so also by reason of the vows and of the rules of religion that we have promised to observe ⁷⁰.

And, in fact, *for what reason have you come* ⁷¹? We are, then, called to be striving after perfection. One who pursues song, or chant, what would he not do? He would always practice in it, and so on. And what about a woman seeking her own vanity, what would she not do? She would flaunt herself now in one dress, now in one style, and then in another, and so on. This is what brought tears to the eyes of that monk of ancient times: that in the city of Alexandria, seeing that woman all dressed up, he began to sigh and weep, and he was asked why: and he answered: how wretched I am! I do not exercise such solicitude and diligence in seeking to please God in my work, as this woman makes use of to present herself just to please men ⁷².

⁶⁹ cf. Sermo XII, in Ps 118.

⁷⁰ Cf. *True Spouse of Jesus Christ*, c. III, n. 12.

⁷¹ This is a saying of St. Bernard, quoted in Rodriguez, Part I, Tr. I, c. 15: *He often had this in his heart, and frequently also on his lips: Bernard, Bernard, for what reason have you come?* From this chapter, Fr. Lenotti took the care to transcribe the following part that is presented to us: ‘O, my God!, to what art or trade would I have committed myself out there in the world? Or, to what would I have given myself over for all that time that I have been in religion, and would I have known success in it?...Many years have passed since I came to the **School of Virtue**, and still I have not been able to finish learning even the first letter of the alphabet; I still have not acquired up until now the first degree of Humility.’

⁷² From a ‘Spiritual Diary’, a book cited by Fr. Lenotti – re-printed in Turin in 1923, p. 207.

What does a soldier do, who is seeking military discipline and to be trained in the military art, and so on?

Therefore, be seekers: desire in the very first place this perfection, and have a great desire for it. Confer the *True Spouse of Jesus Christ*, c. 4, n. 1: ‘Whoever sees a high mountain would he not desire to reach the top, where he knows he will find a treasure,, but yet would not take a single step in order to climb it, and if he remains at the crevice, standing aside, and lazy? ***So, run that you may obtain*** [cf. 1 Co 9:24].

And to tell the truth, St. Jerome says, all human beings seek to perfect themselves in their sciences. And then, in the Science of the Saints, so many are content only with having begun. ‘Why is it that in all the studies of this world, human beings are never satisfied; and in virtue, only to have begun, suffices?’

O if we would only imitate the example of that Religious [of whom Rodriguez speaks]!’He had entered into Religion after having conquered the opposition of his mother, by repeating obstinately: ‘I want to save my soul!’ But, then, he was taken over by a great neglect. It then happened that his mother died; and the son, who was by then seriously ill, as taken over by a terrible panic because it seemed as though he was standing before the tribunal of God with her. When the mother saw him among those who were to be condemned: ‘What’s this?’, she said to them: ‘is this how you end up? Whatever became of those words: ‘I want to save my soul’? At this scene, the religious remained in great confusion, and he did not know how to respond...When he came to – and it pleased the Lord that he should escape from that infirmity. But, he made such a profound change in his conduct that he did little else than to weep over his past conduct and he began to do penance. And to anyone who would suggest to him that he should be a bit more moderate, so that he would not lose his health, he responded: ‘If I had been unable to suffer the reproaches of my mother, then how could I suffer those of Christ and of His holy Angels on the day of judgment?’⁷³

However, to do this, it will not suffice to manifest a simple desire: there is needed an efficacious desire. The Rule says: that they are to be searching, be desirous, seeking - observe the word well [*studiosi*] is what the Rule requires. Observe the word well. It is necessary to commit oneself, there is needed a desire that would put in motion, into practice, the means suggested.

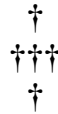
And what are these? It is not required that one take on extraordinary measures, or those exceeding our forces:

1. To flee any sin, or defect that is fully voluntary; but, after the defects that have been committed; not to be discouraged: rather, make repentance to take up the journey.

⁷³ The abbreviated account of this story is from Rodriguez, Part I, Tr. I, c. XV, n. 7.

2. Do with diligence and attention the ordinary matters: meditation, reading, Mass, the Office, eating, going for a walk, and the like.
3. To observe faithfully the rules of silence, obedience and the like.
4. To cut off the attack on our well and self esteem.
5. To resolve to be always with God, and that we to not want anything other than His pleasure and joy, resigning ourselves in everything to his Divine Good Pleasure.
6. Great confidence in Jesus Christ and in Mary most Holy.

Let us give our best efforts and to trust totally in God: we need a broad and generous heart! When the Lord comes into our lives, and wants to make us deny ourselves, respond to Him with St. Paul: ***I can do all things in Him Who strengthens me*** [cf. Ph 4:13]. Just read the ***true Spouse***: ‘I do not have the strength for anything; but that Lord Who has chosen me and has called me to His love, he will give me the strength to do all that He wills’⁷⁴.



PART II – CHAPTER III

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE NOVICE IS TRAINED

Humility of Heart and its practice – Grace to the Humble – Christ’s example – Let us practice Humility- False and genuine humility – Humility of spirit and of heart, and humility of the hand: for all – The external acts nourish the internal virtue: example of the saints – The humble and lowly duties – The Doctrine and example of Jesus Christ – The saints again – The external humble acts without humility of heart: *pride is more deform*.

4. **CF # 36:** *It is fitting that the Novices be assigned to the more humble tasks in the house for a time.*

By Divine Mercy, we have come to Religion – and we have come here in order to achieve by means of it the most sure path to Paradise. However, we can never reach the goal of Paradise, even though we are in the state of religion, if we are not humble, and humble of heart. Jesus Christ has told us: ***Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*** [cf. Mt 18:]. And the great and principal reason is because in order to become saved it is necessary to be in the state of grace, and grace is not granted except to the humble: ***...God gives grace to the humble*** [cf. Jas 4:6].

⁷⁴ Cf. ***True Spouse***, c. III, nn. 10-11.

Jesus Christ is the First of the Predestined, for whom, as a result, He is the rule and the Model. He has acquired the glory by means of this virtue, as the Great Apostle notes ⁷⁵: nor can we acquire it other than by means of this same virtue. We do not know if we are worthy of love, or of hatred, whether we are predestined, or reprovéd; and this uncertainty makes us tremble. God has His own reasons for keeping our lot hidden : but, would we like to calm a great part of these fears regarding this? Let us practice humility – let us love the retired life, let us suffer disdain patiently, let us esteem others better than we are; let us be content with the last post: in this manner, we will be worthy of love, and will be of the number of the predestined.

But, my brothers, it is necessary that we be persuaded that there is a false and a genuine humility. And if we do not apply ourselves to distinguish them well, we will be in real danger of taking the image in place of the truth. And so, it is precisely on this delicate article that many really deceive themselves and mistake one for the other. And then, after many years, they find in themselves a deposit of pride, which they never reached, nor ever combated.

True Humility is in the spirit, in the heart, in one's hands: It is necessary that our spirit be persuaded, that it be convinced that we are nothing more than nothing – and that our hearts approve this principle by reflecting on our miseries and weaknesses, and that it experience and love its humble state, and seek therefore, its own abasement, and that our hands put themselves to work in consequence to these convictions.

False humility is simply exterior, it does not wish to abase itself, other than when it might be able to win the esteem of others. It understands with supreme finesse how to find profit from the little humiliations that might bring some glory to oneself: but alas! What kind of glory is this! It is similar to its principle, which is false, and thus this glory is nothing other than smoke and vanity.

Now, leaving aside that humility of spirit and of heart of which we have spoken so many times, let us pause a bit on humility in the use of one's hands. By this expression, there is meant that exterior humility, which teaches us to choose always what is less for ourselves, to do that which is the more abject, and that others consider as more fatiguing to accomplish, regarding us as useless servants [cf. Lk 17:10].

This is precisely that our Venerated Founder prescribes for us in that Rule for the Novices, which says: ***It is fitting that the Novice be assigned to the more humble tasks in the house for a period of time.*** It is not meant that this only applies to the Novice: no, because this exercise of exterior humility ought to be accomplished by

⁷⁵ Cf. Ph 2:7-9: ... *He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant...He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death ... for which cause God also has exalted Him...*

the Religious right up until his death and even as an old man ⁷⁶. For this, we ought to know and see that good Religious do this in all communities, and they do not allow a week go by in which they would not be waiting on table, or washing dishes, or when they would accuse themselves publicly of some of their faults, and the like.

It cannot be believed how this humility of the hands helps in acquiring and increasing humility of the spirit and the heart. ‘Humiliation’, says St. Bernard, ‘is the path to humility, just as patience is the road to peace, and as reading opens the way to knowledge. If you desire the virtue of humility, do not refuse the path of humility.’ ⁷⁷ There is so much commerce between the body and the soul, as Rodriguez puts it: ‘this exterior person and this interior person are so united and connected between themselves. The one depends so much on the other that when the body is humiliated and abased, there is excited in the heart and affection of humility: there is in itself, I do not know how to estimate the value, those actions of humbling myself before my brother, and to serve him, and to kiss his feet – there is in itself I do not know how to put it, the value of that poor and humble clothing and that lowly and humble duty that it seems that of itself it generates and nourishes humility of heart – and when it finds humility already present, it conserves it and increases it’ ⁷⁸.

The saints practiced this so much themselves: St. Francis of Assisi always wore a rough habit; St. Francis Xavier, who always went about dressed very poorly in order to conserve himself in humility, fearing that he would not become involved and mixing his motives in striving to obtain some esteem, or presumption by sporting fancy clothes, as usually happens ⁷⁹.

As far as the humble and lowly duties, Rodriguez notes that our holy Father, Ignatius, in his Constitutions and Rules placed this injunction on all with much force: *It helps greatly, devoutly, in so far as it can be done, to undertake those tasks, in which there is more greatly exercised humility and charity:... In the exercise of those lowly and humble offices, one more readily may take on those in which senses find greater repugnance...* ⁸⁰

This has already been taught by Jesus Christ with His words and deeds: ***When you are invited to the nuptials, go, sit down in the lowest place*** [cf. Lk 14:10] And in His own life, what examples! He was born in a stable, there was chosen a place that was so vile; he lived for thirty years in a kind of shop, doing those most lowly tasks such as sweeping, washing the dishes, and the like. And at the Last Supper He leaves

⁷⁶ cf, Instruction X, note 5

⁷⁷ cf. Ep., 87.

⁷⁸ Fr. Leonotti's citation here is: Rodriguez, Part II, Tr. III, c. 23, nn. 4-7 – whereas Fr. Stofella would eliminate n. 4.

⁷⁹ cf. Rodriguez, n. 5.

⁸⁰ This example may be found in the: *Summarium Constitutionum S.J.*, Rules 19 & 13.

us with that illustrious example of the humility of His hands by washing the feet of His disciples: *...If I, then, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also* [cf. Jn 13:14, f.].

Thus the saints did in their lives: 'All those who have wanted to arrive really at the possession of humility, have given themselves with all their strength to the exercise of humiliation, because they knew that this is the speediest path and the shortest.'⁸¹

This is what we do, and we ask permission of Superiors for these acts. But, note well that these acts of external humility have to be accompanied by humility of heart, otherwise they would be actions of the most abominable pride ever, since it would be pride vesting itself as humility. *That pride which passes under the signs of humility is much more deform.*⁸²

Let us have courage, then, and let us commit ourselves to maintain always in vigor among us that very holy and useful exercise, and the Lord keeps His eyes on the humble, and He will turn His face benignly upon us...



⁸¹ cf. *Spiritual Diary*, Humility. February 28th. The Blessed Alexander Saul – St. Camillus de Lellis, there; St. Mary Magalene de Pazzi, St. Rose of Lima, there. There is cited again Rodriguez, the same Part and Tract, c. 24 – sundry examples confirm what has been said – cf. nn. 1 & 5.

⁸² St. Jerome, Letter to Celantia. And thus also Rodriguez, as above, c. 25: how, and with what practical intention should this humility of the hands be practiced, and the occasions for it in the Congregation.

XII. CONCERNING CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE⁸³

The teaching of Christian Doctrine is obligatory for all ⁸⁴ – Fr. Lenotti's points:

– 1. What is this Doctrine? – 2. There is a doctrine of the philosophers: Aristotle, Plato; heretics, seducers: Arius, Nestorius – all this is a human doctrine: fallacious knowledge, erroneous teachings which led to perdition. – 3. The Doctrine of Jesus Christ, however ... 4. There is a *Compendium* of the Gospel, Epistles, Tradition, drawn up by St. Robert Bellarmine, and others. St. Camillus of Lellis. Bellarmine teaches it. – 5. The Code on which we will be examined – 6. To teach and to learn, how to study it: a study that might be conducted with devotion, and then that it might pass into our hearts – 8. With the children – St. Aloysius Gonzaga, St. John of St. Facondo – 8. Do not tire as is so often heard, or learned. Even bread is taken every day, and yet we pray: *Our Daily Bread* – 9. The French Soldier and Fr. Bertoni: in his innocence, the soldier studied Doctrine in free time, and while he served as sentinel, he meditated on what he learned – 10. A young lad in Tonga, in Oceania, age 5, who knew the entire Catechism – 11. The Catechism: A barber was converted, and learned it in a week: he was baptized and declared himself ready to die for the Faith – three points of practical philosophy. In the note: 12. Recommendation for the frequency of Christian Doctrine.

CF # 37: Each one of the Novices will be exercised in teaching Christian Doctrine to children and to the unlettered, adapted to their level of learning, in accord with the opportunity presented by the times and places.

⁸³ The points for this Instruction seem more or less 'sewn together': brief thoughts just jotted down and some seem buried in Fr. Lenotti's frequent use of *et cetera*. One might get discouraged if the Font were not clear to us: a more ample *Instruction on the Course of the Fourth Class*, that Fr. Lenotti began to deliver in 1851 [therefore, still under the guidance and direction of St. Gaspar], in the parish of S. Mary's of the Stair. There are 12 columns of very small writing here, plus notes in the side margins and on the front page. Given the identity of the argument of the person of the Preacher, this might explain the rapidity of the points jotted down, for a later Instruction... So, there is a difference in form, in the audience, and then, to some degree, in the scope. In the parish, it might be seen as a kind of public 'pep-talk', whereas at home, it assumes the style of a family life atmosphere for the community. In the parish, the address was to every class of parishioner in order to call them to the teaching of the Christian Doctrine, for the sake of assuring them of eternal salvation – whereas in the community, the audience is a small number of Novices and religious students, and the effort is to encourage them to the study of Christian Doctrine, and to inspire them to be active catechists according to the norms of our Community. These differences bear with them inevitably that not all the matters of the initial treatment of the material would pass over into the later Domestic Instruction. Thus, certain notes addressed to the former group, might apply to the domestic group – but, this would involve very little of the material – and some of what would be important to confreres might not interest parishioners.

⁸⁴ Fr. Bertoni places the studying and teaching **Christian Doctrine** as an essential part of his ideal for the **Apostolic Mission**. He prescribes it from Novitiate, right up through the special duties of the *Professed Apostolic Missionaries*, with Solemn Vows – cf. **CF ## 37; 51; 55; 72; 163; 165; 170; 182**. In this same connection, it is noteworthy that throughout the years, Fr. Charles Zara kept the House Chronicles – here are some of his thoughts: May 6, 1875: Ascension Thursday...after dinner, five of our Priests fanned out through the city to teach the so-called *Quarta Classe* ... and what an important Mission this is! This is perhaps the most useful and necessary among all the Missions!... May 7, 1877: ...today our Fathers began the so-called *Quarta Classe* ...This is the life of the Missionary! ... May 6, 1880: Today the so-called *Quarta Classe* began. This is the Summer Mission, to catechize the people...! [cf. *Cronaca Zara*, pp. 43; 107, 108.

With this end in view, each one from the very outset of his entrance into the Novitiate, will commit himself to the learning of Christian Doctrine, unless previously he would have been well instructed in this.

1. What is this Doctrine?

Jesus Christ, our Lord, said to St. Martha: ... *But, one thing is necessary..* [cf. Lk 10:42] If we should ask of certain beautiful spirits of our time what is the sole necessity in the world, there are some among them would say to us that money is the sole necessity, others that it would be to eat and drink – some would say, it is the country - and others who would say something else. We, though, who think according to the old styles, we say that the one reality that is uniquely necessary for this world is to save one's soul and to go to paradise: because, as the Gospel teaches us, that what would it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul [cf. Mt 16:26]. We, therefore, find ourselves on this earth as in an inn. We are all foreigners and pilgrims who are heading toward our heavenly home land. We are on a journey rather toward that most beautiful land that there is, and that is Heaven. *For we do not have here a lasting city...* [cf. Heb 13:14]. Now it is only natural that in order to go there it is necessary to know the way. And this, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has taught: *I am the way!* Precisely His teachings are what constitute Christian Doctrine. This is what teaches us the way to go to Paradise.

2. There is [also other] Doctrine...

It is true that there are so many others who have wanted to teach this beautiful path that leads to happiness. Many philosophers have pretended to teach this: and so, there is the doctrine of Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Diogenes, Epicurus, and so many others. So many heretics have had the pretension to teach this to us: as would be Manes, Nestorius, Eutyches, Mahomet, Luther, Calvin, Voltaire; and so there is the doctrine of the Manichees, of the Mahometans, Lutheran doctrine, Calvinistic, Voltairian.

Lastly, so many evil fanatic seducers, heads of sects, in our own time: and so we find before us the Socialist, Communist, Mazzinian, and the like. But, what kinds of teachings do you think that these are? *The bottle does not provide, nor can it, any other wine than what which it contains!* And so, this kind of teachers have their heart full of vices and their heads full of prejudice, so that they can only teach errors, and disproportionate principles. They having nothing other than darkness to offer – they strive only to draw human beings to render their passions content, to subvert all propriety, and every shadow of religion: in brief, squeeze out whatever you can from their doctrines, and you will not end up with any sap, nothing constructive, nothing that is good. The doctrines of all these persons do not teach anything of the way in

order to save oneself and to reach paradise, but only that which leads precisely directly to Paradise.

3. The Doctrine of Jesus Christ, though...

The genuine pathway to Heaven, this is what Jesus Christ alone has taught us: from Him there is the Teaching of Jesus Christ. O, how grandiose is the excellence, the holiness of this Doctrine! It suffices to reflect that he alone in person, the Son of God, has come from heaven to set up this **School**, and to serve as the Teacher for it. And if the Master is indeed God Himself, what then will this Doctrine of His be like? This teaches only the truth – it instructs us on how to know God, to serve him, to love him, and to carry out His Holy Law, and to flee vice. This Doctrine exhorts each person to practice justice, chastity, obedience and every other more beautiful virtue, and renders one happy in this life and in the next.

4. A *Compendium*⁸⁵ of the Gospel, etc.

Then, just as all these teachings, or all this Doctrine which Jesus Christ gives us is contained partly in the Gospel, partly in the Letters of the Holy Apostles, partly in the tradition of the Church –so, there have been learned men and saints who have sought to unite all of these together, and to reduce them into one single book: among these – by order of the Supreme Pontiff, Clement VIIIth – the famous saintly Cardinal Bellarmine⁸⁶: that personality who was so holy, and so learned and a great Theologian.. He was small of stature, but one who made all heretics tremble and was their hammer...Of his excellent book, how many schools, how many dioceses make use of it: almost everywhere.

St. Camillus de Lellis, although he was endowed with so much knowledge⁸⁷, nonetheless, at the age of more than 60, he used to read and study every day this Doctrine of Bellarmine, as he would have been able to do as a boy and a poor ignorant peasant⁸⁸. And he himself, Bellarmine, when he was Bishop of Capua, even though he was a Cardinal of the Holy Church, every Sunday, he went to his Cathedral, and placed himself among the children, the poorest waifs, among the most distracted. He would send them to gather hither and yon their companions from the squares, from the streets, and would teach them the Mysteries, their prayers, in brief: Christian Doctrine

⁸⁵ This is an important word in the vocabulary of St. Gaspar Bertoni – his *Compendium Rude* might remind one of St. Thomas' 'other' *Summa*: *Compendium Theologiae*. The idea might be based on Augustine's *Enchiridion ad Laurentium*. John Paul II's Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* [October 16, 2002] speaks of the Rosary [quoting Paul VI] as the *Compendium Evangelii*.

⁸⁶ St. Gaspar includes St. Robert Bellarmine's [1542-1621] Catechism and *Controversies* in his *Original Constitutions* : CF ## 51, 53. He was blessed in 1923; a saint in 1930; Doctor of the Church in 1931.

⁸⁷ 1550-1614 – as for his learning, he was quite learned in the science of the saints.

⁸⁸ Cf. *Life*, Book 3, c. 14.

⁸⁹: the saint would interrogate them with all patience, and would delight them with his praises and little rewards in order to animate them to return another day ⁹⁰: and do you know what book he used? He had no hesitation in holding in his hand this little booklet which he himself had composed and had had printed.

5. The Code on which we will be examined...

This will be our Code, our Rule...Recall well, my brothers, that this Christian Doctrine has cost Our Lord Jesus Christ all of His Blood: recall well that if you put to one side all the other books of this world, and on the other side, the book of Christian Doctrine, this Book alone is worth more than all the others, beyond comparison. Recall well that this book here will be opened by the Judge before each one of us as soon as we are deceased: **and the books were opened** [cf. Rv 20:12]: and on this one we will be judged: on the Doctrine of Jesus Christ: on the Catechism.

6. To teach and to learn...

To teach [Christian Doctrine] and to learn [the manner of teaching it well], how to study it? With a study that is done with devotion, and that it pass over into the heart.

7. With the Little Ones ...

Recall well that in order to remedy so much corruption and so much evil that there is found in the world today, there is no better means than to attend to the indoctrination and to instruct the youth...

St. Aloysius Gonzaga, even though he was a prince, even as a lay person, he used to go on Feast days to teaching Doctrine to the children.

St. John of St. Facondo, when he was a young man, he used to stand and on a rock, and then confer the Breviary: *for from this higher spot, he addressed the other lads present there, whom he exhorted to virtue and to the worship of God.* ⁹¹

8. Never tire of it...

Do not ever tire [of studying Christian Doctrine], as this is something that is heard, or learned so many times. Even bread [remains our food every single day: and

⁸⁹ Saintly Jesuit that he was, St. Robert Bellarmine was imbued with the spirit of St. Ignatius of Loyola – who, as Fr. Bertoni would do in imitation, legislated this as a most important aspect of the Jesuit Mission: for every phase of Jesuit life, from Novitiate, all the way through to those with the Fourth Vow [cf. CSJ nn. 69; 80; 113; 277; 394; 395; 410; 411; 437; 483; 527; 528; 645]. The Jesuit Founder had originally intended this as a **Fifth Vow**: cf. A.M. DeAldama, SJ *Peculiarem Curam circa Puerorum eruditionem*. Recerches Ignatiennes, Vol. V 1977. It was in the **Formula** of the Institute of Paul III, and remains in the Formula for the Profession of Vows cf. CSJ n. 527.

⁹⁰ Fr. Bertoni imitated this practice in his *Original Constitutions*: **CF ## 180;181**

⁹¹ Once on the 12th of June, the IVth Reading [historical.

also we never tire of asking every single day of the heavenly Father: *gives us this day our daily bread...*

9. The French Soldier and Fr. Bertoni...

Remember that soldier about whom our Venerated Founder tells us: that he always kept himself pure and devout even in the midst of battles and the Napoleonic wars, which he passed always in prayer united with God. When he was then serving as the sentinel, he would meditate: the catechism was his book where he found food for his soul. He was endowed with the gift of contemplation: he was frank, generous, and bold, and so innocent that his Confessor – who was our Fr. Bertoni – did not find in him any matter for absolution.

10. A little child in Tonga ...

In Tonga, in Oceania, there is a child just five years old, who was indeed a genius, and seems that he was a prodigy. He knew the Catechism by heart. He asked permission of the Missionaries to teach Christian Doctrine to his family, since – except for his mother and father – they were all pagans. Before and after lunch he would say the usual prayers. He would imitate celebrating Mass, imitating the ceremonies: ‘but when I am grown up’, the story goes, ‘I will say it really’ [From the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith].

11. The Catechism: a barber...

Recall that poor old, gentile barber in China, who only knew the Decalogue which he kept, and then some prayers. He set out on a voyage to find the Missionaries. He committed himself to learn the Catechism, which he did in a week. He was baptized and ready to die for Jesus Christ [From the annals of the Propagation of the Faith]⁹².

In brief, then, listen all of you, in that I want to treat of philosophers. Clement of Alexandria says that there are three items proper to Philosophy: 1°. cognition of reality; 2° to put into practice that which has been learned; 3° to communicate this to others in order to make them good.

As for the cognition of truths: this, as we have seen, is acquired come to the Christian Doctrine, where you supply yourselves with the most important knowledge that there is in this world...⁹³.

⁹² What follows here seems to have been from Fr. Lenotti's notes, prepared for the larger audience of a parish.

⁹³ There are some notes of Fr. Lenotti that Fr. Stofella adds here: "...and all the more, if you are persevering in the same Church, this is so you will not be confused. There are those who for entertainment enjoy going now to one Church, and then to another: they go to hear one Catechist, and then to someone else; and do you not know that 'a rolling stone gathers no moss'. And don't you know that the doctrines taught are like a chain made up of so many rings that are united among themselves and interconnected one with others. And so going hither and yon, those rings could break and there would be broken the thread of your understanding? And do you not see

The second matter proper to Philosophy is to place in practice that which has been learned, and this is what urges more than everything else: because what good is it for you just to listen to the Doctrine, for example, what it means what it says: that *He has come to judge the living and the dead* - if then you will live as though you were never to be judged? What does it matter if you hear in Doctrine that Jesus Christ has suffered without opening His mouth, if then you follow our excessively fastidious ways, being impatient, angry as before? What good would it be if you listen to doctrine about the necessity of having to believe that which the Roman Catholic Church teaches, if then later you have little regard about reading certain books, certain pages that mis-treat holy things, that calumniate the Pope, and to deal with certain folk who place everything in doubt, they criticize the Bishops and the Popes, as if they were just so many Christians? What is needed then, is to reduce to practice, practice, because whoever knows more the will of god and does not fulfill it, will be punished all the more, before the Tribunal of God.

The third matter proper to Philosophers is to communicate to others that which has been learned, in order to make them good. Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, when you go home, when you are together with your loved ones to dine, to work, out for a walk, how unfortunate it would be if you would never hear something said from Doctrine that you have already listened to, or to remember some example heard at Doctrine, to never to inculcate this or that truth which has struck you the more, which remains the more impressed upon you? It seems that we can talk about all other matters: but, those regarding the Lord and the soul, is there ever a word heard...? ⁹⁴



that going hither and yon, you hear an article of the Creed explained in one place; then a petition of the *Our Father*, and in another place one of the Commandments, and then somewhere else a capital vice: and so you will mix up so many ideas that all this confusion makes of your head as it were, the clothing of a Harlequin..."

⁹⁴ There is one more exhortation in Fr. Lenotti's hand at the end of the Introduction, meant for the broader public: "...My most beloved brothers and sisters, I recommend to you Christian Doctrine: do not consider it as something of little worth, but esteem it greatly, and therefore take part in it with all commitment and concern. Remember that otherwise there will come a day when you will know the harm that you will have heaped on your souls because you were lacking. Then, you will know, but too late, what abundance of heavenly lights the Lord would have shed upon you in order to medicate your ignorance: see then the good that you would have achieved, the compunction and the devotion with which you would have received the Holy sacraments, the respect with which you would have remained in Church. Just think of the different education that you would have imparted to your families: in a word, the life of Christ, that you would have led. Overcome all the obstacles, reject all human respect, make some sacrifices in order to frequent it, and you will see one day the advantages that you would have garnered from it, you will experience in death a ineffable contentment of having been in the number of those who went to the Christian Doctrine: to catechism..."

XIII.
THIRD PART: THE SECOND FORMATION
Chapter I:
The Time after Novitiate

Piety – Humility – Prudence

3. **CF # 42:** *In this time, through varied and new experiments and testing, each will show himself to be formed so that his piety, humility and prudence will be evident to all, especially to the superiors.*⁹⁵

In the end: **piety**: in the preparation, celebration and thanksgiving for holy Mass⁹⁶. There should appear one's piety and devotion in reciting the Office with attention and composure – also in reciting the Rosary of the Virgin Mary... in responding devotedly to every *Hal, Mary* which, at the sound of the hours, or in greeting a certain Image, as was once said:

Piety in hearing the preaching and exhortations, or in visiting at times some church;

Piety and devotion in the recollection and in speaking willingly and to hear willingly truths of edification, pertaining to God...

A spirit of piety and devotion should shine through our whole life; even into our very room: that all be set up there, ordered in our belongings, books, the bed, and clothing: all should bespeak devotion and piety.

Humility: humility of heart, and in our words; in conversing and in dealing always with humble and simple manners;

A humility in our endeavors, exercising ourselves in low tasks and external humiliations.

A humility toward our Superiors, conducting ourselves in their regard and in our words, with reverence, as authentic subjects;

A humility toward our equals, with respect: *loving one another...with honor preventing one another* [cf. Rm 12: 10], as inferiors, treating them with humility, in a polite manner.

Prudence: in words and in deeds; acting and speaking with reflection, with reserve: with reason and not according to passion.

⁹⁵ It would seem that Fr. Lenotti simply brought this Constitution with him, and commented on it orally. There are a few and very brief notes among his papers regarding the virtues that would characterize the good results from this Second Formation: therefore, the notes that follow here deal more with the second part of this Instruction. These few notes almost seem to be his conclusion, as he introduces these notes: 'In the end', 'Lastly'. This particular Conference then remains incomplete. Nonetheless, there is some real ascetical-historical interest for us.

⁹⁶ In a footnote, Fr. Stofella asks the question whether this **Second Formation** would last until the **Third Formation**, just prior to the conferral of the **Grade of Apostolic Missionaries, and Solemn Vows?** [cf. Part VIII, cc. 1 & 2 [CF ## 152-157].

Let us learn from Our Founder, so reserved in word and so prudent in everything.

For all this, it is necessary to have recurrence to Mary Most Holy: *Mother of Good Counsel, Virgin Most Prudent.*



XIV.
THIRD PART – CHAPTER II
CONCERNING THE MANNER OF PENANCE⁹⁷
CF ## 43 – 44

The need for Mortification – Two kinds of mortification – The Two Constitutions, ## 43 & 44 – Rodriguez’ Teaching – St. Alphonsus Maria de’ Liguori – St. Ignatius of Loyola – Still more about *mortification* - Without it, we will not be religious – The example of our Fathers.

1. The necessity of Mortification for the opposition against the flesh, and the way of the spirit⁹⁸.

The theme is the necessity of mortification for the disturbance and the war of the flesh against the spirit: ‘because as St. Paul says, the war has desires that are contrary to the spirit, and the spirit has desires contrary to the flesh; the reason is that these two are mutual enemies. This is the continuous war that we have with ourselves’. ‘The disturbance within each person was introduced by sin.’ ‘With Baptism there is taken away original sin, but not the trouble caused by this.’ ‘From this upsetment are derived all the temptations.’ ‘From this there is deduced the necessity of mortification.’ ‘Without it, one cannot be a follower of Christ.’

2. Two kinds of Mortification. [cf. Rodriguez⁹⁹]: here in brief:

‘There are two kinds of penance and mortification: one corporal which castigates and afflicts the body: that which we call exterior penance, such as the disciplines, fasting, hair shirts, uncomfortable bed, simple food, harsh clothing, and

⁹⁷ This theme of penance – or, of the spirit and religious practice of this virtue – has already been described to some extent in Fr. Lenotti’s presentation of the text from the *Compendium Rude* - CF # 6 : that regarding ‘The Program of Life’, where he gives it a rather general treatment. Here would be the place for him to take it up more in detail. However, Fr. Lenotti’s very precise notes on these two numbers of Part III, c. 2, would be indeed insufficient, if they had not at least offered an indication regarding their sources. Those even by just inserting regularly that which is required in order to reach the places indicated, one might obtain a sufficient reconstruction of that which Fr. Lenotti himself would then have stated to the Community of long ago.

⁹⁸ This heading calls to mind almost immediately Rodriguez’ treatise on *Mortification* in his c. 2 the first of his Second Part, or 2° Volume. It would suffice to note a citation from St. Paul in that Chapter, and then insert the others one after the other, all marginal titles: there would not be needed much more to offer the most natural development of the theme. All the cited passages are from Rodriguez.

⁹⁹ Cf. c. 7: *Two Kinds that are found regarding mortification and penance.*

other similar usages that afflict and castigate the flesh and deprive it of its comfort and delight.’

The other kind of mortification, says the glorious St Alphonsus , is the more precious and eminent. It consists in ruling and well regulating the motions of our appetite, in one’s going every day, combating against his vices and evil inclinations, in always denying one’s own will, submitting and subjecting one’s own judgment, overcoming one’s wrath, repressing one’s impatience, restraining one’s gluttony, eyes, language, and all his senses and motions...”And just as this penance is the more excellent and the more precious – so, also is it the most difficult and has to cost us the more...’

Here we treat of external mortification:

1st Rule: CF # 43: There is no general rule regarding penance other than this one: that all the Confreres will take only from the common food, clothing and all else for us in the religious life, that which will be appointed, or granted by he Superior. All of this will at one and the same time suffice for the exercise of temperance, fairness, decency, poverty, as well as fulfilling each one’s need.

2nd Rule CF # 44: each one, however, will accept those penances which the Confessor, or the Superior, will impose on him in the Lord. Furthermore, everyone will desire and ask for even greater penances, in so far as his physical strength and reception of grace will dictate. These will be determined and moderated for each.

Reflect on *something* from my *Instruction to the People*, regarding external penance.

Reflect on *something* from Rodriguez on exterior mortification.

‘These two kinds of penance the Company embraces and uses. As for the former [which is exterior], even though our holy Father [Ignatius] did not wish to spell these out, nor determined by Rule, any particular penances which among us would become obligatory, However, there is nonetheless among us the living rule which is the Superior, who gives and assigns to each one those penances of which he may stand in need. Our holy Father states that these can be taken in who ways: either those that each one will choose for himself, in order to make greater spiritual profit, however, with the approval of the Superior; or, those which can be imposed by the Superior for the same purpose. This he judged to be more fitting for the Company ...: first of all, because the dead rule could never be the same for all, in that not all have equal strengths for these penances.’ ‘Just as there is not prescribed one and the same medicine, nor the same rule and regimen for all the infirm. So, also there cannot be prescribed for all the same penances, because some are more befitting the young, others for those more advanced in years. Some may help those who are ill, and others

may be asked of those who are healthy Some would help those who have entered into the religious Life in their baptismal innocence, and others who have come wounded, as it is often said, a whole texture of wounds.’ ‘So, our holy Father [Ignatius] did not wish to impose on the Company a certain and determined tax of external penances for all, but left the matter up to the Superior who is the **spiritual doctor**, so that according to the strengths and the needs of each one, he might impose the tasks of these penances and to grant them proportionately, to some more, and to others, less.’ ‘This is not only the reason where there are those capable of more, and who are able to take them on with greater spirit and devotion.’

‘The second species of these penances, which is the mortification of the passions, and of disordered self love, is that which the Company more distinctly embraces ¹⁰⁰.

In his *True Spouse*, Volume I, ‘Regarding the Detachment from One’s own Will’ – there is that story of the Venerable Catherine of Cardona, and of the Discalced Carmelite lay brother who would carry wood – and the deeds of St. Francis de Sales, and so on – *something* here of obedience, form the same source.

‘In the *Life* of the Venerable Catherine of Cardona – who having left the Court of the King of Spain, went to hide herself in a desert where she lived for many years, among so many penances that it is horrible to read them. It is narrated that a certain Discalced Carmelite Brother out of obedience dangled along a bundle of wood - and knowing by divine light, that he, being old, limped along complaining over such an obedience, and she said to animate him: ‘Brother, carry t this wood joyfully – and know that you merit more with that obedience which you accomplish than I have merited with all my penances.’

St. Francis de Sales was forming the idea of the rules for his Nuns of the Visitation. There was someone who said to him that it was a good idea to make them go without shoes; but, the Saint responded: ‘You want to begin with the feet, while I would like to start with their hearts.’

St. Jerome wrote: ‘You will so much the more achieve virtue the more you draw away from doing your own will.’ O, that blessed religious person who would say at death that which the Abbot John stated; ‘I have never done my own will!

Fr. Lenotti in an Instruction of his to the Seminarians on Abnegation of oneself, also quoted from St. Ignatius’ Letter to the students of Coimbra. On the contrary, what contentment, what happiness, I will put it this way, does not one experience after having conquered something, after having restrained one’s impetus to anger, having overcome that repugnance of obeying, after having been mortified! And it could not

¹⁰⁰ Rodriguez cites here the example of St. Alphonus Maria de’ Liguori.

be otherwise, like a hidden manna that was prepared and promised by Christ to anyone who conquers: *to the conqueror, I will give the hidden manna*. It is manifest, wrote Ignatius to his students at Coimbra, that the lazy, in order not to fight against themselves, do not achieve that peace of mind and at the internal possession of some virtue, either never, or very late. On the contrary, wherever the valiant and the hard working people advance in a short time, they move ahead in both peace of mind and in the acquisition of virtue. The contentment, then, that in this life can be experienced, is seen by experience, that not by the tepid, but by the fervent in the divine service, is indeed enjoyed. Since those who are committed making every effort to subject themselves and to destroy self love... they are disposed to enjoy those holy delights of God, Who is the Most merciful Consoler of His own. In encountering it, tepidity is the mother of an always unhappy life, because it does not allow one to root out that area where discontentment flourishes – and that is self-love, and does not dispose one to merit the favors of the divine consolations¹⁰¹.

Appendix

Do not become attached to anything: one single attachment can be the thread with which the devil binds us and drags us outside of religion: or, at least, he keeps us bound and impedes us from lifting ourselves upward, much like a bird cannot fly when it is held even by a thread.

Attachment to food, or to drink, to family, or to travel; or to anything, even what is good, and under the appearance of good. Let it be disrupted, let it be divulged, let it be conquered for as long as the passion is small; with generous feet let it be trampled, this egg of asps [cf. Is 59:5], otherwise...

Without mortification, we will not be religious. May God guard us from there ever entering among us that spirit of personal comfort. May God see to it that there instead be maintained among us that spirit of abnegation, which by his grace there always was: that spirit of fervor, of loving privations, promptness in offering ourselves, and not to withdraw ourselves, or at least from grumbling. And if nothing else, let us be ready to come away from any word that shows that we do things just because they have to be done, or because we have no choice in the matter. The impression would be that if we could, we would simply avoid these duties. No, my beloved brothers: may God protect us from all this! Which in addition to our harm, it would also be that of our companions, with our poor example.

This spirit of abnegation, my brothers, I tell you the truth, I would yearn to see it more among us. To see that generous self offering of a good heart to do that which might not be according to one's taste. To offer ourselves to read even when this is not

¹⁰¹ From Bartoli's *Life of St. Ignatius*. There follow now some further thoughts of Fr. Lenotti on Mortification, inserted here as an 'Appendix'.

easy for us to do so – or, to hear exaggerated one’s suffering, weakness, if by any chance the Superior asks us to read a bit more. Something else is wanted, if we are this delicate! I do not say with this that one should not advise the Superior if one feels that he might suffer health-wise. But, if it is only a brief inconvenience, it is necessary to embrace it willingly out of love for God. If not, then we could have remained in our own homes where we could have done that which was pleasing to us, and to work according to our own ease.

So, in the kitchen, for example, do we offer ourselves to do those duties, those things that are the more vile, the more burdensome: or perhaps do we withdraw ourselves, leaving them to others?

And so, with our desire for food, how is that going? Is there any mortification every either in the quantity, or in the quality? Or with what excuse for fasting, do we strive to fill well our stomachs in compensation? This was something rather reprovéd by St. Jerome! Or, is there some sighing, as when something is too heavy, with such little good edification? Or, do some speaking too readily about eating? *This is not fitting* for Religious.

Our early Fathers had the custom of offering themselves to the Superior to do the most demanding tasks: for example, to celebrate, either every early in the morning, or the last Mass, both on Feast days as well as the regular ferial days. And what about us? Do not our noses get twisted out of shape, or at least something will have to be said that would show that one really feels the burden of an order. Something better is wanted! My brothers, if health is to be disturbed, let it be understood, one should let the Superior know, who would never be so indiscreet. But, if it is just some inconvenience that is to be disturbed, it is better to embrace it with a broad heart, to love this little inconvenience: is that we have come to Religion in order never to suffer anything? Come on, now! If that be the case, we could just as well have stayed home.

When it comes about that I order to mortify the wish to go outside of the house for a walk, ask permission of the Superior, as fervent Religious are accustomed to doing [and, as it has always been done in our House] – could we not stay home at least some times, out of love for Mary, or some Saint?

My brothers, we are religious by name, and do we not want to be so in our deeds?



XV. CONCERNING SPIRITUAL READING

From 4 K cc. 22. 23: the reading of *Deuteronomy* - Spiritual reading helps prayer and God's Service , it is the food and the mirror of the soul – Marvelous conversions and advancement in virtue – But, it is necessary to do it well, to raise the mind to God, to read not so much to know, but to put into practice its maxims, read decisively - Reflect and pray – the responsibility of the reader – Again the reading of *Deuteronomy*.

The great even that we have read in 4 K, 22, 23 [2 K]: Josiah ordered the priests that they cast out of the Temple those utensils made for Baal [that the abominations be destroyed], and so on. And he ordered a Pasch with such solemnity that from the time of the Judges that had never since been celebrated one like it ¹⁰².

This is the story: he ordered Saphan one day that he should go to the priest Helchiah. This latter told him that he had found the Book of the Law. And he gave the volume to Saphan. It was the Book of *Deuteronomy*. And once Saphan had read it in the presence of the King, and the King had heard the words of the law of the Lord, he tore his garments. And he gave the order, saying to Helchiah: go and consult the Lord regarding me, and regarding the people, and about all of Judah so that the great wrath of the Lord not be ignited against us ¹⁰³. And as a reward, the Prophetess Hulda said to him: 'Because you have heard the words of this book, and your heart has been lowered and you humbled yourself before the Lord, and have rend your garments, and have wept before me, you shall be gathered to your fathers in peace, before these punishments descend and so your eyes will not see the evils of your people [cf. 4 K 22:19,f.].

This is that the prescribed *Spiritual Reading* of our Rule requires. Read it:
Also Spiritual Reading after dinner for twenty minutes... [CF # 47]

Spiritual Reading is the sister of prayer, and her assistant.

The Apostle writes to Timothy, Bishop and much committed to the care of his flock: ***Attend unto reading..*** [cf. 1 Tm 4:13] The verb ***attend*** does not imply something just in passing, but that one be committed *to the reading of holy books*.

St. Athanasias said that one would not be seen 'who was committed to serving the Lord,' who was not dedicated to Spiritual Reading.

¹⁰² Cf. 2 K 23:4-24.

¹⁰³ Cf. ib, c. 22:8-13.

Such Reading offers food, *it almost places food in the mouth*, says St. Bernard¹⁰⁴. It gives power to cast away temptations: *let there always divine reading in your hands*, so that with this shield you might be able to defend yourself from bad thoughts, suggests St. Jerome to Salvina.

It is the mirror in order to see your own defects; it fills the mind with holy thoughts; it illuminates the intellect, enkindles the heart, detaches it from the world, expels worldly sadness, imparts heavenly consolation, has one fall in love with God, with virtue, with paradise. *Spiritual Readings* are comparable to short letters written by heaven!¹⁰⁵

What effects it has! Marvelous conversion in St. Augustine. St. Ignatius, St. John Columbini, and so forth. And it leads to advancement in virtue: St. Servolus, St. Dominic: all were loves of Spiritual Reading¹⁰⁶.

But, how is it that it often happens that we do not experience such effects from Spiritual Reading? *Many read, and yet are fasting from reading*, notes St. Gregory: in his 10th Homily on Ezechiel. He noted that many read, and they read a lot, but from their reading they still get up hungry, almost as though they had read nothing, because they read solely out of curiosity, and because the Reading was not conducted in the proper manner. And how is it to be done, in order to reap profit from it?

1. Raise the mind to God: ***Speak, Lord, for Your servant listens!*** [1 S 3:9, 10]. Recommend ourselves to God that He might illumine us: do not neglect a *Hail, Mary*, to complete this.

2. Do not read to know, or for study: *all things have their time*¹⁰⁷. *Let him who reads not seek to listen to knowledge, but flavor, and the taste of the will* says St. Bernard¹⁰⁸. Do not read for curiosity: just because there are new thoughts, or the texts are well written...: but yearn for the substance. Who is it who just looks at the beautiful colors of the flower, and sniffs the perfume, that gains much from this? But, the bee draws the sap. What benefit would it be for the sick person just to get the odor of the medicine and then does not take it? He does not get better: he remains ill. Apply it to yourself: therefore chew it over, ruminate it well as do the lambs and the live stock.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *The School of the Cloistered*, c. 2 [found among Bernard's works].

¹⁰⁵ cf. St. Alphonsus Liguori, *true Spouse*, c. 17, n. 6.

¹⁰⁶ *Ib*, nn. 7, 8, 10.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *In the Mirror of the Monks*.

¹⁰⁸ In his book *On the Work of the Monks*.

3. One should read slowly, decisively, quietly, with some pauses, and not in haste and running toward the end as though one were just reading a story. The whirl-wind carries things away but it does not fecundate the soul- while the rain does that falls gently. This is how Reading should be done with commitment. It is like a food, we have said, a lesson. *Nourish your soul*, says Augustine, *with divine readings*. If indeed it is a food, as St. Alphonsus says, it is necessary to chew it well: do not devour it, if it is to give nourishment: and this is the way reading is. Rather, when in reading one receives a certain light, something that wafts over the reader – the reading should be stopped and one should raise the mind to the Lord, and matter should be reflected upon, and one should then return to the reading.¹⁰⁹ *Do not be reluctant*, says St. Ephrem, *to repeat the same meaning*¹¹⁰. And St. Bernard: *Let prayer interrupt reading*¹¹¹. Even if it is just a few words, it does not matter. And then, *from daily reading*, says St. Bernard once more, *each day something must be passed into the belly of the mind, that it might more faithfully be digested, and then called back to mind by ruminating upon it*.¹¹² Precisely from reading something beneficial may always be taken away with one which does us more good. Therefore, what am I drawing away for myself from this reading? It is something like when one visits a garden, and takes away a flower with him...

But, you might say: how can one force himself to make a stop of such reading? One cannot interrupt the reader. And so, many of you attend to reading also by yourselves many times each week. And then, there cannot really be put into practice these suggestions. However, as for reading in common that is done in company with others, and prescribed by the Rule, here it is necessary that for now it is up to us to do all that we can to keep attentive, to guard ourselves from sleep, and the like, and to seek to apply to ourselves, and then to recommend ourselves decisively to the reader. I say that if each one has to render an account to the Lord of the spiritual readings that each of us hears, certainly the reader himself ought to make himself aware of this – both regarding himself and also regarding the others, that if through his own fault, or through his reading too hurriedly, or without feeling, if in brief that by through his negligence in reading, the others cannot reflect on the truths and to garner some advantage for themselves. All of us, then, ought, as we have seen, to take this whole matter to heart, to attend to it with enthusiasm: and not every to listen to it neglectfully, almost with annoyance, as though we could hardly wait for the moment when it will all end.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *True Spouse*, c. 17, n. 12.

¹¹⁰ Sermon 7.

¹¹¹ *Epistle to the Brothers on God's Mountain*, c.10.

¹¹² *ib.*

How blessed are we if we attend to it, and if we listen to this spiritual reading, as those poor Hebrews did of whom we read in IInd Esdra, c. 8 ¹¹³. One day, on September 1st, there came all the people to Esdra, and begged him that he might bring out the Book of the Law of Moses: *...And he read it plainly in the street that was before the water-gate, from the morning until midday before the men and the women, and all those that could understand: and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book...And they read in the Book of the Law of God distinctly and plainly to be understood;* [and the People wept, and Esdra and the Levites said to them: *...This is a holy day to the Lord and be not sad. And the Levites stilled the people saying: Hold your peace, for the day is holy and be not sorrowful...and he read in the Book of the Law of God day by day, from the first day till the last, and they kept the solemnity seven days, and in the eighth day a solemn assembly according to the manner ...* ¹¹⁴

Let us also learn this lesson, and so on.



XVI. MANIFESTATION OF CONSCIENCE

The Rule and the Canon – Limits on Fr. Lenotti's teaching, but does not totally cancel it - Manifest one's temptations is a defense – The fallen Monk – To manifest defects and failings, penances, devotions, virtues - Examples of a Monk and St. Ignatius – Exhortation

FURTHER ON THE MANIFESTATION OF CONSCIENCE

The Humility of the Infant Jesus – A very ancient exercise of Humility – Private and public accusation – From the inobservances of the rule, etc. - Not only from the external but also from the internal – Two norms for accusation in public.

CF # 47: *The manifestation of one's own conscience is to be made to the Superior, either in sacramental Confession, or outside it, whenever he sees fit.* ¹¹⁵

¹¹³ This would be Ne 8:1-3, 6.

¹¹⁴ Passim, up to v. 18.

¹¹⁵ Fr. Bertoni treats of this in various of his *Original Constitutions* ## 47, 107; 111; cf. also ## 308, ff.: Modern Canon Law has offered very clear guidelines in this matter – the Code of 1917, n. 530, §§ 1 – 2 it was forbidden to Superiors to induce those subject to them to manifest their consciences to the Superior; each subject, though, if he chooses to do so, was able to make this manifestation. Today, in the Code of 1983, we read: *The Superiors are not to hear the confession of their subjects unless the member spontaneously request them to do so.* [cf. Can. 630 § 4].

This manifestation of conscience could be made to one's Superiors, either in the Sacramental Confession, or outside of it, as whatever seems better.. The Superiors, Directors, Confessors, are meant to be capable in managing the sword of prayer and of the Word of God. They are called to watch over us, they are to defend us, illuminate us – so that we may not be deceived. But, how will they succeed if we are not subjected to them? If we do not place our souls into their hands? Our hearts? This Rule [Constitution # 47] invites us to open up our hearts to the Superior, and not to hide anything: otherwise, it could be harmful to us> [In those times], this was the practice in many religious communities.

And what is it that we ought to manifest?

1. The Temptations. The Demon does not leave Religious alone: you can just imagine what envy he has! There are traps everywhere! Just remember that old story of the Monk who fell after 40 years under attack – and the special reward won by that devil!¹¹⁶ The story runs: I have just come from the Hermitage, where I have been for 40 years tempting and fighting with a Monk: early last night I conquered him making him commit the sin of fornication.' When Satan himself had understood this, he got up and kissed his faithful servant; and taking the crown he was wearing, he placed it on the other devil's head and had him sit down on a chair next to himself, saying: You have done a great deed!'

Temptations to pride, disobedience, anger, impatience, impurity, sins against the faith, or hope, or charity, or against one's vocation.

Not only are beginners subject to temptations, but also those who are proficient, the perfect: the likes of At. Antony the abbot, St. Jerome, St Ilarion, the abbot Moses and so many others.

But how can we remedy this? How can we defend ourselves? A good way is to manifest them, speak about the temptations. The temptation when manifested, ceases; otherwise, it will only intensify. The eggs that remain hidden and covered under the wings of the mother become newly hatched chicks: so, bad thoughts when they remain hidden in one's heart without their being discovered to someone who could heal them, they ordinarily come to light and to put them into execution. Woe to any religious who does not open up his heart, who hides his temptations, and opens up only that which he selectively chooses!

The greater part of those who leave Religious Life, if we would like to examine their origin – says Rodriguez and the spiritual masters - we would find that they did not discuss their temptations. Therefore, the temptation of temptations, do you know

¹¹⁶ One of Rodriguez' stories [cf. 'Chastity', Part III, treatise IV, C. 11, n. 1]

what it is? It is the temptation to be silent, of not manifesting to Superiors, but rather to limp along, or to say: ‘ I already know what he would respond to me.’ – or, ‘but then I will lose face: what will he say?’

2. Defects, failing, either habitual or actual. When the sick person does not manifest to the doctor his infirmity, how can he bring to him the opportune remedy? For thus, merit is acquired, humility is exercised, mortification, obedience.

Blessed Bernardino Realino, also as an old man, it was moving to see him, with his paper where he had written down his failings, and each week he would present himself to the Superior, and accuse himself of them, and asking penance for them.. Woe to anyone has this realization at his finger tips, and says they are not much, must a little matter!

3. Penances: either not to go over-board, or to do too little, or too much. The Saints, both men and women, depended in these matters on their Spiritual Fathers. It could be that someone would think that he would thus prejudice his health, and thus would render himself incapable of contributing to the well being of his neighbors. This is what the evil one would like, and thus to flee from every act of penance and mortification, and that one would never do anything, and would remain without any sense of the spirit.

4. Devotions. Also here, how much need to we have of manifesting them to our Superior in order not to be deceived! In order to know if they are fitting and opportune, or if they are excessive!

5. The virtues. These, too,, these must also be manifested: otherwise, we will remain deceived. ***There is a way that seems to a man right: and the ends thereof lead to death*** [cf. Pr 16:25]. The Devil is transformed at times into an Angel of Light. O God! How many illusions! Even in the way of the spirit we need do we not have of a benign and expert hand who directs us.

There was once upon a time, a Monk in the desert who believed that he was well advanced in virtues and so dear to God, that he persuaded himself that nothing could ever harm him, and if he threw himself into the well, as he would have noted in that Psalm: ***For He has given His angels charge over you; to keep you in all your ways...*** [cf. Ps 90:11, cf. also Mt 4:6]. And with this, he cast himself down into the well; and all bruised and moribund, they drew him out of there; but it was not possible to remove from his head his illusion and pertinacity, and so he miserably died. Read Rodriguez here.

St. Ignatius until he learned to manifest his own conscience – early in his spiritual life – how many deceptions did he not have as well as indiscreet penances, and what anguish and temptations!

Courage, then! Let us open our hearts to our Superiors. Let us not have any human respect or fears: rather, there are thus removed and disappear certain suspicions that there perhaps reigned between the superiors and subjects, and vice versa. With this type of communication, one can take on much confidence. We will be illumined, directed, assisted and defended from temptations: and we will walk directly in the path of the Lord, without deception. Otherwise we will walk as *those who feel their way along as in mid-day*¹¹⁷, feeling our way along without assurance and restlessly, and perhaps in danger of ruining our soul.

STILL MORE ON THE MANIFESTATION OF CONSCIENCE¹¹⁸

CF # 47 *The manifestation of one's own conscience is to be made to the Superior, either in sacramental Confession, or outside it, whenever he sees fit.*

In this beautiful month of January, we have proposed to hold before our eyes the Infant Jesus, in order to love Him and to show our love with imitating Him, especially in humility. *For a child is born to us...* [Is 9:6], a little one. We, too, then, the more humble we are, then, then all the more will we love the Infant Jesus who lies in his Crib, rejected by all, and so on.

However, for the acquisition of humility, there is needed practice: *humiliation is the path to humility, as patience is to peace.*¹¹⁹

One means, among others, for exercising ourselves in humility is through the manifestation of one's own conscience, either to the Father *Prepositus*, or to the Master of Novices.

This exercise is proper to good religious who are loving and solicitous for their own spiritual progress, of manifesting to the Superior the good and the evil, concerning oneself, and regarding one's own defects. We have this practice by Rule.

¹¹⁷ Dt 28:29.

¹¹⁸ This is an outline of another Instruction of Fr. Lenotti, somewhat rudimentary, but of practical value. There is touched upon here the practice of the manifestation of one's own faults of one's faults in public, with the traditional norm of the correct and sincere intention and with the Superior's permission. The Master of Novices comes alive with an expression inserted here and there throughout the text. There is some historical interest in this Instruction. It seems to have taken its inspiration from the month dedicated to the remembrance of the Infant Jesus.

¹¹⁹ St. Bernard's Letter 87.

It was constituted in all the Congregations from the time of the Apostles – St. Peter taught it, and persuaded¹²⁰ it, as St. Clement witnessed. Thus, many saints followed suit: St. Antony, Abbot; Pemenes, Palladius, St. Basil in his *Rule*; St. Benedict, St. Bernard, Cassian, St. Doroteus, St. Bonaventure, the About Isaiah, St. Anselm, St. Ignatius – and our Founder, in his Rule.

This practice serves much for the exercise of humility – cf. Rodriguez: ‘Clarity of Conscience’, Part III, tr. VII. Furthermore: *The just is first accuser of himself* [cf. Pr 18:17].

I distinguish the accusation of one’s own defects, and faults to the Superior in private, as well as in public.

In private, to render an account of what? See Rodriguez, as noted above, *passim*].

Regarding meditation: if it is going well, to ask pardon for that, and to ask penance for it; regarding the Examen, the same: whether the Particular Examen is made should be noted; regarding Spiritual reading, and how is it done?

Regarding the desire to eat: how is mortification going? Regarding silence: whether it is broken at the wrong times, and whether one speaks out loud. Regarding the manner of receiving correction: whether badly. Whether one feels resentment at some little observation. Regarding one’s diligence in performing the ordinary activities. Regarding impatience. Regarding study. Regarding the Divine Office or Mass. Regarding one’s obedience: if there is any failing in this regard. Regarding one’s ambition. Regarding poverty: if one asks permission for having either extra sewing equipment, or books, or tobacco, or anything else, whether this was received without having sought permission from the Superior.

Regarding one’s interior: the external domain does not suffice! O! this is beautiful to beat down pride and for the exercise of humility. If some thought of vanity, or anger emerge. Regarding temptations, even those humiliating, and against one’s vocation, even though these are cast out, with the grace of the Lord. Regarding envy, of one’s exercising not enough indifference in one’s duties and offices. Against the superiors, whether one has engaged in criticisms, perhaps expressed then with others. One should make known thoughts, or affections for one’s family.

The manifestation made in public: this was always in use in all the Monasteries: it would suffice to read *The Lives of the Holy Fathers*, the Chronicles of Religious, and so on. It is one of the first lessons that they teach and recommend to Novices. It is a beautiful exercise of humility: to make oneself small with Jesus! Whether

¹²⁰ The witness of the early Church, and the Apostolic life lived together with Jesus served as one of Fr. Bertoni’s ideals for his Apostolic Missionaries [cf. CF ## 259; 261; 272; 273].

religious are already elderly; and it is not meant solely for the period of Novitiate, but for all of one's life.

However, two principles are to be observed, that is:

1. No one should accuse himself in public without having permission.
2. The Manner: with a true sentiment and spirit of being disdained and counted for little; and internally and externally they should ask for penances. And this should not be just out of custom, or for vanity; but, at times this could be done in honor of Mary, on some Vigil of Mary, or the Holy Protector, or on Saturday's, or Wednesday's in honor of St. Joseph, and so on. And one should ask for this insistently from his Superior. The devil will try to make it all seem to us as very minor matters, to be left for the simple Brothers: May God protect us from this! This is for the Lay brothers, and the students, and the Fathers, and the Novices, and the Professed *until their deaths*, it is fitting that all should make use of this custom, as thanks be to God, they always did. And our old Fathers of the time of the Founder, if you could have seen them... more often today, this custom is not so widely practiced.

Jesus Christ did not disdain being born in a stable, to make Himself small, to appear as a sinner with his circumcision, being baptized, being accused in the tribunals, and the like.

And we, what profit will we not derive from this practice! What consolations will we have! What merit! What graces... that the Lord will bestow on us for avoiding such confusion!



DENUNCIATION TO BE MADE OUT OF CHARITY

1. **The Church is a Temple: the faithful are its stones – the Vigilance of God, and of Superiors, and of one's Companions - The text of the rule – its Practice.**
2. **It is not spying: but charity towards the individual and towards the Community – *Knowing and willing does no injury.***
3. **Reasons for this Rule which is that of the Company of Jesus – Practical cases.** ¹²¹

CF # 47: *The Manifestation of the faults of another, or of any of his Serious Temptations that are known outside of Confession, is to be made out of charity.*

¹²¹ Denunciation is the theme on which the Founder's Constitutions come to an end – cf. **CF ## 308-314**, on juridical union of the Community – this was thought to be one of the means to insure unity.

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As the heavenly Jerusalem up above, so the Church here on earth is like a magnificent and most sumptuous temple in which the Most Holy Trinity is praised, venerated and adored. The stones which make up this great temple, what would they be? They are the faithful: the just and the perfect, and so on.

But, these stones [stones: *the stones build up this mass*] – since *with suitable joints they can be located in the pinnacle of the Temple... they are subjected to innumerable blows for shaping, with much refined chiseling, adjusting and finishing.*

For this end in view the following put their hand to the work, the power of the father, the intercession of Mary Most Holy, the most vigilant eyes of the Superiors, and indeed even those of our equals and inferiors. And all of this because each of these is set to promote the work of our perfection, in a manner that each religious can affirm that which the Prophet Zecchariah affirmed of the Holy of Holies: *...upon one stone there are seven eyes: behold I will grave the graving thereof, says the Lord of Hosts...* [cf. Zc 3:9]. And these are the eyes of the Divine Father, of Jesus Christ of the Holy Spirit, of Mary Most Holy, of st. Joseph, of the Guardian Angels and of the Superiors and one's companions. Take the *Rule*, and read that part entirely which concludes the Founder's Constitutions:

CF # 313: *St. Ignatius¹²² states: For the candidate's greater progress in his spiritual life, and especially for his greater lowliness and humility, he should be asked whether he will be willing to have all his errors and defects, and anything else which will be noticed, or known about him, manifested to his Superiors by anyone who knows them outside of Confession.*

CF # 314: *St Ignatius also adds¹²³ that the future Novice on entering the Society, I to be questioned at the beginning whether he would be content to have all his defects and errors, as above...*

What, then, is the obligation of all this?¹²⁴

What if this is not complied with? We would be like so many Cains! *Am I my brother's keeper?* [Gn 4:9]. Enemies of their own brothers would be those who would not denounce faults that are known – enemies, too, of their own mother, the Congregation, of his soul. *What is this to me....?*

Let us peruse a bit from the book of Deuteronomy: *You shall not pass by if you see your brother's ox, or his sheep, go astray: but, you shall bring them back to*

¹²² In his **Constitution CSJ n. 63.**

¹²³ In his **Examen c. 4, 8 = CSJ n. 63.**

¹²⁴ Fr. Lenotti leaves this as a rhetorical question.

your brother. And [even] if you brother is not nigh, or you do not know him: you shall bring them to your house, and they shall be with you until your brother seek them, and receive them... [cf. Dt 22:1-2]. How much more, then, should we not have the care of our brothers at heart, to correct them, or to advise the Superior!

But, and would it not be better, first to advise your brother? No: it would be more advantageous to speak of it to the Superior: because the Superior can give the correction better, because he is a Father, he is a Doctor. And then no one can lament about this, because everyone knows it: [and accepting our Rules, he] cedes his right.

2°

The maxims of the world are quite different from those of God: and the rules of this world, totally opposite of those of Religion.

In the world, there is nothing that is so abhorrent and that is hated as much as denunciation, the accusation of the sins of others before the Superiors is thought of as spying, and those who would do so are treated as spies.

It is not this way in Religion. Rather, here it is the rule that should anyone know something about the rather notable wrong of a companion, and he is held to manifest this to the Superior; and each Religious ought to be disposed and content that his defects and failings should be manifested to the Superior.

It is a Rule full of prudence, usefulness for individuals and for the entire Community.

For the individuals: for whom the Superiors are able to apply the remedy for their failures. And so, there could be provided for anyone who might fail another rule of accusing oneself and to give an account of their own conscience and conduct to the Superior: because it is hoped that he will be bettered once the correction is made, by means of the Superior, rather than by another subject; and through the exercise of humility and of mortification of the same subjects. St. John Berchmans asked the Superior and two, or three of his confreres, to keep their eyes upon him.

For the entire Community: so that the Superior might be able to provide better for the good of the Congregation. In brief, all is for the greater good of the Religious in particular, and of the Community in general. And it is a practice in vogue in so many religious community, *from ancient times*. Just read the text here.

See no. 1°.

It is a matter of great merit because in the end, it is really a work of charity. Naturally, it is a help in overcoming that obstacle, or fear that then the one [about whom the defect is denounced] would then become aware of this, and so forth.

What deception is it not then, for anyone to say that he does not want to bring harm to anyone, and so he does not want to report gossip, to give rise to whisperings, and the like! This is not the spirit of religious life, but rather more the spirit of this world, a worldly law of maxim, worse, or a kind of worldly affective friendship, and very prejudicial to the religious life.

No one can find fault because he sees this rule being practiced: he hears of this Rule in Novitiate: *'to anyone who knows and is willing, no injury is delivered!'* And each one thus hands over his own right. No one, then, should take this badly. It should not be neglected, even should one foresee that the other might take it badly.

Let us, then, thank the Lord even regarding this means that He offers us in His house in order to sanctify us, which, if we were in the world, we would not have the benefit of it. Let us be grateful, let us correspond, let us esteem our vocation, and let us be well attached to it, that it might fructify for us through eternal life.

3°

Now it is necessary to explain, and recall this theme to mind: *Concerning Denunciation.*¹²⁵

This Rule, as it is practiced in the Company, was approved by the Supreme Pontiff even in a motion that presented it under contradiction – so, at least twice.

It is a necessary and important Rule: 1. because the Superiors might better govern, direct and bring a remedy and medicine to each subject in particular; 2. so that thus the Superior might order and provide better that which befits the universal Body of the Company. Succinctly these are the two reasons that lead to the justification of the other rule of the manifestation of one's conscience to the Superior. Our Rule then is justified by the manner with which in the Company it is practiced; and from the evil that would thus be removed, should the defects be rendered incorrigible. Furthermore keeping hidden the defects of one's brother is to give one a shove over the precipice, and therefore there is done a real great good by manifesting it to him. It is a deception for the one who would think that in keeping quiet is a motion of good manners. Furthermore, in the Company, there is pronounced by everybody a

¹²⁵ Fr. Lenotti considers these as the Founder does, under the means for *Spiritual Progress* [cf. **CF # 47**]. The reasons for it are found in Rodriguez, Part III, of *The exercise of the Religious Virtues*. Tract VIII, c. 6: *On the Rule and Constitution which we have in the Company of manifesting the failures and defects of our brothers immediately to the Superior.*

special protestation of being submitted to this Rule: therefore, wrongfully one could lament that his defects have been made known to the Superior.

In response, to any criticism, answer this way:

For example: if one notices that his companion is missing for meditation, or for the Examen, or for Spiritual Reading;

or, should he see that someone had either envy, or aversion and hatred toward another;

or, if one should criticize the Superior in something, or disapproves some decision of theirs, or a position taken, either directly or indirectly

or, if one says something against the Congregation censuring something about it, or one of its practices, or is a burden to it, or holds it in little esteem, or even disdain;

whoever hates it, ought to refer this to the Superior: for the reason that such conversation, such ideas might indeed be a spark for the temptations in the poor companion who is listening to him; or, in this manner one comes to place one malcontent with another; or at least, this one has rather disedifying speech, that it might bring, and does indeed heap some harm on the members of the Community and of the Congregation.

Should someone have something that disturbs him, he should not make this known and open himself up on this to his Confrere – and even worse, with a Novice; rather this should be brought to the Superior, to whom one should manifest his own temptations and to keep his own mind always open, in order to be comforted in his vocation, and not to discourage others. And so, just as one might fail one essential rule and would not ever accuse himself for having committed such a fault, such as speaking in a most imprudent manner - he would thus fail at the same time another Rule, that is no less essential for the one who does not denounce him, and does not manifest to the Superior that which the other confrere has said in his presence.

Alas! Let us guard ourselves, so that the enemy might not sew weeds in the Lord's field, which would be a greater disgrace that could happen to the Congregation. These are not, in fact, disgraces that would kill someone, or make one ill: rather these are faults that In the Congregation would sew unhappiness, the bad persuasion and the little esteem for the Congregation. For all this, cf. Rodgrigeuz.



Fr. JOHN B. LENOTTI

Master of Novices

§§§§§

**IInd Superior General
[1871-1875]**

DOMESTIC EXHORTATIONS

on the

FOUNDER'S ORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONS

SECTION 3:

VOWS

SECTION 3: VOWS

- XVIII. Pars VI, cc. 1-2:VOWS WHICH ARE EMITTED IN THE SODALITATE [CF ## 83-83-89]**
- XIX. Pars VII: THE OBSERVANCE OF THE VOWS –
Section I: ON THE MANNER OF POVERTY**
- XX. Chapter I: ON THE MANNER OF POVERTY WITH REGARD TO THE
COMMUNITY [CF ## 90-95].**
- XXI. Chapter 2: ON THE MANNER OF POVERTY WITH REGARD TO
INDIVIDUALS [CF ## 96 –104].**
- XXII. ON THE PERFECTION OF POVERTY.**
- XXIII. Section II: ON THE MANNER OF CHASTITY [CF ## 105-119]
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[CF ## 105-109].
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119].**
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RULES OF A GOOD RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – ON CLEANLINESS
*THE JESUIT RULES OF MODESTY.***
- XXVI. Section IV. Chapter I: ON THE MANNER OF OBEDIENCE [CF ## 138-141].**

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XVIII.
CONCERNING THE VOWS IN GENERAL
CONCERNING THE VOWS WHICH ARE PRONOUNCED IN THE
SODALITY
[Part VI, cc. 1-2 : CF ## 83-89]

C. 1 [CF ## 83-84]: Concerning the Vows made privately in the time of the Novitiate – These do not count for the Congregation – These are not to be made without permission, nor without subordination to the Superior.

C. 2 [CF ## 85-89]: The Vows of the Congregation – Solemn only for the *Grade of Apostolic Missionary*: the others are simple, perpetual vows, subordinated to the Institute – They remove the use and the administration of one's goods. The Acceptance of the *Grade* which the Superior retains opportune for the individual – Grave obligations of the Vow, which is the Consecration to God, and the Dolorous, Glorious, advantageous Crucifixion with Christ.

It is our task now to say something concerning the Vows in general: a matter that is most important and indeed proper and pertinent to us Religious. Rather, it is most interesting for us to give whatever can be given.

And first of all, regarding Private Vows: *say something and explain*, praising the beautiful custom that exists among us, and thanking God for it. Observe indeed that it is not right to lose time in advancing to practice these vows until after two years of formation when they should be pronounced; and to oblige ourselves to them for our entire lives: and thus, to offer to God the holocaust of our entire selves: our possessions, our body, and our will.

Chapter I
Concerning the Vows Privately Made during the Time of Probation [Novitiate]

1. **CF # 83:** *Vows that are privately made during the time of probation are not admitted. As a result, such Vows do not oblige the Institute, but it can freely dismiss a Novice who has made them. In which case, such vows will cease, unless the intention of the one making the Vows was otherwise.*

2. **CF # 84:** *Since the young more easily make such vows out of indiscreet fervor, they will not be allowed to make them unless with great consideration and consultation, and the proper form being observed as well as subordination to the Superior. Vows of this nature are temporary, rather than being with out limitation of time.*

Then, the Vows of the Sodality: *read and explain.*

§§§

Chapter II

The Vows of the Sodality

1. **CF # 85:** *No one pronounces vows with solemnity, unless he who merits the Grade of Apostolic Missionary in this institute, and in accord with its scope.*
2. **CF # 86:** *The remaining Collaborators pronounce only simple vows in the Community before the Superior, after a suitable formation period, that would be based on the common law of the Church, and the particular Rule of this Institute.*
3. **CF # 87:** *These simple vows are perpetual, in so far as the intention and obligation of the person making the vows is concerned. However, for a legitimate reason, the Institute is free to render these vows null and void because it has only conditionally received them.*
4. **CF # 88:** *In like manner, by these vows the ownership of temporal goods is not taken away, nor is every acquisition of other goods, either through inheritance, gift bequest, or something similar. It is only the use and the administration of these goods which are subordinated to the will of the Superior.*
5. **CF # 89:** *Those who are assigned to studies pronounce their simple vows publicly after Novitiate. They also promise the Divine Majesty, and they do this publicly, to receive that more perfect and stable grade of membership in the Institute, which has been imposed on them by the Superiors after carrying out the experiences and a sufficient formation.*

In this number 5 it is legislated in brief that the students who after Novitiate, pronounce simple Vows ought to have also the intention of receiving that more perfect and stable Grade, and so on [as the Rule indicates]. For this it would be helpful to read the *Biographical remarks* and the *Compendium* drawn up by the Father *Prepositus*.¹²⁶

Enter into the Institute with this Spirit: to arrive one day at the **Grade of the Professed** [with solemn vows], and to do all on one's own part in order to merit this: however, always remaining content to remain in that Grade which the Superior General will hold to be opportune.

¹²⁶ For this, cf. **CS II**, pp.158-179.

Whatever the vows that a religious may pronounce: whether they are simple, or solemn; or temporary or perpetual – the obligations which they impose are of their very nature great and grace obligations. This truth is beyond all doubt, since the emission of vows is not a simple ceremony, but a formal commitment with God, from which rigorous duties are derived.

These duties it is necessary to know them well, if they want to be carried out with that diligence proper to one's vocation: and we will speak of this at more length as this unfolds, at the same time as we will read the rules concerning this.

In the meantime, though, let us think, beloved brothers, let us keep in mind what a great privilege it is to pronounce the three vows in the Lord's House, and let us propose to esteem this as it truly merits to be.

Each human being is obliged to love God above everything else, and in order to do this each must indeed flee every mortal sin, which is *against charity*. Then, the next step is the avoidance even of venial faults, which even though they are not *against charity*, they do cloud it: they are *outside* charity. Then, one must go even further by abstaining out of love for God even from licit choices, and finally – and this is the highest point of perfection – that is, obliging themselves by vow, and this is precisely what is done in the state of religion.

It is like being a chalice consecrated to God! What esteem does this not merit! What a sublime value! And so, the Religious merits all the more. The chalice is placed in a protective covering – it is kept under lock and key. The protective covering for the Religious are his Rules – and the key under which he is protected is his Fear of God.

The vows, then, are an entire and total consecration of oneself: 'a **holocaust** by which the person offers himself and all that he has, to God.' This is a sublime consecration in its principle, which is the love of God, the charity which leads him to make this sacrifice. It is sublime also in the efforts it requires, since it costs so much the delicacy of the senses, to renounce everything to give all to God. This entire consecration is likewise sublime in its effects: because it makes us similar to the heavenly spirits and also to the angels while still on earth.

It is a Sorrowful Crucifixion: *with Christ I am nailed to the Cross* [cf. Ga 2:19]: since consecration demands very great sufferings: these are sufferings that are not momentary, but perpetual, always new.

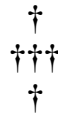
It is a Glorious Crucifixion: *God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ* [cf. Ga 6:14].

It is an advantageous Crucifixion: the Good Thief remained for only a few hours on the Cross, but he heard: *This day you will be with Me in paradise* [cf. Lk

23:43]. The religious remains there for his entire life, not out of constraint, but for his entire life.

But, what merits and how great they are! The vow is the act the virtue of religion, which is the greatest and most excellent of all the moral virtues, and thus betters by carats the works of the other virtues, transforming them into works of Religion: as something sacred, offered for the divine worship, a sacrifice and as making one dedicated and consecrated to God.

[2] A further reason is that that which is accomplished by vow proceeds from the most constant and perfect will. That which is accomplished by vow comes to have greater merit because as the goodness of exterior activities principally springs from the will. The will is all the better the better are the activities which proceed from it. Now, the matter is clear that the more the will is firm, constant, and perpetual, so much the better will it all be. Now, this is precisely what the vow accomplishes: it brings firmness and stability to the good deed, and thus makes it the more perfect.



XIX.

PART VII – ONE THE OBSERVANCE OF THE VOWS

Section I – On the Manner of Poverty

[CF ## 90-104] ¹²⁷

This is a serious obligation: a commitment with God – But, Christ is with us – Poverty, is the foundation of Evangelical Perfection – An Affective obligation, and obliges all – Affective and Effective, religious - Jesus Christ renders it precious, offering Himself as the Model – The Apostles, the First Christians, the founders – Poverty and the Common Life – Demands of Poverty.

Concerning the Observance of the Vows, let us say from the outset that it is a grave obligation, by its very nature. And from mortal sin, one could be excused only

¹²⁷ Once more in this Conference, Fr. Lenotti is most concise, and lacking in many aspects: the full grasp of this would require that it be integrated with some recourse to the others that the author cited, or could have – Pinamonti and Rodriguez – and other handwritten notes of the same Fr. Lenotti, as one of his Instructions for a Retreat ‘to the Nuns.’ This has much in common with what is presented here. There is also another manual type hand-written document which under the letter “P” offers a text from St. Bernard for the word: ‘Poverty’. There will be brought forward here only that which is necessary to give a sufficient sense to this outline that Fr. Lenotti offered here. As for the treatise of Fr. Pinamonti, almost all is derived here from Fr. Lenotti’s Instruction just noted above, and we offer here a kind of reduction of it. As far as Rodriguez is concerned, this is merely the evident development which cannot be left incomplete.

by levity of matter. *If you make a vow*, it is our word given to God, for which one must give an account: *and God will exact it from you*: it is a word written in heaven, and not only on a piece of paper here on earth.

But, have courage! Let us not pull back from pronouncing these vows: because the example of so many others is an invitation also for us, and because the lord's grace is with us. And also because the Vow is indeed a yoke, and as with every yoke, there are at least two who bear the burden: Christ is united to us also so that He might bear it with us. Even though, a vow might be called a yoke, it is one that is sweet – and even though it is a weight, the Scripture calls it 'light'.¹²⁸

Poverty. 'The private and public means of living, and all the grandeur and the happiness of the followers of this world is based on the riches which are for the Apostle John called the substance of this world: ***he that has the substance of this world*** [cf. 1 Jn 3:17], almost as though that without these, the world could not subsist.

Instead, the grandeur and the happiness of the followers of Jesus Christ is based on Poverty, which is the foundation of evangelical perfection.

Affective Poverty obliges all, even seculars, and is necessary for everyone: otherwise there intervenes that which the fishing eagle which has sought a prey bigger than its own strength. In order to keep it from falling, this beast holds the large fish in its talons, and would not let go, so from its weight the prey dragged the eagle to the depths of the sea.

However, religious poverty not only disdains the base goods that establish worldly fortune, but abandons them and deprives one of them, in effect, by losing their ownership, or by depriving oneself at least from the use and from their administration, by vow, in order to go more speedily to God: much like a hungry deer – which, having set aside the heavy weight of the horns, runs more swiftly to the source.'¹²⁹

Jesus Christ Himself comes to render this Cross of Poverty very precious on earth. 'This is not found in heaven – the thought is from St. Bernard] – while on earth it abounded, and human beings ignore its value. The Son of God, for the desire that He has had of it, has come down from heaven on purpose to choose this Cross as His own, and to render it precious for us.

Truly, ***He has become poor for your sake*** [cf. 2 Co 8:9]: poor in His birth, in His life-style, in His dying! What poverty there is on the Cross! ...***Look and make it according to the pattern*** [cf. Ex 25:40]: ***that was shown you on the mountain! - For I have given you an example, that as I have done for you, so you do also!*** [cf. Jn 13:15]. Jesus takes glory in His Poverty.

¹²⁸ Cf. Rodriguez, Part II, Tr. I, c. 18. cf. Mt 11:30.

¹²⁹ This is from Pinamonti-Lenotti, from 'The Religious Sister in Solitude. Lessons for the 5th Day'

This is the example of the Apostles and the first Christians ¹³⁰: so, too, the Founders of Religious Communities in the East as well as in the West, all planted Poverty as the foundation of their enterprise. ‘St. Francis called it His Spouse, his Mother, his Lady and Queen...St. Ignatius calls it the bulwark of Religious Communities, because the disorders that with time might enter into the sacred cloisters have never entered by any other way than through the breach made in this wall.’¹³¹

This is also true for us, and our Founder who willed that we be formed in this way.

However, the Vow of Poverty is, or can be, something elastic: as a knitted cap, or a stocking, that either contracts, or expands as one would wish. Each one in his Religious Community can observe it, where and as he professes it. For example, some [of the community] only eat dinner, and they ought to think of getting their own breakfast, and so on. Others have their own clothing; others have a certain standard of life [or a periodic return], and they receive a certain amount to provide tobacco for themselves. And in this way, common life takes a trip, and with it, so does poverty: because this common life can be more or less perfect according to the rigorousness, or the largesse with which one observes it: and so, as a result, poverty is also more or less perfect.

The Vow of Poverty, *from the strength and the very nature of the vow*, demands – in its rigor – that the person should dispose precisely of nothing, and he would have only the use of material goods. However, with due permission from the Superior, and for that purpose and for those circumstances for which this use of goods is granted. Thus, one may receive paper in order to write a letter – and so, he would not be able to use this to do something else, like making a container, or something else. And so, one who eats all at dinner, or supper, cannot without permission to reserve whatever is left over, in order to make alms of the remainders, or to set it aside, in order to eat it at a later moment – for the simple reason, that nothing is his.

Let us inspire ourselves, then, to maintain this observance of Poverty in flower, and we will have the reward of a hundred fold in this life and eternal glory in the life to come.



¹³⁰ The early Church, and especially the example of the Apostles, is one of the preferred ideals for Fr. Bertoni when he set ‘models of living’ for the Apostolic Missionaries throughout his *Original Constitutions* : CF ## 252; 259; 261; 272; 273.

¹³¹ Fr. Lenotti took this thought from Pinamonti, from the original.

XX.
SEVENTH PART – FIRST SECTION
C. 1. On the Manner of Poverty with respect to the Community
CF ## 90-95¹³²

All is held in Common, nothing granted for perpetual use – Poverty helps one observe also the other Virtues – Everything as loaned, as though it belonged to God and was consecrated to Him – Fr. Lancisio's Norms – Examples, St. Ignatius and the Coadjutor Brother, Fr. Francis Perez Godoy – The Abbot Agaton - Fr. Balthasae Alvarez.

5. CF # 94: *All will have in common whatever pertains to food, clothing, furnishings to one's room and books. What is granted for personal use, the confreres will have as not possessing, and they will be prepared to return everything whatsoever they may be suing, for common use, at the slightest indication on the part of the Superior.*

6. CF # 95: *To no one is granted the perpetual use of books, or those which he might take away with him wherever he may be transferred.*

The observance of Poverty serves also to having the other religious virtues observed: obedience, chastity: because the poor man is also humble, and also he is obedient. He is a lover of discomforts and of privations, and the like, which are the companions of Poverty, and this enables him to standing up to temptations [which attempt to break down the 'beautiful virtue'].

Therefore, everything must be held in common: common life is to be observed: let care be taken of those goods that are granted for their use, as though they were valuables loaned to them out of Charity, as something belonging to God, and as consecrated to God. ¹³³

'Make use of goods in this manner, as that it would be seen that they belong to someone else, and are not yours – all has been given to you as a loan, just for the moment: use them all as though you remained in the situation of very shortly having to give them all back, integral and unsullied, to the owner. Thus it will be seen that clothing, or books, or anything else, you will not mark, you will not render them unusable, nor will you desire them. Rather you will keep everything clean, integral and neat, and you will allow nothing through your own fault to go bad. So you will never

¹³² The concerns raised here were much on Fr. Bertoni's mind writing his *Original Constitutions* – cf. especially CF # 229, ff., under *Unity*. For clothing [CF ## 6; 29; 32; 43; 69; 91; 94; 100; 133; 137; 229; 130; 231]; regarding Food [cf. CF ## 6; 43; 91; 94; 97; 229; 230]; concerning lodging: [cf. CF ## 6; 91; 94; 100; 229]; concerning Books [cf. CF ## 61; 94; 95; 101].

¹³³ Here Fr. Lenotti cites the *Opusculum spirituale secundum*, of Fr. Lancisio: Chapter VI: Concerning the Acts of Poverty – under numbers 125-129. Fr. Stofella offers a synthesis of those marginal numbers here.

throw things aside, poorly folded, and not put back in a decent place, allow nothing to get covered over with dust, or bespattered. Good manners demands that goods be taken care of as though they were loaned by illustrious persons. And what person is more illustrious than the Lord Jesus? Whatever it is that the state of religion, by taking care of your needs, gives to you, it is not as a gift, but as a loan, and all comes from Him...'

'Take good care that you do manifest excessive affection, even for things of low value: but, make good use of them in such a way that if they were taken from you, you would not miss them, nor would you be upset, or come to argue. Keep this same mind as if they were indeed taken away, or allowed to spoil, or stained maybe by others, but not by you.'

'Be careful not to consume many things for your own use; be content rather to use goods as little as possible. Do not take medicines without great need. Do not leave the candle burning in your room, when you leave, even for a little while. And when you can do without,

'Use goods in such a way as not to lose them, neither within the house, or outside it. [There is the story of the three lentils of which Cassian speaks, and of the penance meted out to the culpable for such a waste].' 'The necessary objects – the furnishings for the room, books, or other goods – after their use, put them back into good order.'¹³⁴

Then he descended to particular regarding clothing, reliquaries, images, shirts, his hair. He also noted even his sash of wool.

Solid poverty demands that the servants of God should make use of very few things, and those of small cost. But those who attend to the welfare of others in the clerical state should fly from extremes and follow the example of the Abbot Agathon, who was one who 'made use in everything of the greatest discretion, even in his clothing. His rule was that his garments should not appear too good, nor too poor. And those things that are absolutely necessary, see to it that they might be as inexpensive

¹³⁴ Here Fr. Lenotti has recourse to other examples from another work of the same Fr. Lanciso: the 15th example is cited elsewhere. There one can find the story of the 3 wasted lentils, but there is also read the correction that St. Ignatius directed to the Coadjutor Brother, who was doing his job rather lackadassically but claimed that he was doing them for the Glory of God. If you worked this way in the service of men, perhaps someone could pardon you. But, in the service of God! This is simply not acceptable! There is also this example: The Jesuit, Fr. Francis Perez Godoy – later a martyr in Brazil – was working as a Novice in the kitchen under the direction of the Brother Cook. He was washing rather carefully a number of outs and pans, cleaning around the stools, and doing all to leave everything just spic and span. Someone asked him why he expended so much effort for those things and places that would soon be messed up once more. He answered that in the evening, he was accustomed to offering to the Most Holy Virgin his work for each day. He would have been too ashamed to offer to her anything for kitchen use that was not well dried and quite clean. He could not offer to her a task not well some. Fr. Lenotti now continues:

as possible. There is the example of Fr. Balthasar Alvarez: he would never wear new clothes or shoes. He tried that for some time, that others would first use them. He adapted himself to them when the garments were no longer new. The exhortations that he delivered, even though of great importance, he wrote them, out of love for the virtue of poverty, on covers, or envelopes from letters he had received. A sitting chair with a silk cover had been given to him as alms, he set it up in the kitchen and left it there until it was soiled, hoping that the Novices who worked there might learn that our life is regulated in all, contrary to the customs of this world, and the like...



XXI.

CHAPTER TWO – ON THE MANNER OF POVERTY WITH RESPECT TO INDIVIDUALS CF ## 96-104

The discussion here is on the Founder's Rules, 1-6 [CF ## 96-101]. There should be no spirit of ownership in the use of goods – Neither food or drink in one's room – no books without permission – Everything in common use – The ban on superfluities – Fr. Lancisio's teaching – The examples of Fr. Alvarez and St. Francis Xavier – St. Teresa – The two other Rules, nn. 7 – 8 [CF ## 102-103]: not to receive compensation, nor to give or receive as a loan, without permission - Rule 9 [CF # 104] – The Benedictine and the handkerchiefs – Books for one's *use*.

Our Divine Redeemer, Jesus Christ, *being rich, He became poor* [cf. 2 Co 8:9]. And we, my brothers, it is not all that great a matter – whether we were rich or poor in the world – if, for love of Him, and also to be like Him, we would prefer to elect Poverty for ourselves. Let us thank the Lord for this, and let us love it in our hearts and tenderly and with a genuine spirit: that we might experience in it authentic contentment and consolations. Let us proceed now in the reading and explanation of our Constitutions, that treats of this, **Chapter II: *On the Manner of Poverty with Respect to Individuals***:

1. **CF # 96:** *No one will use anything as though it were his own.*

And here, I will offer a word, as I said to you the other time: everyone should make use of goods as though they were not one's own, as though on loan, as something that belongs to the Community and to God. Use them with care, with a sense of taking care of them. And note well that this should be done not only with those goods that we have for our particular use, but also for common possessions: that is, books, clothing, wood, food, one's room, and so on. Cf. *The Religious Sister in Solitude* for this thought: 'To fulfill in this matter your duty, take the same care of those common goods in the Monastery that you care for those that are granted for your own use. The reason is to make any distinction in taking care of them, would make it quite evident the

attachment that you have for yourselves. It would indicate that you possess as though it were your own whatever in reality is not yours, but what is been granted to you by the Superiors, and just for your use.’¹³⁵

2. **CF # 97:** *No one will keep privately in his own room, or have under his own care, and for his own free use, whatever pertains to the sustenance of the body, as food and drink.*

3. **CF # 98:** *If anything of this nature should be sent to any religious, this is not for his own use, or possession, but must all be received and distributed in common use.*

Whatever you have in your hands, is as much mine as yours: and the Father *Prepositus* would not find any fault with you if these same goods were distributed to another, instead of to you. And if one, having received something from family or friends, should dispose of it by himself, without any permission, would sin against the vow.

4. **CF # 99:** *No one will keep the door of his room locked, or any chest, without the direction of the Superior.*

5. **CF # 100:** *Regarding clothing and personal laundry, and all that pertains to the furnishings of his room, no one should retain anything beyond what is actually necessary for the use of the body, but all else should be kept in the common wardrobe.*

6. **CF # 101:** *No one should have any books without the permission of the Superior, nor should he write, or note anything in them.*

Concerning what would be superfluous, read Fr. Lancisio ¹³⁶: *You should have nothing superfluous in whatever is destined for your own use. Ad so, you should not have two knives, and not more printed books in our room than is needed for your ordinary use, especially those which others might have frequent need. Thus St. Zeno – as is read in Theodoretus - upon receiving a book from his family, read it totally and accepted another one only after having returned the earlier one.*

The Venerable Alvarez would allow no mirror for himself. ‘those who abstain from superfluous goods, are rewarded by the Lord with the grace of devotion’, is the view of Fr. Lancisio. When on trips, do not spend more than what one would do at home for food, and the like. St. Francis Xavier *when he was traveling through India,*

¹³⁵ Fr. Pinamonti.

¹³⁶ Tome I, p. 159, n. 122.

*made use of the most ordinary food, of low price, and what he had begged. He did not taste meat or wine, nor did he consume wheat bread. When, though, he was at home, he ate also of those foods distributed also to all the others.*¹³⁷ St. Teresa – read in *The Religious Sister in Solitude* – ‘was accustomed of reviewing her cell from time to time, in order to observe whether there was anything of which she could rid herself, and if she did find anything, she would bring it out of her room forthwith.’

7. CF # 102: *No one is to receive anything in compensation for his spiritual ministry, or pious offices, which the Institute offers to its neighbors gratuitously.*¹³⁸

8. CF # 103: *No one can give, receive or dispense whatever belongs to the House, without the Superior’s consent.*

Permission is always needed to give, or to borrow anything! ‘St. Aloysius Gonzaga did not even want to borrow a piece of paper from his companion without first asking permission of the Superior.’¹³⁹ Not to give, or receive, or dispose of anything without permission. In order to get a drink, to use a book, to obtain silk, or thread, or a handkerchief, or shirt, and the like. There is the old story of that Monk who took a piece of bunting without permission, in order to use the material for his habit. The Prior called him before the Chapter of all the Religious of the Community, and accused him and punished him as though he were a thief, and burned in that very place that strip of cloth taken for his wretched use.’

This permission can be general, or particular. And although it is also possible to have a good general permission – for example, to drink, to use the books for a week or more – nonetheless, let us keep well in mind that the most perfect and desirable practice- excepting the case of a continual necessity of this or that good – let it be as our Founder wanted: i.e., that it be special once in a while, as our good old Fathers used to do, and that each will adapt himself to do this also now. St. Aloysius, asking for permission even for paper, ‘and did this in order to practice better poverty and obedience, did not wish even a general faculty – but asked permission, whenever the need came to him, each and every time.’

¹³⁷ Another thought from Fr. Lanciso.

¹³⁸ Fr. Berotni – following St. Ignatius – insisted much on *Praedicare in Paupertate*, [cf. Gunter SWITEK, ed. *Estudios sobre el concepto de pobreza segun Ignacio de Loyola*. Centrum Ignatianum Roma 1975, 250 pp.] i.e., *to exercise any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever* – absolutely gratuitously – cf. **CF ## 3; 67; 102; 184: gratis omnino.**

¹³⁹ Cf. *The Religious Sister in Solitude*.

9. CF # 104: *In order that each one be content with whatever is distributed to him from the common supply, he should be ready to accept the more mean and abject goods, for his greater abnegation.*

Just consider that Monk and his good example as recorded in the *Life of St. Benedict* ¹⁴⁰: that good and zealous religious, who went to preach and to assist a Monastery of Nuns situated on the top of a mountain, and having received from the charity of those Nuns a few handkerchiefs, that pleased him, and he deliberated on whether to keep there for his own use, without handing them over to his own Monastery, as he should do. On his return, then, he hid them in his habit – and when he was standing before the Abbot, he asked for his blessing. The Saint said to him: ‘What did you do up there? What have you brought back?’ And the monk responded: Nothing, lying., But the saint, illumined by God, advised him gently saying to him: Do you not realize, my son, that you have a snake in your habit? Do you not notice that the Devil sought to blind your eyes with a handkerchief, to make you to fall into the grave error of ownership? You have left behind with such generosity the wealth and possessions of the world, and then you give so much affection to a piece of cloth that can unravel you into so many imperfections?’ At these words, the returning Preacher was much confused and no less convinced of the prudent advice the saint was giving him, so he confessed to him his error. And he remained gently overwhelmed, and showed himself for the future always quite far from pretending any personal ownership of anything.

One last addition: in a Convent there was introduced the custom of writing in books with the permission to do so: there would be written *For the Use of N.N., perpetually* - and from this single abuse there entered the abuse of relaxing the observance of poverty and of the religious spirit. There was in this practice a certain expression of attachment, and a certain dominion of ownership, that was not opposed. One should not even write his own name in any book.



¹⁴⁰ Written by Fr. Joachim Fogli, c. 19, p. 120.

XXII. ON THE PERFECTION OF POVERTY¹⁴¹

Have we not left behind everything, and so on: the hundred-fold in this life and eternal life. The power of judging on the last day. – The three conveniences of St. Thomas – The perfection of poverty – three levels – The example of Brother Ximenus, SJ – still more on poverty: examples of the Saints – Particular Cases.

One day, St. Peter said to the Divine Redeemer: *Behold we have left all things and have followed You: what, therefore, shall we have ?* [cf. Mt 19:27, ff.]. And Jesus answered: *Amen, I say to you, that you, who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the seat of His Majesty, you also shall sit on 12 seats judging the 12 tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall possess life everlasting...* There will be a reward, then, in this world as well as in the next. This is the well calculated measure of retribution that he will give to us.

‘This reward is of three kinds: the hundredfold in this life; the power of judging on the last day; and an eternal treasure in the possession of Paradise...And as for the hundred-fold in this life; and an eternal treasure in the possession of Paradise ... And as for the hundred-fold in this life, this consists primarily in recompensing the abundant temporal goods out of love for God with the abundance of spiritual goods... In addition to this in this hundredfold there are contained also the necessary and fitting goods for the sustenance of our living, committing the Lord's Providence of His Heavenly Father and the Charity of His faithful ones to communicate to us up to that degree which will seem just to the Lord, for our salvation and perfection. ‘

‘The second well calculated measure of retribution will be given at the end of time to all His poor voluntary followers, who will have left everything behind out of love for the Lord. In the Universal Judgment they will be the Assessors of the Divine Judge, and they will confirm the sentence with Him...’

‘St. Thomas brings to the fore three fitting rewards. The first is because His poor followers, with the disdain they have made of the goods of this earth, have made such a correct judgment of them... The second is that of merit: because since they have humbled themselves out of love for Christ to embrace that which in the world is the more disdained, they merit to be raised up to the honor of judging of judging the remnant of humanity. The third is one of disposition: because voluntary Poverty, emptying the heart of terrestrial affections, prepares the mind to be well instructed in

¹⁴¹ It seems here that Fr. Lenotti calls on the help of his favorites Fr. Pinamonti, Rodriguez, St. Alphonsus, and others. Our style will be one of sobriety. [Fr. Stofella's Note here]

the divine truths; and consequently this gives to them such a right of publishing to others the Decrees of Christ.'

However, it is not enough to have professed Poverty in order to exercise this very sublime judiciary power on the last day: it is fitting that this to perfection: ***The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of His people...*** [cf. Is 3:14]. This means, as St. Augustine has explained, with the perfect, and with those who maintain their promise to Christ of living as the poor out of love for Him. These have merited that Christ will maintain toward them His Promise of taking Him as companions on the Day of Judgment.'

In what does the perfection of Poverty consist? There are three degrees ¹⁴²:

1° Degree: to possess nothing as one's own...

2° Degree: to possess nothing superfluous, as we saw, and not to be too solicitous and attached to necessary goods: But, rather it is fitting to exercise also a certain ***poverty of necessities***.

3° Degree: to tolerate at times a certain lack even regarding necessary goods: otherwise, [cf. *The Religious Sister in Solitude*], says St. Bernard what kind of Poverty would this be, that would not wish that anything every be lacking, and placing the whole House in an uproar, if one has not been totally cared for?¹⁴³

Then, there are interior levels in the practice of this virtue: i.e., Joy, Thanksgiving: receive the occasions to practice Poverty with Joy, Thanksgiving, with Admiration. ¹⁴⁴.

I conclude with this story of Brother Ximenes, SJ. He was one who greatly praised poverty, seeing that the clothing that he was wearing was very poor indeed, and he gave this response to a sublime doctrine of perfection: 'Poverty, my Brother, is peace of soul and also of body, when all is lacking to us: i.e., to rejoice and not to murmur in our need: to consider oneself unworthy of whatever we already have, no

¹⁴² cf. Rodriguez, Part III, r. III, c. VI; St. Alphonsus, *True Spouse*, c. IX, § 11.

¹⁴³ Cf. Sermon IV, on the Advent of the Lord. In his notes for the Instructions to Nuns, Fr. Lenotti expressed the wish that men and women religious make, when the possibility arose, to hold in high esteem the so-called ***poverty of necessities***. And he adds: If this is not so, that we are Lords and Ladies! And he notes the words that might be found on the lips of Religious: words just allowed to fall: 'One has to live!' 'When some things are finished, it is always possible to buy others.' Or, 'others have what they need.' And gradually, all goes wrong. These are scandalous statements! And Fr. Lenotti goes on: But, we are seeking perfection, detachment from the things of this world, even small things. How strange it is that after having left everything else, we attach ourselves to trinkets. Some Nuns... what a wretched way of life they lead! *When we have food and clothing, let us be content with that*. There should be no laments: the wheel that squeaks is the worst of all. Let there be no desires: one Nuns keeps quiet, but would want this and that: her comforts: she would accept the honors of poverty, but not its inconveniences! Companions in poverty, are some suffering and discomfort. The poor, have to endure these things, and are still disdained!'

¹⁴⁴ cf. St. Alphonsus, *True Spouse*, c. IX, § II, nn. 9-11.

matter how poor is our food, and poor our food: this is peace of soul and body, whatever is lacking to the one who is content, not so much with that which is already distributed.’¹⁴⁵

CONCERNING POVERTY

*Solid poverty demands that the servants of God make use of as few goods as possible, and these the most lowly; but, rather that they attend in the clerical state to the salvation of others, and they should flee extremes*¹⁴⁶. St. Bernard states: *In one’s clothing, poverty is always pleasing, but filth never.* Neither to give, nor to receive anything: not even as a loan without an expressed permission: not even a thread, or a needle. St. Ignatius placed as a reserved matter anyone who would loan also something that was of the value of a pen. Some good Religious confess as the very first matter whether or not they have lent or received anything without permission.

Blessed James had sent to St. Policronius a hair-shirt that was somewhat more better than the one he had, so he sent it back. St. Arsenius, even though he was the first master of Theodosius, Honorius and Arcadius, was a most honored person, but always wished for the most rough and abject clothing.

The shortest cut of all: to seek the harshest shirt, and so on. Mary Most Holy recommends abject clothing to a Carthusian Lay Brother, when she appeared to him to console him, and so on. So, poverty is to be observed even in the use of paper. Venerable Alvarez did not write his exhortations, even those of great importance, other than on covers for other letters, out of love for poverty. Books – and all other goods – especially those that are used also by others, are not to be kept in one’s room: but immediately they should be returned to their proper place. St. John Chrysostom states that those who make use of the fewest goods, are more like the Angels. St. Basil legislated that Monks live as in an angelic ritual, and that they be content with the fewest things. Whoever loves Jesus, regards the most vile and poor goods as delights.

Further, one should keep his affection from being attached to vile goods, but rather to keep them as not one’s own belongings so much so that should they be taken away, one would not feel their absence, and would not be upset about them, as though they were taken from someone else. The lamp should not be left lit without necessity in the time of meditation, and when the points do not have to be read, extinguish it. A certain Father of the Company of Jesus was seen by a holy Nun enveloped in splendor

¹⁴⁵ In conclusion of this thought – developed up to this point from the Instructions destined for the Novices loyal to the text of the Original Constitutions - let us now offer the hand-written notes of Fr. Lenotti’s Exhortation on Poverty, where the Constitutions are just implied. This following talk, most likely was destined for the whole Community. There are some repetitions – but this offers emphasis to his ideal.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. an excellent treatment in Fr. Lancisio, T. I, p. 157.

in celebrating Mass early in the winter morning in Prussia: not having willed to make use of a little candle that would be in use, to read better, and he did this out of love for poverty.

Do not lose anything, nor break anything: but use everything as though it belonged to the Lord. The story of the three lentils. In St. Pachomius' Rule, dictated by the Angel, who lost something, had to be corrected before the altar. If anyone had lost any part of his clothing, he would remain without it for three weeks. And in the fourth week, if he had done penance, it would be restored to him. Each one must keep in good order all that it is in his room, or whatever one has used. St. Ignatius wished that twice a day, he would visit the rooms to see if anything was out of order. Hunger, thirst, and disdain, these are the companions of poverty: if we love these, it will be a sign that we love poverty. *Whoever wills that nothing be lacking to him, and yet wish to be considered religious, deceives himself.*



XXIII. SECOND SECTION

ON THE MANNER OF CHASTITY [CF ## 105-119]

To fall in love with this Virtue – Its delicacy – The Lord *feeds among the lilies* - Cautions imposed by the Rules.

C. I: Concerning the Manner and Purpose of Chastity in Common CF ## 105-109

After Poverty, it is now the right time to speak about Chastity. Speaking of this, the Abbot Cheremone used to say that the religious ought to fall in love with Chastity, more than an avaricious man would love gold, more than the ambitious person would be avid for his own honors. Our life, our ministries, demand this. The Lord *feeds among the lilies*. [cf. CT 2:16].

However, it is a delicate virtue. As a flower of sweet fragrance, that a little bit of wind, or some small animal suffice to tramp it down, and it needs to be protected on a veranda of crystal: this is Chastity. And we ought to use every diligence to guard it pure from every mark of stain. Therefore, precisely our own Founder offers us the means for this.

1. CF # 105: There is to be a cloister regarding women¹⁴⁷.

Therefore, the porter and the sacristan, all have to be careful not to leave the doors of the cloister opened. A few days before his death, St. Alphonsus was heard to cry out: 'have that woman leave: there is a woman in the house!' It was thought at the time that he was fighting off some temptation or other. This was not the case. A young person who had come to bring a bundle, and was frightened when he heard the saint cry out like this, and the person left in great haste with a companion. The truth is that this person was a young woman, dressed as a soldier, and had been brought into the house unrecognized. The young person confessed later the truth of this fact.

2. CF # 106: No one should leave the house unless with the permission of the Superior, and with a companion being assigned to him.

Let us thank the Lord: for this is what the Holy See commands. And we are to be indifferent regarding the companion assigned. Let our every outing be one of some devout discourse. The examples of our own confreres and others, who would discuss the *Magnificat* along the way, and so on.¹⁴⁸ This is a virtue to be exercised: Modesty, which is like a sermon. Silence in the places of assembly.

3. CF # 107: *On returning home, if there had been anything of note which the companion did, or which had happened, both confreres will refer the matter to the Superior. Furthermore, if anything important might have been heard from other externs, or which had been seen along the way, they will also make known.*

Therefore, it is required to refer if anything happened, any imprudence, or insufficient modesty. Or empty conversations.

4. CF # 108: *No one will speak with a woman, or hear her confession, unless with the door opened and before those present, who will be able to keep them in view, even though it is not licit to listen.*

Regarding speaking with women, there are some examples: it would suffice to note the *Monologo*, of Petrigiani, or St. Alphonsus, or some other saint: 'With women, even holy women – Fr. Consolini of the Oratory used to say – it is necessary to practice charity as with the Souls of Purgatory: from afar and without looking at them.

¹⁴⁷ The Founder notes this several times in his Rule: cf. also **CF ## 269**

¹⁴⁸ cf. the *Biographical Notes regarding Fr. Biadego*, in: **CSI**, p. 442.

5. CF # 109: Each one moreover will tend to that perfection of chastity, which befits men whose office is angelic, or who are espoused to Christ our Lord, for their soul is given in marriage to Christ, as the Apostle says, as a chaste virgin, or holy in mind and body¹⁴⁹.

Read and explain. Chastity renders us Spouses of Jesus Christ, and dedicated to Him. There is renounced every profane love. There is put up a wall of separation from creatures. One thus becomes an object of predilection to Jesus Christ, as St. John, *whom Jesus loved* [cf. Jn 13:23] – *He who loves cleanness of heart, for the grace of his lips shall have the king for a friend.* [cf. Pr 22:11]. One thereby becomes the object of favors of Jesus Christ.

The Madonna and St. John are angels of purity. The Angels are such, by nature – and we become such by the effect of virtue, by the fruit of so many battles, by the triumph of the spirit over the senses: Angels of perfection. In order to observe Chastity we are necessitated to exercise the other virtues: mortification, abstinence, penance, humility, modesty.

The Angel of happiness: sees only the Lord – such a one is in possession of God, Who blesses him with celestial delights, and so on. Therefore, practice these Rules, fall in love with the beautiful Chastity, pray to the Holy Spouses, pure Virgins, that they may give this special affection to us – and so, remaining constant until death: then the crown.

2.

C. II: Concerning the Means for preserving Chastity in Particular¹⁵⁰ CF ## 110-119

1. Prayer and Meditation – 2. Sincere openness of conscience – 3. Penances, especially in *abstinence of food and drink, in prayer and fasting.* – St. Jerome – St. Ilarion – St. Nilo – Flight from laziness, and love of hard work – Fr. Gaspar's own maxims – St. Gregory Nazianzen – The Garment of King Theodoric.

Who indeed are the chaste Joseph's who dilute the swamp of luxury, if not religious men and women? Therefore, this refers to us who are called, we who are consecrated by vow, and so on.

The Means: 1° Prayer and Meditation:

¹⁴⁹ A quote here would be 2 Co 11:2].

¹⁵⁰ This is a rather summary presentation. Both in this one, and in two other similar reflections, Fr. Lenotti took his inspiration from a passage of Genesis: the selling of the chaste Joseph to the merchants of aromatics on their way toward Egypt. Here there is to be understood what he affirms elsewhere explicitly: 'this world, especially in our times, has become a fetid Egypt, where uncleanness...and the most shameless lasciviousness has unfurled its banner.' This is the presupposition with which the discourse begins here.

1. CF # 110: *For there is to be the frequent exercise of prayer and meditation, which either the common rule will assign, or the order of Superiors to each one.*

It is necessary to remain persuaded that Chastity is a gift of God, and that it ought to proceed from a supernatural motive which is God. Therefore, it is necessary to have recourse to Him: *And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except god gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom, to know whose gift it was: I went to the Lord, and besought Him...* [cf. Ws 8:21]. And Jesus Christ adds: *This kind can go out by nothing, but by prayer and fasting...* [Mk 9:28]. And then: *...Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation...* [cf. Mt 26:41].

Prayer, then, both ready, and continuous: also to Mary Most Holy, to St. Joseph, to st. Aloysius, to the Guardian Angel. And follow without being spell-bound. And during the day, there is recommended the use of aspirations and ejaculatory prayers: *O Lord*, etc. ; Meditation is obligatory by rule – and should there be needed something still more to overcome the temptation, then that prayer granted by the Superior.

2° The Manifestation of one's Conscience:

2. CF # 111: *In order that the Confreres might be effectively and gently assisted by their Superiors in overcoming all the difficulties and dangers which in the keeping of Chastity customarily occur, each one will conceal nothing of this matter from the Superior, or the Confessor, or to someone else to whom the spiritual care of the religious is entrusted. Rather, each will manifest all temptations and dangers. Likewise, whoever might know of a danger for any confrere outside of Confession, will be held to manifest this secretly to the Superior.*

There are indeed difficulties in Chastity: therefore, there should be no wonder if we are tempted: and if we encounter dangers, even though we find ourselves in this enclosure of the Religious House. We have with us always our human flesh, and so on, passions, and so on, and then, there's the Devil, etc. It is necessary to manifest the little things: that the Devil and the serpent bite from hiding, like a thief in the night who hates the light, and loves the darkness.

Temptation once it is manifested, is healed, if it remains hidden, it will only increase. And if one does manifest it, what was great becomes small. And if a small temptation is hidden, it becomes great [St. Bernard]. The Demon reasons this way: now, under the pretext that it is nothing, that it is something small, and leads one to keep quiet about it. And then comes the embarrassment...real harm and precipices. It is a delicate virtue, a mirror which with a breath is clouded. Temptation is like a flame that when one touches it, if it does not burn, it singes, and so on. Therefore, manifest

these temptation and cast out with decisiveness the bad thought just as soon as it comes, and flee every occasion of danger. Read Rodriguez.

3° Mortification, especially in abstinence of good and drink, in prayer and fasting :

3. CF # 112: *Each one will assume that mortification of the flesh through abstinence from food and drink, which is fitting for him in the judgment of the Superiors, or the Confessor.*

For this, read Rodriguez, Part III, tr. IV, c. VII, n. 1: St Jerome and St. Ilarion.

Blessed Jerome states: *The fiery arrows of the devil are extinguished by the rigor of fasts and vigils.*¹⁵¹ Regarding St. Ilarion, the same St. Jerome, that while he was being tormented by the temptations of the flesh, and by impure thoughts, he addressed himself to his body, and stated to it: 'I will see to it, jack-ass that you are, that you are not able to do much kicking; I will take our victuals away from you, and I will give you only hay, I will make you die of hunger and of thirst, I will load you down with very heavy burdens, and I will inflict you with heat and cold. In this manner, you will have to think more about eating than about lascivious thoughts. When the horse eats well, one is then found to be more sprightly and accepts kicks. The furnace of Babylon and the Abbot St. Nilo: 'Our concupiscence is like the furnace of Babylon.'

4° Flee laziness. Celebrations. Company – love fatigue¹⁵²

4. CF # 113: *Idleness will be totally and perpetually avoided by each and everyone. Manual labor, or some external exercise of the body will be assigned to each by the Superior, which seems to be the most proper and expedient.*

A good example of all this would be St. Gregory Nazianzen, who renounced the See of Constantinople, and retired into the solitude of Arianzo. His penitential life and of prayer and was one of flight from all occasions. Also St. Aloysius Gonzaga and St. Joseph. Courage, and keep the Rules.

¹⁵¹ Letter to Fariam.

¹⁵² Here Fr. Lenotti develops his thought, very similar to some of the maxims of Fr. Gaspar's talk on *Remedies against Dishonesty*: 'remove all laziness, which is so close to uncleanness – which like without this, there would not be polluted the waters in the swamps – in like manner, souls would not be polluted by pleasures. *Remove laziness, and Lovenio no longer has its bow and arrows.* [This Ovidian hexameter was quite familiar to Fr. Gaspar, who in his Vith Instruction to the Accolytes, he recalls it twice. The second time, he also adds the pentameter: *The lamps lie neglected and without light.* Cupid is often remembered with bow and arrows, and as a flame.

The Chapter goes on. Cassiodoro, the secretary of King Theodoric, while writing to a certain artisan who had been given the charge to work out a rich mantle, for the person of that prince, recommended to him to use in that work, every possible accuracy, so that it might succeed perfectly, and without blemish; The reason was because he was dealing – as he himself said - with working out a bit of clothing for the person of the King, *it would be sacrilegious to sin in that garment*. We religious in a special manner ought to work out – I will put it this way – a white garment for Jesus Christ, a precious garment. And so on.



XXIV.
THIRD SECTION - CHAPTER I
On Humility
CF ## 120-121

1. Cultivate Modesty – In what it consists – St. Bernardino – St. Lucian, Martyr – The modest Religious – The dominion of two movements of the spirit – The exercise of Humility through the 12 Degrees of St. Benedict.

2. Necessity of Humility – Gospel expressions similar for Baptism and Humility – St. Augustine's doctrine – Foundation of every virtue – Humility of intellect and will – *That I may know myself, that I may know You*, etc. - Humiliation: all the exterior senses are instruments – Humility toward God – Blessed Bernardino Realino – Humility with one self and with one's neighbor – The warnings of Mary most holy to a Monk and a Jesuit, etc. – To the external acts there must be a correspondence of internal humility: to live of humility.

1. C F # 120: *Thus, all will practice modesty in all matters, so that it might appear to all who are in the house, or outside, for the praise of God. And first of all, they will moderate through humility every motion of the mind which tends toward one's own excellence.*

Therefore, our Venerated Founder recommends modesty to us, and prescribes it for us as an ornament, an embellishment and help for chastity, for the edification of those outside, as well as those within. This Modesty consists ¹⁵³ 'the correctness of our body and the custody of our senses, and our dealing and our conversing and all the movements and gestures are to be such that they give edification to all those who see us, and have any dealings with us.'

We should, therefore, employ a certain gravity and maturity, to such an extent that in our exterior humility should be manifest. This helps for us as a guard over our

¹⁵³ Cf. Rodriguez, Part II, Tract II, c. 1.

hearts. There is no doubt: the commerce and harmony that there is between body and soul, between the exterior person and the interior, is meant to be so great that the recollected spirit serves to maintain the body modest and composed, and *viceversa*. When the doors of the house are closed, everything is guarded and secure. But if they are broken open without a guard, so that anyone might enter and leave at will, the house will not be secure, or at least it will not be in repose, nor quiet.’ ‘So goes it also in our own case. Therefore, the Sage exhorts us: ***With all watchfulness keep your heart, because life issues out from it*** [cf. Pr 4:23]. This is said for our benefit, but it serves also for the profit of our neighbor.

It is said of St. Bernardine that such was his modesty and such was his composed manner of his comportment, that just his presence brought it about that all the other companions of his composed themselves as he did. It was enough to say: ‘Bernardine is coming’, for all to become composed. They recount of St. Lucian, the Martyr that in his life, it was enough for some of the Gentiles to see him, and they would be converted and moved to make themselves Christians.’ And so it is recounted of all the saints and good religious.

And we experience this so many times with experience: that when we see a modest, composed religious, that we may be immediately moved, composed, this edifies us, and helps us to do well also ourselves. And this can inspire us with such a love for virtue. *How Beautiful it is that it suffices to see something in order to find assistance. We are made a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men* [cf. 1 Co 4:9] - *Let your modesty be known to all men: the Lord is nigh* [Ph 4:5]. - Modesty in all things, *I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall always be in my mouth...* [Ps 33:2].

1. CF # 120: *And first of all, they will moderate through humility every motion of the mind which tends toward one’s own excellence.*

This is a challenge to hold back all the movements of pride, of making comparisons, of being better than others, and the like.

2. CF # 121: *In the acquisition of this virtue, the confreres are to exercise it through those 12 degrees which the divine Benedict has placed in his Rule, c. 7.*

(1) *To be humble not only in heart, but also to show it in one’s very person, with one’s eyes fixed to the ground.*

In One’s Heart: To maintain always such a reverence for God, and that certain feeling lowly of oneself: but, not by becoming disheartened.

In One's Person: with always ceding one's place to others, with one's head lowered. There needs to be humility in one's gait, in one's comportment, and the like. A modesty humility with draw on the principle humility of heart, and it would appear on the outside, *with one's eyes fixed on the ground*. With one's eyes cast downward, this is a help., and so forth. – St. Bernard is quoted here in Rodriguez – and at the same time, to keep one's heart fixed on heaven.

(2) *To speak a few and reasonable words, and not in a high voice.*

(3) *Not to be too prone and disposed to laugh.*

A virgin called Musa was corrected by Mary: that if she wanted to be pleasing to her, she should abstain from immoderate laughter.

(4) *To maintain silence until one is asked.*

Young man, scarcely speak in your own cause. If you be asked twice, let your answer be short...and when the ancients are present, speak not much. [cf. Si 32:10-13, *passim*]. Do you see? It is especially fitting for the young to maintain silence.

(5) *To do nothing, but to what one is exhorted by the common rule of the Monastery.*

[The Pharisee said; I am not like the rest of men... [cf. Lk 18:11]. Have you held all others in contempt? And you have made yourself worse than them all! ¹⁵⁴.

(6) *To believe and to acknowledge oneself to be more vile than all others.*

Learn of Me for I am meek and humble of heart [cf. Mt 11:29]. It may be read in the *True Spouse* [c. 11, § 2]: *There are those who make themselves humble, but they humble themselves out of malice, not to be corrected and humiliated, but to be considered and praised as humble.* Such as these are humble through their mouths, but not in their hearts!

(7) *To think oneself worthless and unprofitable for all purposes.*

(8) *to confess one's sin.*

(9) *To embrace patience under difficult and contrary circumstances.*

(10) *To subject oneself to a Superior.*

¹⁵⁴ Trithemius is cited in the *True Spouse*, of St. Alphonsus.

For he who rejects wisdom and discipline is unhappy; and their hope is vain, and their labors without fruit... [cf. Ws 3:11]. *For the appearance of a just person is already an admonition* ¹⁵⁵. What a great admonition it is, greater than all the admonitions offered by voice, to see an old religious observe with punctuality all the rules, the important ones as well as the small ones.! The elderly are obliged even more than the others. The lack of observance begins with them. ‘St. Peter Chrysologus said that a tree which does not bear fruit, with its shadow that it sheds about not only is harmful to itself, but also to other fertile trees that are near it.’¹⁵⁶ Elderly religious are like the torches which illuminate Communities, and are as the columns that sustain regular observance, and they draw other confreres on behind them.

(11) Not to delight in fulfilling one’s own desires.

Religious profession ought to be the *burial place of one’s own will* ¹⁵⁷.

(12) To fear God and to be always mindful of everything that God has commanded.

Conclude with what the Monks of Egypt taught, which is precisely that that is being said in this present *Exhortation*: that is, the Monk, if he wishes to conserve the orderliness and purity of his heart, ought to be blind and deaf and mute, and so on – Rodriguez – ‘because you will close off in this manner the gateways of these senses, one’s soul will be clean, and the imagination unloads and becomes disposed to treat and to converse with God.

2. ¹⁵⁸

Humility is a virtue which is necessary to obtain our salvation: therefore, with the same expressions with which the necessity of Baptism is affirmed, so there is likewise maintained the necessity of Humility: ***...Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*** [cf. Jn 3:5] - ***Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself as this little child,*** and so on [cf. Mt 13:5, f.]

St. Augustine teaches: *The entire life of Christ on earth for human beings, which He has deigned to assume, served as a discipline of morals* - it was all meant

¹⁵⁵ St. Ambrose, in Psalm 118.

¹⁵⁶ Sermon 74.

¹⁵⁷ St. John Climacus, on obedience. Cf. *The Ladder of Paradise*, step 4.

¹⁵⁸ Under this heading, Fr. Lenotti offers certain notes that he had put together for an *Exhortation in the House*. He makes references here, too, to St. Alphonsus and to Fr. Pinamonti, and so on, to whom in some manner it is necessary to refer.

for our instruction; *but especially He has proposed His own humility to be imitated, saying in Matthew 11: **Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart...***¹⁵⁹

The saints entered into heaven through the path of humility. This virtue is therefore necessary especially for us Religious, who are attending to, and we ought to attend, to perfection: the glorious St. Augustine comments: 'it is necessary that all our actions be preceded, accompanied and consolidated by humility, in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. The reason is that if even a little we slip and allow to enter even vain self-satisfaction, the wind of pride will carry everything else away.'. Therefore, it is necessary to guard our good works with humility: otherwise even their author will be extinct by his own victory, as Eleazar succumbed under the elephant which killed him [cf. 1 M 6:46].

Humility is the foundation of every virtue: *Do you wish to be great. Then, begin with the insignificant*, and so on. If you want to be great and raise up a very high building, think first of making a good foundation of humility. And the higher you wish to construct the building, so much the more profound should you make the foundations.¹⁶⁰

Faith requires a humble and submitted intellect. And not only to receive the faith, but also to conserve it, humility is required. Hope is maintained with humility – because the humble person feels his need, and knows that he cannot of himself do anything. Charity and love for God arrives with humility and is enkindled. And so it is for charity towards one's neighbors. From humility also proceeds patience, that is so necessary in this life.¹⁶¹ And also to have peace: ***Learn of me... and you will find...***: this is not in discouragement, and depression regarding oneself.

Humility of intellect and will. 'Humility of intellect consists in feeling lowly about ourselves and in considering ourselves as those low and truly wretched which we really are. It is necessary to pray with St. Augustine: *That I may know myself, that I may know You – that I might love You, and hold myself in disdain.*'¹⁶² Humility, then, of will consists in desiring to be disdained by others, and in rejoicing in being disdained.'

However, to arrive at humility, in addition to the consideration of one's own miseries and self-knowledge, and of the greatness of God, humiliation helps a great deal. St. Bernard maintained: *Humiliation is the path to humility, as patience is to*

¹⁵⁹ Letter to Dioscorus.

¹⁶⁰ St. Augustine, *De Verbis Domini*.

¹⁶¹ These thoughts are all found in Rodriguez.

¹⁶² The Book on the Blessed Life.

peace.¹⁶³ Exercise yourselves willingly in the lowly ministries, which are the most suited means of all the others to acquire and conserve humility.’¹⁶⁴

For a little while, let us taken up the matter of examining, as in a brief exercise, that we might practice to obtain humility . All of our exterior senses can be employed as so many instruments for this:

First the Eyes: do not look at any person directly in the face, not only those of the other sex, but also other men: let us consider ourselves unworthy of looking at it. And thus, in speaking, not to stare at any one. What a beautiful exercise of humility would this not be, if God should also give us the grace to practice this! St. Peter of Alcantara – says St. Teresa – was so mortified even from his youth, that he once told me that he had lived for three years in a Convent of his Order without ever knowing any religious, other than by his voice. For many years, he never looked at women.¹⁶⁵ It is proper of the proud person to hold the high up high – rather, it is proper of the humble person, to keep it somewhat inclined.

The mouth, tongue: by not speaking of oneself in praise, neither in good, nor in criticism, as a person unworthy even to be thought of. This would men not wounding anyone with afflicting and harsh words, whether the person is present or absent – by speaking with respect, most especially with Superiors – with not criticizing others – with not offering excuses for oneself - _by speaking with a low voice, and very little especially where there are Superiors present.

The ears: with not willingly listening to the praises which others might say about us, by fleeing this in any way we can. But rather listen humbly and willingly to the corrections of Superiors, without making excuses, with offering thanks: and that these might not just stop in the ears, but might pass then to the heart.

Regarding taste: being content, and thinking that the treatment we are receiving is already too good, and by seeking the most lowly foods for ourselves.

Humility then in externals toward God, towards ourselves, and toward our neighbor.

Toward God: in prayer, with our exterior all composed, by prostrating. Fr. Bernardino Realino, in the last years of his life, when he was almost an octogenarian, prayed on his knees on the ground, without any support, in the middle of his room. *He*

¹⁶³ Letter 87.

¹⁶⁴ It might be pertinent to compare Fr. Bertoni’s insistence on Catechizing the unlettered [*rudibus*] and Pope John Paul II’s hope for a renewed commitment to the teaching of Catechism: *...The more the Church, whether on the local, or the universal level, gives catechesis priority over other works and undertakings, the results of which would be more spectacular, the more she finds in catechesis a strengthening of her internal life as a community of believers, and of her external activity as a Missionary Church... the Church is bidden by God to renew her trust in catechetical activity as a prime aspect of her Mission....* [cf. CT 15]

¹⁶⁵ Life, c. 27, n. 18.

was in this position when he had the honor of an appearance of Mary Most Holy with her baby Jesus. God wanted to honor His servant, by surrounding him with a marvelous splendor, and elevating his body somewhat into the air. ¹⁶⁶ Let us exercise that humility toward God, by lowering our heads reverently to sacred images – by making genuflections with profound reverence toward the Most Blessed Sacrament. St. Thomas states that humility flows from that respect which the soul nourishes for God ¹⁶⁷.

Toward God in prayer, with one's external comportment composed, by prostrating. The tongue [cf. above], and add that there be observed also humility, with silence. By accusing oneself of his own defects to his Superior... Do not say: But, they are just little things! In Religious life, it is necessary to attend also to these, out of humility, and to seek to accuse oneself of them in public, asking a penance for them and to do this out of a genuine spirit of humility and to thank the Superior, and so on. In presenting oneself to the Superiors especially, there be seen that the one who is speaking is indeed humble.

The ears cf. above. The sense of smell: by taking the occasion which the sick, or fetid places might offer to us, by humbling ourselves in thinking that because of our defects and sins we are even more stinking before God: and we ought to be in hell already for some time: in that eternal cesspool of stink and sewer!

As regards the rest of one's person, humility is to be observed in gesturing very little in treating all with respect. The humble is of himself very courteous even toward a villain, as well as with a poor country-maid, and so on, without any affectation. Be slow in your gait; and always be ready for obedience. Love the coarse garments. The advice of Mary to a Monk, who was quite afflicted and persecuted by the Demon. She said: that you humble yourself always in these three things: in eating, in dressing, and in the tasks that you perform: that in eating, you desire and procure for yourself the most lowly foods; in dressing, that your clothing be poor and coarse; and as far as your duties, strive always those that are the most base and humble, considering it a great honor and a gain the occupying yourself in the most disdained and abject duties. You will greatly please God and you will conquer your enemy. And remember that young Jesuit who out of love for the Virgin used to sweep the house and take out the trash. Once, there appeared to him the divine Mother, and as thanking him, she said to him: How dear to me is this humble action on your part, done out of love for me!

Do not withdraw from humble and tiring duties, by loading them on to someone else! Brother Jerome Winter, SJ, sought always humiliations and to serve others. Fr. Joseph of Alexandria, even though he was the Rector, took care of the chickens and the rabbits that belonged to the house. His ejaculatory prayer always was: *Suffer and be disdained for You*. We will thus render ourselves lovable also to God, to Mary, to

¹⁶⁶ Fr. Lancisio, *Opus spirit., II*, Concerning the exterior composition of one's body. C. 3, n. 70.

¹⁶⁷ II-II, q. ??, a. 2 ad 3 [incomplete citation]

St. Joseph, and then also to our neighbors. The humble person steals one's heart; whereas the proud man is abominable.

However, all these external actions are always to be animated by the spirit of internal humility: otherwise will be masking ourselves as humble by play-acting, and not being genuinely humble. Thus exercising ourselves in it, we will mutually give good edification, we will give glory to God, and we will acquire always that humility of heart that leads to genuine peace: *Learn of Me...* and so on. And our house will ever be an lodging of peace, the more it is a lodging of humility. Since, therefore, the *Just person lives of faith* [cf. Heb 10:38], and we will strive to live out of humility. That from head to foot there should shine out this beautiful virtue with which we will acquire all the others, and we will raise up with them the edifice of our perfection, for which we entered into the religious state and without which we would uselessly call ourselves Religious.



XV. CONCERNING MODESTY¹⁶⁸

Minute observations – St. Thomas' Doctrine – Composition of the exterior movements: special virtue – The Doctrine of the Saints – of Fr. B. Alvarez – of Fr. John de Plaza – God sees us – St. Vincent – St. Ignatius

RULES FOR GOOD RELIGIOUS FORMATION: ON CLEANLINESS

This contributes to salvation and to edification – Worldly fastidiousness to be removed: religious cleanliness to be cultivated – the Priest – Letter of recommendation – Motto of St. Ignatius.

St. IGNATIUS' RULES OF MODESTY

§§§

Often the Lord does not watch, or attend to what we are doing, but He notes with what affection, and in what manner we attend to our chores. Because often those tasks which in themselves might seem small, by Him these are esteemed more than those matters which have a more grandiose appearance: as those two coins of the Widow in the Gospel [cf. Lk 21:2], which pleased the Lord more than the more substantial gifts of the rich.

¹⁶⁸ This *Instruction* - with the group of norms which follow – do relate to Part VII, Chapter III & IV of Section III of the Founder's *Constitutions: On Four-fold Modesty* even if this text is only alluded to by Fr. Lenotti.

St. Thomas teaches that *every operative science is all the more perfect in the extent that it considers that more particular matters in which it is their act* ¹⁶⁹. Therefore, the great servants of God were exercised in these small and minute matters not only in their time of apprenticeship, or Novitiate, but also in the maturity of their age and virtue. Therefore, my brothers, it is fitting that religious – especially Novices – should have before their eyes in what ways they ought to commit their members, the senses of their body, *as a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God* ¹⁷⁰, and of these little matters and diligence they will have a great reward.

The saints did not disdain to recommend these to their followers. Rather, God Himself, by Himself, or His Angels, as we have in Church History, or in the lives of the saints, this is evident: *Whoever fears God, neglects nothing* ¹⁷¹.

The external movements and the actions of the body are of such moment in the School ¹⁷² of Christ, which Thomas says and proves that it is a special virtue, that gyrates around the composition of the exterior movements of the body and concerning their moderation ¹⁷³. The ministers of the king, when they present themselves to him, are very careful about even the least detail. And in the rules for the Monks, there were prescribed the most minute matters regarding clothing, foot wear, and the like.

A sun, a luminary of this world ought to be the faithful of Christ, says St. John Chrysostom: and that we who *are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels and to men* [cf. 1 Co 4:9], and it is fitting that *there be nothing in all your gestures that would offend the notice of another: but let everything be what is proper to the holiness of your state* *St. Augustine in his Rule* ¹⁷⁴.

The teachers not only present and teach the disciples the figures of the elements; but they present also the least points and distinctions. *It is not the least fault to disdain the least offenses*, says St. Bonaventure ¹⁷⁵. Therefore, in us, our walking, our gesturing, our looking about, our eating, praying, and the like, ought to reflect a certain modesty and urbanity and civility. From the lack of this, the saints could foretell a bad ending about others. From the manner of walking of two clerics, St. Ambrose foresaw that they would be separated from the Church. ¹⁷⁶ *A man is known by his look, and a wise man, when you meet him, is known by his*

¹⁶⁹ cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, I, q. 22, a. 3, ad 1^{um}.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Rm 12:1 – the passage where Paul speaks of *obsequium*. [There will be an addition to the St-Bertoni.com web site, under ‘Studies’, with this title].

¹⁷¹ Fr. Stofella suggests Qo 7:9 – but, does not match with Douay translation.

¹⁷² An image often used by Fr. Bertoni: *School of God* – cf. Ep. pp. 109; 256, f.; 326.

¹⁷³ II-II, q. 140, a. 2.

¹⁷⁴ This is a direct quote from **CF # 131**.

¹⁷⁵ *In Speculo Disciplinae*, Prol.

¹⁷⁶ *De Officiis*, I, c. 18.

countenance, the attire of the body, and the laughter of the teeth, and the gait of a man, show what he is [cf. Si 19:26-27] – Thus speaks the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Baldassar Alvarez did not think that his disciples had been sufficiently exhorted to the reform and the mortification of the interior man. For this end, he compiled a catalogue, or an index of all the immodest actions that could be noted among seculars as a defect of their urbanity, and which might be found in a religious: movements of the head, of the forehead, of the eyes, of the ears, or the nostrils, of the mouth, and of the tongue, of the arms and of the hands, of the knees, and of the feet – and of the other parts of the body and in the manner of wearing clothing: he listed more than 200.

Fr. John de Platza, the Master of Novices, and the Provincial and the Mexican College, said once to a fervent young man that he did not know well what might be the cause that he made such little profit in the ways of the spirit: he said: ‘I recognize the case of this from those disordered motions of your body. While you, with such a vivacious intelligence, dominate yourself and command yourself in so little.’ Keep uppermost in mind that the reason for which so few truly spiritual men are ever encountered, is that there are truly few who put to death their tendencies and passions: while God clearly proclaims; ***Man will not see me, and live.***¹⁷⁷ Even if there were not human beings, God sees us, and this is enough.

St. Vincent admonishes the athlete of Christ: *All acts and motions of the body are to be composed in every manner by honesty: for you can never restrain your soul ever from inordinate acts, unless first you strive to subject your body to discipline...*¹⁷⁸

St. Ignatius in the first time that he came to Rome, ordered St. Francis Xavier, Salmeron, and another companion of his, that every Monday for three hours before supper, they should assemble to consult among themselves concerning the exterior and interior comportment of all: and concerning the exterior of all matters from which one could presume that this would give evidence of some lack of edification, whether in words, or in gestures, whether in the movements of the person and in other actions¹⁷⁹: i.e., of exterior modest, and of one’s interior in every minute manner.

¹⁷⁷ Fr. Stofella offers Gn 33:10 for this text – which does not correspond to the Douay version.

¹⁷⁸ *On the Spiritual Life*, c. 5. cited by Lancisio, n. 22.

¹⁷⁹ As the result of these discussions, St. Ignatius eventually composed his *Rules of Modesty*. Cf. *Obras de S. Ignacio*, pp. 680-686.

RULES FOR A GOOD RELIGIOUS FORMATION

As is clear, flee from seeing indecent things. Run away from seeing lurid or sordid scenes, moved not so much by a certain natural impulse and nausea, but more from a most tender love for honesty and purity, and as from a certain reverence of God. It is an unworthy matter: with those eyes with which we ought to be looking for sacred and divine realities!

Flee from looking around, here and there, in Church, and the like. From looking at persons of the opposite sex. And a religious that would do that! David and Samson fell this way. From observing even indifferent matters. In walking whether it be in the house, or outside, do not let your eyes wander, here and there, to look at what is not necessary for you.

Fr. Bartholomew Ricci taught his Novices that in walking, they were to keep their eyes fixed on the ground, and they were not to extend their gaze further abroad than the length of a man, saying that this was sufficient to keep one from falling into danger. And Mary most holy found fault with Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez, because once, raising his eyes, he looked by accident on a woman who was at her window. And she gave him this warning: ‘When you go about through the street, do not raise your eyes more than that which is necessary in order to see where to place your feet: but do not be looking around.’¹⁸⁰

Do not leave your room without necessity. Your head, should be rather bowed somewhat, but not to hurt the cervix. The lips might be a little opened, and keep a smile on your face, a joyful look, especially in greeting other persons: do not be brusque that would only relay that was are misanthropes. Avoid walking in an effeminate manner, languidly, and with a certain bodily agitation. While being seated, do not stretch out our legs, lolling about. Do not place one leg over the other, as was noted by St. Arsenius. Do not speak too loudly. Do not laugh immoderately.

Among the other members of the body, concerning the composure and the moderation of which aims toward the virtue of Modesty, the hands to not hold the last place, which by Galenus are called the *instrument before all instruments*. Do not hold your chin with your hand, because this is an indecorous posture: do not be overly self-concerned... Do not make so many gestures in speaking, and so on: *especially in correcting children*, says St. Thomas, and that pride not appear in your gestures, and in hold your neck distended, or your legs, or have your shoulders drooped. Do not place your elbows on the table.

¹⁸⁰ cf. Rodriguez, Part III, tr. VIII, c. 5, n. 5.

Do not rattle your rosary, or with the end of your cincture, or with some piece of paper, or sheets, or a parchment, or fold them, and re-fold them in your hand. To slouch on the chair shows little respect for others present, especially if they are Superiors! In kneeling, try to keep the legs and feet covered with a long robe. Do not play the piano and drum something on the table, at meals, or elsewhere. St. Isaiah, the Abbot, said this about walking, one should keep his hands joined, to the height of the sash nor should he clap them. The mantle should be worn drawn up a bit.

St. Doroteus used to say: *You should open the door of your own cell, or that of your brother, moderately and quietly.* Do not put your hand on any one else, or touch anyone. Be careful that you do not walk with a certain effeminacy. Do not walk with excessive haste, which is something all the saints desired: however, neither should one walk too slowly, and not with affectation.

From the manner of one's walking, there can be understood the spirit of the person – either a light-weight, or someone who is serious, noble. From one's walking, St. Ambrose foretold that two clerics he knew would end up separated from the Church. Do not walk with your neck stretched, which would indicate pride; nor with the head too low, either, which would be hypocrisy, but just a bit inclined. To walk not that heavily that would make the whole house tremble, but in a manner that those close to you realize you are passing. Walk lightly, raise your feet: do not drag your shoes along, like the serpents...In moving along the corridors, be careful not to walk too swiftly, and see to it that you do not present too harsh a face to anyone else.

Love cleanliness also in the house: if one encounters some mess, hasten to clean it up if you can. Our good Fathers of old did this ¹⁸¹! Believe me: what a reward you will have from the Lord, even in this life! At table, during the praying of the *Bless us*, and the thanksgiving, do not lean on the table.

A sign of presumption is one would whisper, or look about, concerning one who makes a mistake during the reading at table, as though the defect of the reader should not lie hidden; which is what the less pious frequently do. ¹⁸² No one should unfold his napkin before the *Prepositus* does, or the Superior. Do not talk on leaving the refectory, until one is at recreation

In ascending the stairs, unless there may be some weakness, or old age, do not hold the banister. In walking, do not pass by your elders. Place your mantle in your room: and do not leave it with the mantle over your arm. Whenever one goes to the Father *Prepositus*, first knock at his door – and do not enter until he says: *Avanti!*

¹⁸¹ It would be interesting here to note the testimony of Fr. Schlør: *'throughout the house one sees a real effort at neatness, and it is a delight to notice it. The little church, is marvelously restored.* Cf. Summ. Add., XIII, 2, p. 67

¹⁸² St. Bonaventure, *In Speculo Disciplinae*, quoted by Lancisio, c. XV.

When a Priest passes by, whether belonging to the community or an extern, tip your hat; if he is a Superior, one should also make a slight bow, allowing him to pass first...¹⁸³

ON CLEANLINESS

Cleanliness both with regard to our body as well as in all else, is recommended. There are two reasons for this: *our own health, and the edification of our neighbors*. Just what is this cleanliness? It may be understood in two senses: 1° A certain neatness, joined to a certain voluptuous elegance, as is so painstakingly sought for by women. This kind should be *just removed from us!*: 1° because this is sought after with a certain artificiality, certain instruments, and so, and therefore *should be detested by us*. 2° because *it draws the eyes of men*; 3° because it is opposed to that *certain laudable lack of care, and neglect – since the opposite is something of the female world*, it is denied to men who do not wish to nourish a feminine spirit. St. Jerome notes: that the Christian, there are not fitting either affected disorder nor sought after neatness.

Regarding this sought after neatness that it is not fitting for men, then some other kind of cleanliness *is to be sought*. There is to be looked for a certain neatness which results from the totally removal of all filth, and from not having dirtiness around. There is stated by St. Jerome that there should be a certain ‘neglected’ cleanliness, in so far as this would not smack of engineered effort, or excessive ornamentation, or artifice: we are to be content with this alone]: that it remove all that offends ours, and others’ senses, especially the eyes; and even helps to avoid infections in us, and horror, and disturbance in others. This is the kind of cleanliness recommended to Religious.

1° Nature itself recommends this to us: since each one not is stupid, nor despoiled of humanity, there are abhorred by men all gloom, dirt and filth. On meeting others, one loves to find neatness, cleanliness, without stains, and with such people, one converses familiarly and willingly. With such cleanliness, we are distinguished also from the brute animals.

2° In this manner, there is approached the most pure nature of God, *through reason*. Nature has given us both water and hands...*that you be a man, and not swine*. It is necessary to be clean, in order to be a man, and not to be a bother to others: if one does meet these standards, he remains in solitude!

¹⁸³ Fr. Stofella notes that almost as a natural complement to this number, there follows a brief section *On Cleanliness*, in Fr. Lenotti’s hand – it has a number of themes treated under *Modesty*.

The Priest, in the minds of all the people, was always meant to be the personification of spiritual cleanliness, of integrity, as necessarily required in one who is to intercede for the sins of human beings and offer sacrifice to the Divinity. Therefore, there have been decreed in his ministry clean vestments, frequent ablutions of his hands, sometimes his head, and sometimes his whole person. Exterior neatness is the symbol of that of the soul, and not rarely it happens that also the neatness of the body is the witness that reveals a lack of cleanliness of the heart. It is at least always a sure indication of laziness and carelessness. Neatness regarding one's body, then. Neatness regarding his clothing. Cleanliness in his actions. Let each one flee from whatever might cause bother or disturbance.

There must be both in appearance and word the presence of a civil person – and therefore, of a Churchman – all should aspire to that most evident cleanliness. Such a person is able to inspire it, demand it, I would even say, among those who approach us. And this is one of those means to gain the respect of the people, and with respect, their esteem.

One was accustomed to say that neatness of one's person is already a letter of recommendation which presents us favorably to the mind of those with whom we are to deal. Cleanliness, then, in a religious edifies. Thus, St. Ignatius prescribes: Silence and Cleanliness, in order to reform the house!

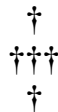
St. IGNATIUS' RULES OF MODESTY¹⁸⁴

These are what should be observed by the Brothers of the Company in going out in public. In a general way, it can be stated briefly that in all of his exteriors each one should give evidence of modesty and humility and religious maturity and good example and offer edification to all who might set eyes on the members of the Institute. Coming now to the particular, the following matters should be protected:

- 1. First. The head should not be turned lightly from one side to the other, but rather only with seriousness, when it is necessary. And when this is not so, then it should be held straight ahead, with a moderate inclination of the neck, without tipping to one side or the other.**
- 2. The eyes generally should be lowered, without raising them much, nor looking from one side, or to the other. And when speaking with anyone, especially if this is a person of respect, one should not look at him directly, but usually with eyes lowered.**

¹⁸⁴ Fr. Stofella adds here one version of 'St. Ignatius' Rules for Modesty', dating from January 26, 1555.

3. One should avoid wrinkles on the brow, and even more those of the nose, striving always to present a serene visage which shows that one's soul is likewise.
4. The lips should not be shown to be drawn, nor open.
5. One's entire visage should show rather joy than sadness, or any other disordered affectation.
6. The upper clothing should cover all that is underneath, so that there would only be seen the upper part of the neck.
7. All one's clothing and laundry should be kept clean.
8. One's hands, when they are not tending to matters of clothing, should be kept in a decent and quiet manner.
9. One's gait should be without anything remarkable to note, rather it should be moderated, unless necessity would place one under some urgency; even then, one will observe decor in so far as this will be possible.
10. All one's gestures and movements will be such that they demonstrate humility, and inspire those who observe these, with a sense of devotion.
11. Whenever the men leave the house, they will go in two's, and if possible in three's.
12. When it is required to speak, care will be taken to do so with modesty and edification in the one who speaks and in his manner.
13. No one from the house, or from the Company, will dare to say any injurious or scandalous word to another member of the Company, nor to any extern, under penalty of three weeks, and three days for each one of them to eat in the morning and at night bread and wine and something hot, and nothing else.



XXVI.
FOURTH SECTION
ON THE MANNER OF OBEDIENCE¹⁸⁵

Introduction – 1. Obedience: entire, universal, ready – Like the Angels – St. Albert the Great's doctrine – Humble obedience – Strong – 2. Obedience and Humility – 3. Laziness, an Obstacle to Obedience.

4. Retreat for the Brothers for their First Vestition. Instruction – At the Last Supper: *Not only my feet, but my hands and head...* - Religious garb and the Day of Judgment – God wants also the head – Obedience – *You are dead* - New Life.

1.
On Obedience in Particular

CF # 142: *In the first place, all will take care that in its execution, or in the act of obedience, that this be shown integrally, and not only in a partial manner. This holds true not only in obligatory matters, as this is simply required, but also with a*

¹⁸⁵ In the text of the *Constitutions* of the Founder Section IV, of Part VII, is consecrated to the Manner of Obedience [cf. **CF ## 138-151**. These 14 numbers are distributed in two Chapters: c. 1: *On Obedience in General* [**CF ## 138-141**]; c. 2: *On the Decrees of Obedience in Particular* [**CF ## 142-151**]. Those who have followed these Discourses up to this point may see that there is a kind of spirit that invades, pervades everywhere Fr. Lenotti's teaching – it is his own spirit of Obedience. How, as for what pertains to written traces, or ordered notes for an *ex professo* explanation of Fr. Bertoni's original text, Fr. Lenotti does not provide here, any more than a fragment, that bears the title: *Notes*. Limited to the first 4 numbers of the above noted Chapter 2. In the 1950 printed edition of the *Original Constitutions*, these would include **CF ## 142-145**, inclusively: the Decrees of Obedience regarding its execution: so, there is nothing here regarding its levels that follow and which regard the will and intellect, and nothing on what precedes. All this can be explained – and it certainly was – without need of it being written down, *by the oracle of the living voice*; or, if there had been other writings, these have been lost to us.

Whoever would ponder this fragment – apparently jotted down in much haste - sees that I is totally a *Domestic Exhortation*, that is quite familiar in style, for the local community and not for externs. However, it does remain united to an Instruction on Obedience which Fr. Lenotti wrote out quite completely for a course of the *Spiritual Exercises* preached to Seminarists and Priests. This Instruction remains, then, also a font for what was said within the Community: there is something here applicable to all! At the most, when there was needed something more, he was always able to jot some notes in the margin at the side, or in a sheet that would then be inserted among these papers – so that it might be used on another occasion, for a different group of listeners. For this present reflection the following is noted: there remains in place this fragment, along side the Instruction just noted here.

In addition to this fragment, there are two others: but, they are not bound to the commentary of the text of the *Constitutions*. One of these is an ideal recall of the two Chapter headings of Obedience and one on Humility. The other is an introduction of an exhortation regarding: *Laziness as an Obstacle to Obedience*.

It seems opportune to add, because of the similarity of the theme, an Instruction that Fr. Lenotti gave to our Lay Brothers, for a Vestition Retreat, set for New Year's. Looking back through our Stigmatine Chronicles and Registers, it seems that the date was January 1, 1854, less than seven months following the death of St. Gaspar: this was the Vestition ceremony of some Coadjutor Brothers for our Institute. Cf. Fr. Lenotti's own *Chronicle* following the *Gramego Memoirs* – **CS I, p. 510**. This *Instruction* then might date from New Year's Eve, December 31, 1853. Those who heard it would have been: Brother Paul Zanolli, 60 years old; Louis Ferrari, and Francis Stevanoni, who was 41; Charles Salocher, who was 21. At this time, Fr. Lenotti was 36 years old – there follows his text here:

view to the height of perfection in all other proper areas. For that obedience is perfect, when it is universal and makes no exception, unless in what would displease God. Obedience will be all the more prompt when it anticipates the expressed precept of the Superior, once his will has come to be understood.

CF # 143: *Promptness also will especially appear in the act of obedience, so that no one will slowly, or hesitatingly accede to carrying out what has been ordained. Rather, the confreres will rival the heavenly spirits on earth, putting aside all delay, leaving behind all their own projects, they will hasten and even fly to do the will of their Lord, just as soon as each comes to know the wishes of the Superior, or perceive some sign from him. Such perfect obedience leaves unfinished one's own business.*

[Notes]. In its execution, obedience should be *entire*, not only *partial*: the truncated victim is not pleasing to the Lord. It should be *universal*: that nothing be excepted from it, other than that which could displease God. There should not be exercised obedience out of fear. It should be *ready, prompt*, even anticipating the command. St. Bernard offers this principle: *The faithful obedient one will anticipate the one giving the order.*¹⁸⁶ And this means that one would never do that which the Superior would not like being done. The question should be: if the Superior were here, would be done? What would be said? Should we presume that liberty?

As far as the *swiftness* is concerned, let us be careful that there does not become necessary a fulcrum, as is used to move heavy stones. What sorrow for the Superior to have to move one who acts like a sick member: alas! Only with great effort, does he move a hand, then a foot. But, if someone else moves it, alas! alas! It is necessary for one to be like a ball, willing to go here and there, up and down, and so on.

Regarding this *swiftness*, we ought to *rival on earth those heavenly spirits on earth. Perfect obedience leaves incomplete everything else...* We demand this of the animals: horses, dogs, and so on. And what about us, endowed with intelligence and faith.

Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven: i.e., as is accomplished by the Angels who are ready for any service, even the most lowly: an Angel carries the food to the disheartened Elijah [cf. 1 K 19:5-8]. Mary Magdalene find the angels at the Lord's sepulcher: *she saw two angels dressed in white, who remained at the sepulcher as though guarding heaven*¹⁸⁷ - for them, the Lord's grave was heaven.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. *In Sermones de Obedientia*.

¹⁸⁷ Perhaps from some unknown meditation book.

*Bless the Lord, all you, His Angels [cf. Ps 102:20]: you that are mighty in strength, execute His word, hearkening to the voice of His orders. First, hear the command, and then carry it out. Here – the Angels – are presented as *executing His Word*, and then *hearkening to His orders*, to indicate their swiftness in carrying out God's Will. In an instant, they are in some place to obey; and each one, emulating the others, returns to indicate the most ready obedience of the Angels, represents them with wings, then likens them to one's eyes, to the armies, to horses, to lightning: *And the living creatures ran and returned, like flashes of lightning* [cf. Ezk 1:14].*

The truly obedient person – says Albert the Great – never waits for the precept, but merely knowing the will of the Prelate, or believing that he does, carries out his precept.

Let your obedience be *humble* – and it will be this, *when no excuse is brought forward prior to the execution. However, should a real impediment intervene, or at least one considers that there is one, or that he entertains some probably doubt concerning it, this will be humbly pointed out to the Superior, and the solution will be left up to him.*¹⁸⁸ *Lastly, the act of obedience is to be strong, that is, constant, and with due perseverance, so that it not be held back in anything, or at any time, no matter how difficult and repugnant to nature it may be.*¹⁸⁹

2.

Brother Francis of Pavia, among his other virtues, always held as his dear companions obedience and humility. Therefore, it often happened that for the great esteem that he nurtured for obedience, God gave him the grace that all creatures would obey him, especially irrational animals. At times, Blessed Brother John of Capestrano would ask him what might be done so that all might be more pleasing to God and more acceptable. He was always answered in this way: 'humble yourself, humble yourself, because in this consists our perfect. And I think it is more important and more perfect that one completely exercise obedience than one could raise the dead.'¹⁹⁰

3.

Laziness as an Obstacle to Obedience

An obedient man shall speak of victory [cf. Pr 21:28]. You know very well how interesting for us is this sentence of sacred Scripture. The obedient man has a continuous series of victories. However, to carry off the victory, it is necessary first to fight: the idea of 'victory' demands of necessity the idea of a 'battle.' Therefore, if the

¹⁸⁸ CF # 144.

¹⁸⁹ CF # 145.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. *Biography of S. John of Capestrano*.

obedient man sings of continuous victories, it is only right to say that he has to sustain continuous battles.

And so it is, my beloved brothers: we experience this, since unfortunately obedience costs us dearly, even though it is the cause of continuous merits and of glorious crowns. However, speaking of these merits, as of these crowns, my brothers, how many times do we not lose them, for the failings that we commit in carrying out obedience! What is the source of this? From many causes and among others, there is laziness. Our laziness is an obstacle to our perfect obedience...

4.

A Retreat for the Vestition of Brothers Introduction

At the Last Supper, before instituting the Blessed Sacrament, our divine redeemer Jesus Christ wished to give that spectacular example of humility in washing the feet of His Disciples. Therefore, he dried up His cloak, but water in the basin, and approached St. Peter first of all. However, this Apostle, full of admiration at this defense on the part of the son of God, did not want Jesus to wash his feet, and he refused Him saying: *Lord, do You wash my feet? ...You shall never wash my feet!* Then, the Savior responded to Him: *If I wash you not, you shall have no part with Me. Simon Peter said to Him: Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my feet...* [cf. Jn 13:6-9].

This, in a line, or two, is what I want to have you see in this Instruction: that the Lord does not want from us only our hands and feet, but that which is more, our heads! Tomorrow you will have the sublime honor and the much desired consolation of putting on the sacred habit, religious garb ¹⁹¹. But, what will this external habit help you, if with this you do not seek to have your interior correspond to this step?

This black habit with which you wish to be vested, signifies that you ought to be dead to this world, and more than anything, dead to your will, to your judgment. This habit will be our glory if our interior life will correspond with it. On the other hand, it will be to our great confusion, our condemnation if in wearing the religious habit, our actions, our life, should ever be quite different from that which our habit demands.

The religious habit, if the spirit of the one wearing it is not also religious, is nothing more than a mask. And this would also be the case if we do not attend to that which more than all the Lord demands of a Religious: i.e., if we do not attend to giving

¹⁹¹ It is of no small interest to point out that even though the Founder did not specify any religious habit, other than that of the *better ecclesiastics* [CG # 6] - the Rule then does go on to say that the Novitiate will be conducted in a **religious habit** [cf. CF # 32] - and that there will be no Vestition in the **clerical habit** until at least ... *post absolutum gymnasium* [cf. CF # 69].

Him our heads. We will be little different from the comedians on stage. We represent the Monk, but we would not really be monks, if we are not authentic religious. And therefore, what would become of us on Judgment Day, when we would be standing face-front before the whole world – there will be discovered our tepid and remiss life. And while the whole city might have had such a good opinion of us and believed that we were perfect religious, would there then be known that which in fact we really are: people with their own mind-set, their own self-will? And then what would our guardian Angel say, the Saints and Angels in heaven, Mary and Joseph, on seeing us with that habit on, whereas our hearts being quite different?

And for this reason, my beloved brothers, this is what I would now like briefly to make you realize that God does not want from you only your hands and your feet, but He also wants your heads. And He does not want only for you to sacrifice your hands and feet committed to the Lord with a generous heart, but also your heart.

What matter would it be that from morning until evening you would apply your arms, your hands, your legs,, employed in the continual fatigue and in travail, if you worked with you head, if you kept to yourself your own mind-set, and if you did not sacrifice also your judgment to God, and to the one whom God has given to you to rule and govern you? We would just masks of Religious because we would wear the habit, but we would certainly not be Religious in truth.

The state of Religion is nothing more than a sepulcher of one's own will. So the Religious is nothing more than the sepulcher of his own will. St. Alphonsus says that there is 'nothing that brings greater harm on souls who have consecrated their wills to Jesus Christ, than to regulate themselves according to their own will and according to their own inclinations. In our Rules we have only trouble for that religious who does not accustom himself to allow himself to be guided by the counsel and judgment of the Superiors.' 'With no other vice does the Demon succeed as well is dragging the Religious into perdition as much as persuading them to overlook those counsels of their elders, in order to entrust themselves to the decisions of their own judgment.'

For us, though, my most beloved Brothers, from now on we ought to consider ourselves as dead: ***For you are dead; and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*** [cf. Col 3:3]. A dead person does not hear, see, respond, or complain: this is what a religious should be [cf. Rodriguez]. And if there do dawn us judgments against obedience, by humbling ourselves, do we ponder within ourselves, and say: How come? Have you come to the religious life to be the wielder of the dust-cloth for all – have you come to place yourself before the One Who is your Head, and Superior of all?

But, here it is also necessary that I point out that for you to be obedient, and to give to the Lord, our hears, it is necessary to accept well the corrections that the Superior might make to us. Our pride unfortunately often times makes us operate like

rich men: if they want to touch us, we will make ourselves bristle with so many thorns – which means that we immediately break out in words of impatience, or criticisms, and also of murmuring. But, let us listen to what the Holy Spirit says: **...He that hates to be reproved, walks in the trace of a sinner...** [cf. Si 21:7] . Such a person does not follow the path of the just, but rather of sinners: that means, he goes by the way of hell...

But, together with our heads - with the head – you have heard from the very beginning that St. Peter offered to the Lord his feet and his hands. And therefore, while you ought to sacrifice to God your judgment and your will, with obedience we ought at the same time to offer our external with the modesty of our senses, modesty which indeed ought to proceed from one's heart, otherwise it is a disguise, an hypocrisy.

Therefore, let us always walk about with our eyes somewhat lowered, as our rule recommends to us **...with one's eyes fixed on the ground...**¹⁹², looking about as least as is possible at the persons ahead of us, but with modesty of speech: maintaining silence with one's own affairs, other than in the hours set aside for recreation, and using only words necessary to be understood.. And whenever speaking with externs – and even more with our brothers within the house – always to employ good manners, showing ourselves ever ready for services.

Let there be modesty in walking, and so on, and in all the comportment of our person, in our own actions, without though, any affectation, as our rules recommend to us, but at the same time with that naturalness and with gravity and humility.

Onward, then, dear Brothers, with beginning this New Year, with being vested in the new sacred habit, let us all begin a new life, **offering to the Lord an entire and perfect holocaust of our whole selves**¹⁹³. Let us not offer to God only our hands, our feet, our eyes and our tongue. Let us further offer to Him our judgment, our will, submitting it to the Superior: i.e., to the one who God has placed to rule us in His place” *Not only our feet, but our hands and our heads.* Let us offer ourselves with that generosity with which the Apostle St. Peter offered himself¹⁹⁴. To every order, to every command, let us bow our heads. Let us learn from Jesus Christ. He died as the Gospel states; **... and bowing His head, He gave up His spirit...** [cf. Jn 19:30].



¹⁹² Cf. the 12 Steps of St. benedict, the first Degree of Humility: CF # 121, § 1.

¹⁹³ Twice Fr. Bertoni uses similar expressions in his *Original Constitutions: Regarding Coadjutor Brothers ... Qui temporalibus inserviunt... se offerunt...* [CF # 25]; – and the total obedience of the Apostolic Missionary: *Nam, et Isaias se obtulit...* [CF # 186].

¹⁹⁴ As has often been pointed out, St. Gaspar often called upon the example of the Apostles for his ideal of the *Apostolic Missionaries* cf. CF ## 259; 272; 273.

Fr. JOHN B. LENOTTI

Master of Novices

§§§§§

**IInd Superior General
[1871-1875]**

DOMESTIC EXHORTATIONS

on the

FOUNDER'S ORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONS

SECTION 4:

UNION & EXHORTATIONS

IV. THE UNION OR UNITY OF THE SODALITY

- XXVII. Part X: Concerning the Union, or Unity of the Sodality –
Section II. Concerning the Positive Means
- XXVIII. Those Exterior Circumstances which the more serve Unity.
- XXIX. Uniformity in the Common Life: another Means for the Increase of Fraternal Charity.
- XXX. C. VII: Common Recreation and Conversation
- XXXI. Part X. Section II. C. IX: Progress in the Mutual Care of the Members
- XXXII. Part XI: Familiar Conversation with one's Neighbors for Their Salvation.
C. 1: That kind of Familiarity to be avoided.

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APPENDIX - MISCELLANEOUS EXHORTATIONS

- I. Exhortation to Silence
- II. Failures in observing the Rules
- III. Love for One's Room
- IV. Norms of Government – St. Alphonsus de Liguori
- V. Notes for a Conference on the Spirit of Prayer
- VI. Notes for a Conference on Good Manners and Religious Civility
- VII. 1st Exhortation on the Importance and the reasons for the Manifestation of Conscience
- VIII. 2nd Exhortation
- IX. 3rd Exhortation

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TENTH PART
THE UNITY, OR THE UNION OF THE CONGREGATION
SECOND SECTION
THE POSITIVE MEANS
CF ## 221-266

The negative, indirect means – Charity toward God, bond of charity with one's Brothers – the Eucharist – the First Christians – Prayer and Meditation – Devout Practices – Fra Vito's Vision – To look upon one's Brothers as God's image and the virtues – St. Antony, Abbot – Harmony.

We have already seen up to the present which negative, indirect means are prescribed in our Rules in order to obtain and to conserve among us fraternal charity: i.e., to keep us from offending our companions with words of disdain, so flee anger, cutting words, murmuring. Keep yourselves from using imperious manners, or the spirit of commanding with a sense of superiority and pride. Keep yourselves from differences in opinions and from those judgments also in the every day activities and duties, and from those contradictions and contrasts of words, and finally from those private affections and particular friendships.

Now, our Venerated Founder passes to teach us the positive and direct means in order to have and guard and to increase ever more that mutual love among us. Pay attention, my brothers. In this first Chapter he places that *interior propensity*, or that *disposition of spirit*. In a word, he wants to tell us that our love for our companions ought to have as its foundation and basis charity for God – and that the more we will love the Lord, the more will there be mutual love among us.

Chapter I
The Interior Inclination, or Disposition of Soul.

1. CF # 221: *This depends very much on one's internal spiritual progress, for when genuine charity, or love for God and Christ the Lord increases, that very union between confreres, by which individuals are united to God and our Savior, is increased and perfected.*

In fact, this is what St. John says: *...and this commandment we have from God, that who loves God, is to love also his brother...*¹⁹⁵ For what reason was it that Ignatius so loved his religious? He loved so much, and showed that he very much loved each and every one singularly, so much so that each one that he had been

¹⁹⁵ Fr. Stofella offers 1 Jn 4:11 – which does not quite jibe with the Douay version here. [**NB**: the title here, *Unity, or Union* - may refer to unity of hearts, and then, juridical union under Chapters, Superiors]

considered first by him.¹⁹⁶ Why is it that the Saints were always so tender toward their neighbors, and good and fervent religious, of their companions? Precisely because they were well advanced and much inflamed with a genuine love for Jesus Christ.

The first Positive Means, then, is interior profit. As much as we will profit in the spiritual life, so much will we profit in charity. The reason for this is that by increasing in love for God and for Jesus Christ, one will grow also in being united in Christ, in the love of one's Brothers. Therefore, in the Heart of Jesus we ought always to find ourselves: that if we truly love Jesus Christ, we will also love indeed all our companions. The Eucharist! *For we, being many, are one bread, one body, all partake of one bread...* [cf. 1 Co 10:17]. Therefore, the early Christians *were persevering [in the doctrine of the Apostles], and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers...* [cf. Ac 2:2]. Many, many grains [form one sole bread!]. How many Communions! And we? And in order to have this flame of divine love which would enkindle fraternal love, and in order to increase and to enflame us with this love, as we should do? Our Founder tells us this by adding immediately in the following number;

2. CF # 222: *Hence, because this bond of union intensifies through prayer and meditation, as is noted in Ps 38:4: ‘...in my meditation a fire shall flame out.’ As a result, beyond any doubt, this is the more sure and solid way to obtain this unity.*

Therefore, Prayer and meditation! Note well those words: *...this is the more sure and solid way....* Now I ask you: How is it that you are so narrow of heart toward your brothers, that you never see a gesture of charity, a service toward them? Why do you allow yourself to be carried away by some cholerick movement, because there is not seen in you that serenity of countenance toward your companions?

Why is this so? I will tell you the reason: because the spirit of prayer is not in you. How do you make your meditations? If you were more fervent in making your meditation, in practicing the *additions*¹⁹⁷, the reparatory, and so on, then your heart would burn more for love of God, and consequently, with fraternal love.

Whoever is not benign toward his brothers, who looks down on them, who cuts them with his words, who contradicts them, who does not help them willingly, who envies them, who offends them – in brief, whoever does not employ charity in their regard, gives a clear indication that he is not making his meditation, or prayer, or he is not attending to this well. If indeed we were men of prayer, as every Religious should

¹⁹⁶ cf. Daniel Bartoli's *Life*, Bk III, n. 40.

¹⁹⁷ Rules of St. Ignatius for Meditation.

be, we would also have charity. If we would make meditation fervently, how there would then be enkindled in our hearts the fire of the love of God and of our neighbor.

Therefore, my beloved brothers, prayer and meditation: since Religious Life is the *house of prayer* and the hotel of charity and peace. A Religious who does not use his prayer-time well, will never be able to make any profit, nor obtain the fruit of charity, nor of other virtues.

So, my most dear Brothers, I recommend to you giving your attention to your prayers, in hearing Mass, in reciting the Rosary, the *prayers at table*, and so on, in your visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament and in making our meditation. And come often, Novices, to give a report of all this, whether it is going well, or whether it is going poorly. The trees, in addition to water for which they have currents and sources, need rain that comes down from heaven: if they do not get it, then neither do they produce flowers or fruit. And so it is with us who are Religious. Therefore, while he recommends charity to us, our Venerated Founder also recommends prayer and meditation to us: because as we are in continuous commerce with God in the most sweet Heart of Jesus, then we will also be united to our Brothers in charity. And this is the reason why the Demon of discord and hatred, envious of the peace that religious enjoy, seeks to take this away by impeding prayer on which it all depends.

There was – as is read in the Chronicles of the Capuchin Fathers – a Brother, Fra Vito, who having come that hour in which the Friars were recollecting themselves to go to make their meditation towards evening, had a vision. He saw the Devil who with the company of other devils was on his way toward the Church. And all had in their hands bench supports and cushions, and so on. Fra Vito asked the Devil why this was so. And he responded: ‘These poor Friars are tired from their labors; and so were are bringing for them these bench supports so that they can sit down comfortably, and these cushions so that they can repose their heads so they might sleep a little to restore themselves from their fatigue...’ For the Demon there burned more the fire that was enkindled in prayer and meditation than that the raged in hell: i.e., out of their fear that in the exercise of meditation of God there would break out that fire that would destroy and break down all his hidden efforts and his machinations.

3. **CF # 223:** *Furthermore, since nothing so connects the love of genuine charity toward another person than when we notice in him the singular qualities of virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit and we contemplate him as the image of God painted in the most excellent colors of grace. If, therefore, all strive to develop in themselves these virtues and gifts and often reflect on them in others, and to consider these others also as superior to themselves, and truly to rejoice in their spiritual goods, give thanks to God for them, indeed mutual charity will grow among them in a marvelous manner.*

Here our Venerated Founder proposes to us another means: that of looking toward our Brothers and at their virtues, not at their defects, but to notice in them – who are portraits of God – the gifts of the Lord. Whoever loves someone, loves also everything about him. Thus whoever loves God, loves also His images, and so on. We ought, therefore, to increase in ourselves, and to consider the virtues in others. If we want to be loved, then let us love. *If you wish to be loved, then love.* How would you pretend that others should love us, if we are ill-tempered, if we are proud, discourteous, if we are but little obedient?

Here explain and note the example of St. Antony, the Abbot ¹⁹⁸, who, much like the bees, sucked at the flowers of the virtues of others: from one, he drew modesty, in another he admired and imitated humility, and so on. Do not pay attention to their defects, and criticize them with your companions. Charity *does not think evil*, but thinks always good. And when one tends always to notice the defects: in the painting the color black would always dominate, the shadows. And when the colors green, white, red and gold appear, the darkness does not. Another Religious will have so many virtues, but if one sees only his defects these are hardly noted. *Do not judge your Brothers.* Try, rather, to consider them all superiors before you, especially heads of certain offices. ***But, by the envy of the devil death entered into the world; and they follow him that are of his side*** [cf. Ws 2:24].

Do not, therefore, envy or be displeased with the talents and the profit brought by others, but rejoice in this. Just remember, my most beloved Brothers that there is one defect that is really ugly and unworthy of a Religious and of an Apostolic Missionary, being indifferent regarding the good of one's companions. We ought rather to be cordially committed, and so on.

By a sincere love, let us love one another ¹⁹⁹, and let us show this in deeds, in our courteous manners, in our humility in speech and in the way we treat others.



¹⁹⁸ Fr. Bertoni notes the Saint of the Desert several times in his *Original Constitutions* : CF ## 274, 275.

¹⁹⁹ Fr. Stofella believed it would be helpful to insert here a thought of Fr. Lenotti is found elsewhere, to define the harmony of the Confreres, of which the Introduction speaks: 'Harmony is that certain joining of hearts which together are united and come together in authentic thinking and right works. Like the union of the Divine Persons, distinct in themselves, but not divided, and rather are indivisible. *I pray, Father, ...for those who shall believe in Me, that they all may be one as we are one* [cf. Jn 17:20-22, *passim*] If not, all that will result will be confusion and Babylon. Harmony is union and peace which keeps united the bricks and stones of the house.'

And another note from Fr. Lenotti's pen concerns the diversity of opinions in daily living: ***Dissension is to be avoided, not only in opinions, but especially in activities; For example:*** [cf. CF ## 197, ff.] in performing a task; in sweeping, as some do it one way, and others, another, and so on; in Church, the way one might set up the benches, in arranging the books and the like; while going out for a walk, one goes in this direction, and another in that; in coming home, or following after; in visiting this Church, rather than that other one. Learn from the House of Nazareth harmony and concord. Come to agreement! For harmony is...[cf. above].

XXVIII.
Chapter II:
Those External Circumstances which the more serve Unity

CF ## 224-226

**Obedience – St. Peter Leonard – Likeness to God – St. Paul – Fr. Bouchowski –
 St. Francis Borgia – St. John of the Cross – Poverty and Humility.**

Speaking of obedience as a means for fraternal union, observe that in a circle of so many rays converge at the center, and in this center, they all unite with each other. In like manner, many individuals are united in the Superior. If there were many centers, that would not be any unity. Therefore...

1. CF # 224: *Union of this kind if produced in great part by the bond of Obedience, as St. Ignatius says*²⁰⁰.

This is clear: the members are joined under the head, if they are healthy, and they are in agreement with one another. The old axiom from philosophy rings true here: *those realities are the same which convene to a single third being, they thus convene one to the other.* The rays converge in the center. A tree, in order for it to bear fruit, must have unity, union, in its branches: but how? Union of the branches with the trunk, or at least, with the roots. If these are divided among themselves, they will bear neither flowers, nor fruits.

Obedience ought to unite us in the Superior with due dependence. And therefore... let us give ourselves in the meantime to obedience... as often as we have the natural inclination more to command than to obey. The Venerable Father Leonard. Founder of the Community of the Mother of God, begged and bothered by his disciples to write the rules, wrote on a single sheet this one word: *Obedience*: 'wanting to signify with this that in the religious Life obedience is the same reality as holiness, and that it is the same to be obedient as to be holy.'²⁰¹

Obedience renders us similar to God. *All of us human beings* - says St. Diadocus - *are made to the image of God. That fact becomes a similitude in all those who exercise much charity, and in those who make their freedom a service of*

²⁰⁰ This is found in CSJ n. 659: cf. also nn. 284; 547; 551; 821.

²⁰¹ The passage between quotes are taken from St. Alphonsus' *True Spouse*, to which Fr. Lenotti in his alphabetical index, under 'Obedience' refers to this citation: c. VII, 2, nn. 4. Fr. Leonard was canonized by Pius XIth. Regarding Obedience, we can also add here a note of Fr. Lenotti remains isolated: 'You see – St. Philip Benizi said, while he was serving as a Brother, that we are useless servants, if we are not united with God in carrying out our tasks. And then, everything will go well: we profit also in our failings that we commit in our duties. Have courage, my brothers! Obedience brings the light, and without this I would be a deranged person, who would not even know how to place a knife in place on table.'

God.²⁰² And so, let us thank God what he has placed us in the House of Obedience: *house of prayer* and a *house of obedience*.

When St. Paul, overwhelmed by the light from heaven, was converted and said: ***Lord, what will you have me do?*** The Lord responded to him: ***Arise, and go into the city and there it shall be told to you what you are to do*** [cf. Ac 9:6, f.].²⁰³ St. Bernard says²⁰⁴ that with this plan and for this same purpose he entered into the religious state: not without a sublime divine counsel does God place within you the fear for your salvation and gave you a great desire to serve His majesty, and to this effect, inspired you to enter into this city, and into this School of Virtue: here it will be said to you what God wants of you, and that which you must do to please Him. Move on and sacred history tells us that St. Paul, on entering into the city, ***when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. But, they leading him by the hands...*** [cf. Ac 9: 8]. ***This, indeed, dear Brothers, is the form of perfect conversion***.²⁰⁵ And in this consists the perfection of obedience which with open eyes you will not see your way clear to judge anything. But, you will allow yourself to be guided by your Superiors, placing yourself totally in their hands.

Fr. Florence Bouchowski, even though a white-haired old man, was most obedient, and the personal authority that he had acquired for himself with his merit of so many outstanding virtues, he never assumed to himself any role of judge in the matter of obedience. Once, in order to give nourishment to his fervor, he asked of the Superior, I do not know which ministry it was, that he much desired. But, at the first hint of a contrary will that appeared in the Superior, he, too, immediately changed his own will, and with joyful detachment he brought himself into harmony in every way to the wishes of his Superior: in this way the Father Provincial greatly admired the great virtue of this man, and said one day in commendation of this good man to the other fathers: 'Fr. Florence is truly a son of obedience: this praise is the greatest that can be given to a son of St. Ignatius. St. Francis Borgia also manifested a singular veneration for all of his Superiors. When St. Ignatius had assigned to him a Lay Brother so that he would take care of his health, the saint showed to him the same obedience that he directed to his Founder. And St. John of the Cross studied doctrine only in response to an order received by his director.

Then, in order to have charity, there are necessary poverty and humility. Anyone who does not see this, the love and attachment to one's own things and esteem impedes charity. So it is with pride, ambition that seeks only one's own honor. And so it does not behoove anyone to disdain others, to neglect them. Fr. Francis Rogement, SJ, in Costry, while still not yet a priest, and when one of his companions

²⁰² C. 100, *De Perfectione Spirituali*, c. 4.

²⁰³ This section quoted by Fr. Lenotti is from Rodriguez, Part III, Tr. V, c. 5, n. 2 – against from Fr. Lenotti's alphabetical Manual under the letter for *Obedience*. He only points out the Instruction here.

²⁰⁴ Sermon I, *Conversion of St. Paul*.

²⁰⁵ This treatise is taken from Fr. Lenotti's usual Manual

was assigned a rather poorly lit room, one that looked like a grotto, with the excuse that it would serve him better, Francis asked for it for himself. And this is the way it was for many of our men. But, let us remember that it is not *poverty* – says St. Bernard – *but the love of poverty which is a virtue*. Should poverty be a burden to us, let us just think that Jesus and Mary and Joseph were poor, and poorer than we are. And regarding humility, let us observe that the humble person loves all, and is loved by all. He honors each and every one – and is honored by all.

†††††

XXIX.

THE UNIFORMITY IN THE COMMON LIFE ANOTHER MEANS FOR THE INCREASE OF FRATERNAL CHARITY

CHAPTER III THOSE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH UNIFORMITY OF LIFE- STYLE STANDS OUT

Life and the common table – the Monks of Tebaide – The Monk of Lycaonia – *Our daily bread* - Monastic legislation – with the exception, however, of charity because of age and personal needs – The Table and the Breads of Proposition – The Hebrews in the Desert – An Example.

1. **CF # 227:** *This uniformity and conformity must be in all matters, even including external realities, as in clothing, food, and all manner of living; similitude is the cause of love. And this uniformity of life and common consent, contributes greatly to the unity of spirits.*
2. **CF # 229:** *This is the purpose of the common table, so that no one, no matter how important and revered he may be, whether he be a Superior, or the more learned, or of any other condition, be excused from it, other than for the sake of illness ...*

Innocent IVth, derogating from what had been in the First Rule of each one eating from what was provided for him in his own cell, prescribed for the Carmelite Fathers that they instead would eat at the common table: ... *so that each you take in the common refectory whatever had been distributed commonly, while listening to some reading from Sacred Scripture, wherever this can readily be observed.* Therefore, insistence upon *in the common refectory and in common* - that all the religious together might convene at the same hour to take their refecton: and that the refecton of the body should always be accompanied with the nourishment of the soul.

All regular equality, all religious indifference, and all the décor of common life, particularly stands out and shines in the common table. All partiality where life is lived in common is pernicious and detestable. But, that which touches food strikes more to the core of the essence of the religious state. From this are derived bad and

unhappy consequences. All the Founders of religious communities and all monastic rules intimate, therefore, that *all things shall be in common with you*. And ‘common’ can never be those matters that are divided, or when some individuals make their own of certain aspects of the life.

Therefore, neither outside of the place, nor outside of the time, it is not licit for religious to eat. This was established by the Council of Oxford – and this is what St. Benedict has in his rule, and this is found established in the Rule which St. Pachomius received from the angels, as well as in the Rules of St. Basil.

Cassian relates ²⁰⁶ about those Monks of Tebaides in Egypt, that they had this laudable custom, and which they observed point by point and with such rigor, that walking about in the hour for recreation in the garden and meadow in the time which not only among the trees were hanging heavy with fruit, but throughout the alleys, they trod it under foot. Not only did they not bring a bit of it to their lips, but even to touch it with their hands was considered to be a sacrilege, nor would such transgressions or faults every be corrected with merely a paternal correction, but they would be punished severely with public penances. St. Isidore of Seville ²⁰⁷ in his Rule, would issue the excommunication against any who would dare in a hidden manner, or outside the common table, to taste anything.

A formidable fact - noted in the *True Spouse* - is narrated by St. Gregory in his *Dialogues* ²⁰⁸ regarding that Monk, who apparently was of a very exemplary life, who lived in a Monastery in Lycaonia. Finding him dying, his confreres looked about his room in order to find some little *memento* from his life that they might retain as a souvenir of edification. And what did they hear? ‘My Brothers’ – said the dying man – you know that when you were fasting, I was eating hidden, and therefore, I have been handed over to the demon who is killing me, and carrying my soul away!’ And in saying this, he expired. The table of the Lord is common for all, that of the Devil is not so. In the Table of the Lord, *one eats, a thousand eat, as much these latter, as the one*. ²⁰⁹ Whereas, at the table of the Demon, *one indeed is hungry and another is drunk*. [cf. 1 Co 11:21].

In the Lord’s Prayer, we pray: *give us this day our daily bread*. There should never be the saying: *this is mine, that is yours: this is a cold saying!* ²¹⁰ The prodigal son, though, said: *Father, give me the portion of the substance that falls to me*. [cf. Lk 15:12]. This is not the style of the father’s common table: *Give to me*

²⁰⁶ *De Institutis Coenobiorum*

²⁰⁷ Author of the *Rule of the Monks*. As for the excommunication that would fulminate from him as it was a matter of domestic use relative to the Community.

²⁰⁸ I, c. 4 – cited in *True Spouse*, c. VIII, 2, n. 2.

²⁰⁹ The Sequence *Lauda Sion*.

²¹⁰ St. John Chrysostom, Roman Breviary, *Common of Confessors not Pontiffs*. Lesson V.

– and not *give to us*. But, unfortunately it happens that this is way certain religious act, who are not satisfied with what is given in the common refectory, as they would want always more...their stomachs are never full, never satisfied, they murmur at least in their hearts: *they would fain have filled their bellies with the husks the swine did eat* - i.e., with the chickory of this world – and as the prodigal son, *but no man did give them to eat...!* [cf. Lk 15:16].

But, why the common table? The Council of Cambrais responds: *Because the common table designates the union of charity* ²¹¹. Therefore, St. John Chrysostom praises the common living of those monks of his time. And St. Basil in his Rules blames those who were negligent in going to table and to supper with the others. ‘Since it is necessary that at the hour of dinner all should be together. And when someone is lacking, and that he come after dinner, how will we treat him? If being able to come, and if one were not hindered, let him remain without eating until the established hour the next day, as one who has fallen into a fault by his own negligence.’ ²¹²

The same Benedict establishes that *at the hour of eating one should not come before the verses* - so that all might offer together the verse and its response and prayer and they then sit down to table together – if it be out of negligence or through some fault, one is late, let him be *corrected* two times – if once more he does not emend himself, he will not be admitted to the common table. Rather, he will be separated from the community, and he will take his meals alone, deprived of his portion of wine, until he is corrected ²¹³.

As for the equality of good, all work in the same house, and all go out into the same vineyard, *for the weight of the day, and its heat*: then all should eat of the same plate, and all in one and the same manner ought to be restored...One and the same Jesus Christ, figured in the Father of the family, wishes then that all the workers at evening, even though they might have come in different hours of the day, might have the same supper, and the same pay, without any differences ²¹⁴.

There is not meant by this that it is already forbidden that in the community there might be made some distinctions for someone who might have a special need due to his illness. Or that there should not be held a particular regard for the sick, by offering to them with the greatest possible charity, *keeping in mind the age and the needs of individuals*. Not to do this would be to destroy charity, and consequently would be to send the religious state into ruin. In these cases, necessity is required, a

²¹¹ Executing the Decrees of the Council of Trent.

²¹² *Brief Rules*, n. 136.

²¹³ Chapter 43.

²¹⁴ cf. the Parable of the vineyard works; Mt 20:1-16.

just cause and the permission of the Superior, to whom one should leave the judgment. For all the rest, though, no singularity, no differences. The Council of Oxford put in succinctly: *We interdict all singularity in the refectory.*

The Lord commanded Moses: ... *You shall make a table of setim wood...and you shall set upon the table loaves of proposition in my sight always...* [cf. Ex 25: 23, 30]: this is the first table about which mention is made in the Divine Scripture, set by the command of God, a prototype of those common tables of his religious servants. In the house of God all the breads are to be of the same whiteness, the same measure and color, two plates of gold, and therefore, breads of the same appearance, equal in every way: and the companions at a table are all equal, both young and old and rich and poor.

The Hebrews in the desert *complained: Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the flesh that we ate in Egypt free cost: the cucumbers come into our mind, and the melons and the leeks, and the onions and the garlic. Our soul is dry, our eyes behold nothing else but manna* [cf. Nb 11:4-6]. Some religious perform as did these Hebrews. They are nauseated at the foods that the Lord offers us in His house; and as malcontents, they desire the onions and garlic of Egypt. But, what is this? Like those Hebrews of old... the Lord will mete out to them accordingly.

*The flesh as yet was between their teeth, neither had that kind of meat failed ... and the Lord struck them with an exceeding great plague. And that place was called: 'The Graves'...*²¹⁵ This is the burial place of desires. The Lord will whip us religious into life and into health, and in body and soul.

Fr. Peter of the Mother of God, was a discalced Friar, and great servant of God, a great Preacher, and the General of his Community, an Apostolic Commissar of Clement VIII. He was in Rome and working very hard on the diverse Commissions that he had and charges from the Supreme Pontiff, in the worst heat of summer. He returned home exhausted, and the first sitting at table had already been conclude, and the Minister who was waiting on table, seeing him so bronzed by the sun, gave him an orange, having compassion upon him. That good Father asked if it had been given also to the others. And when he heard that it had not, no matter how much the other insisted, it was not possible that he would take it...



²¹⁵ Cf. Nb 11: 33, 34.

XXX.
ON RECREATION
C. VII: COMMON RECREATION AND DIALOGUE
CF ## 250-256

Exhortation I²¹⁶

The Providence of the Congregation – two Rules - Recreation is necessary for all, but it should be moderate and modest – Modest also in laughing – recreation and spiritual profit.

Exhortation II

Do not talk too much, and too loud – ‘Out with the knife!’ – Nothing trivial, nor offensive and displeasing manners – However, to know how to support as St. Francis Regis – No murmurings or criticisms of Superiors - Do not speak of the world, nor of eating and drinking – Our old Fathers! – Do not speak of frivolous matters – The Lament of Jesus Christ - St. Ambrose – Seneca – Clement of Alexandria – To speak of God and of useful matters in the service of God – The teaching and example of the saints – Let us be an apprenticeship for apostolic conversations with secular- examples of the Saints – Our Fr. Biadego – Brother Paul Zanolli - The Teaching of St. Laurence Justinian – Our Venerated founder – The Norms of Fr. Nadal, SJ – St. Teresa – St. Laurence Justinian.

There are many necessities in human life, and to these, the Religious must also benignly assume. We need food, clothing, lodging, and all this has indeed been provided for us. We need also a certain rest and recreation and indeed our benign Mother, the Congregation, provides this for us, and even requires it, several times a day. This is both for the body and also for the spirit, since an arch that is retched too far breaks: with the fatigue, we need to interrupt it with rest, and this is also the Lord’s will: ... *Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you just* says David [cf. Ps 32:11].

But let us see a bit what our Rules say in this regard. Attend to them well, as they are of grace, as you will see, and this is a rather important theme: here we are treating, my Brothers, that on our recreations well made, depends our spiritual profit.

1. CF # 250: *Every day, for an hour after lunch, and another after supper, or a half hour, if one abstains from supper, all the confreres will come together in the same place, if this is possible, and converse in a familiar and friendly manner.*

²¹⁶ The matter of Recreations also has a number earlier in the Founder’s *Original Constitutions* [Part VII, Section III, c. 3, n. 5 = CF # 132: *each one should take part in the useful and proper common recreations. In these, no one should manifest inopportune harshness and excessive severity and a morose visage. This would inhibit the proper relief and rest of others. So, through religious modesty, there is avoided both in words and deeds in jest, every worldly impertinence, so that in no matter would the harmony of good works and virtues be broken.*

Have you heard? *All the confreres. In the same place, if this is possible, they will come together and converse in a familiar and friendly manner.*

2. **CF # 251:** *It is necessary that this be required of all without exception for the preservation of health, but principally for the development of charity. As Aristotle witnesses [VIII Ethic., 5]: friendship grows with communication, and is dissolved by taciturnity. And St. Teresa states: Charity grows by communicating²¹⁷.*

And this is not only *for the preservation of health: but, principally for the development of charity.* This is the over-riding reason: *...charity grows by communicating; and it is necessary that this be required of all without exception.*

Also, recreation is necessary *not only for Novices, and the infirm, but also for the veterans and the perfect...* otherwise, *they will fall into a lukewarm spirit, or certainly into a pernicious state of physical health* [n. 4 [n. 4 CF # 253]. Another reason is that this intervals of conversation and recreation then recall the men more willingly and avidly to solitude. Other reasons may be brought forward for these recreations, and we will see them another time.

For now, how should one participate in this recreation? According to the good pleasure of God: *In the Lord*, as David exhorts us: *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, you just...* i.e., in a manner that is befitting the religious life that we profess. This means that our recreation should be *Moderate* and *Modest*.

Moderate: the reason is that when it is too long, it will always be defective: *Let it be never excessive.* Its time is already assigned by the rule and by the Superiors. But, it is necessary to remain attentive to be punctual in leaving it immediately and promptly, as soon as the assigned time comes. At the first sound of the bell, one should leave in the middle of a sentence the discourse and even the word and whatever other thing of game that is going on. Let us be like the lightning to cease and to leave all and everyone. Alas! Let us not do as some do, who want to finish the interrupted discourse, throwing that time away, and stealing it from the other occupations against obedience. St Frances de Chantal said: 'If I were to throw away a moment of time, I would think of myself as a thief before God. And what is this? Is it perhaps really my time that I am able to throw away at my own pleasure? God has given me the measure, and He wants an accounting of each moment.

Modest: our recreation ought to be: modest in comportment, modest in laughing, modest in speaking.

²¹⁷ *Life*, c. VII, near the end.

1. Our recreation is to be modest in comportment, i.e., in the conduct of one's person. The Religious ought to be always composed, but especially in the recreations, since in these one can offer much edification, and one can also be very destructive. Consequently, in sitting the person should be positioned in a decent manner, not with the legs either extended, or stretched out. In walking one's gait should be grave and measured. In one's gestures, moderate, without excessive agitation, but gently and courteously moving about. The eyes should be modest, not too free, or fixed on the face of others; the hands should be composed fittingly without playing, and so on.

2. Our recreation should be modest in our laughing: one should not laugh immoderately. It is true that a sweet and discreet smile and a rather just manifestation, one that is reasonable, are expected. However – as St. Francis de Sales points out – just as it is a disorder to laugh while conducting serious duties, so on the contrary it is most important that one needs to be very careful always to avoid laughing in recreation. So it is that St. Frances de Chantal stated: ‘Finding myself with our young Sisters, I laugh to give them confidence in recreating, as this is necessary.’ But, a laughter that is unruly, and strong – who would not see that this is very blameworthy, especially in a Religious. Does not this dissipate the spirit and dry up the vein of devotion? And then what does our Rule impose upon us? Where one speaks of Modesty, it is read thus *not to be easily moved to laughter*.²¹⁸

A smile on one's lips is something that we must always have: this indicates contentment of heart and does edify one's companions and neighbor, and approaches them in order to be of benefit to them. On the other hand, seriousness, severity, and harshness distance them and give very little edification. The smile on one's lips is an indication of a friendly spirit, of a benevolent heart, one that is gentle, sincere and candid. The smile on one's lips indicates a charitable spirit, and so on. Seriousness shows a spirit that is closed, and little interested in the good of others. Therefore, the Saints always have had this gentle smile on their lips, that showed their love for others, consoling them, and attracting their hearts to God. St. Romuald – as is read in his Life – always manifested a joyful countenance and this sweet smile on his lips. So did st. Philip Neri, and so on. And this is why in his *Rules for Modesty* St. Ignatius prescribes for us: *The lips should not be shown to be drawn, but open* [n. 4] - *One's entire visage should show joy rather than sadness, or any other disordered affectation* [# 5].

Pay attention, therefore, my beloved Brothers, to this modesty even in your manner of laughing. Let us restrain ourselves out of love for God and for our neighbor. Let us edify, and not destroy, and so on. We will see in another Exhortation the modesty that is demanded in speaking in our recreations. In the meantime, let us keep well in mind that from our recreations there depends greatly also our spiritual progress.

²¹⁸ CF # 122, 3 – Third degree of St. Benedict's Humility.

Rather, from these recreations depends also the good of the Congregation. Be that as it may, the recreations should be conducted in a religious manner, there be maintained and fomented the religious spirit and observance. When, in fact, they are conducted poorly, the spirit is dissipated, there is lost that little that is gained with the other exercise of piety, and there is lost that recollection. And woe to anyone who is the cause of this! Because he will indeed have to render his accounting before the Lord's Tribunal.

§§§

IInd Exhortation On Recreations

The other time we wanted to provide the reasons why by our Venerated Founder there have been prescribed the proper *Recreations*; the place... the time... and in part, too, also the manner. However, there still remains some points regarding our manner of speaking, and here there is not a little to say about it. The reason is that precisely here in this area of speaking is where one falls the most often, and is found lacking with real prejudice regarding oneself and his companions.

In the meantime I posit this question: have we truly striven with commitment of putting into practice, in the few recreations in which we find ourselves together in these few days, regarding what we have heard thus far? Let us examine ourselves well on this.

First of all, there is necessary in the recreations to heed the advice of not speaking too much: because it is known – and the Holy Spirit affirms this – that *in the multitude of words there shall not want sin* [cf. Pr 10:19]. How much should there not be said, especially by the Religious, that some are such chatter-boxes, and that they always seem to want to dominate in conversation, and, *for better or for worse*, some want always to put in their two-cents' worth in every discourse! With this it soon happens that one would show that he is quite proud, or at least a lightweight: *A fool multiplies words* [cf. Qo 10:14].

Consequently, when others speak, it is not proper to interrupt them: as the Holy Spirit says: *interrupt not others in the midst of their discourse* [cf. Si 11:8]. With what immodesty would a Religious manifest who wants to be the only one speaking! And when his companions say something he is always ready to cut off their words in their mouths, showing with this his own pride of knowing everything and of wanting to be the master of all: this is something that brings great disturbance to anyone involved in such a conversation.

It is fitting furthermore that in the time of recreation to say something from time to time, especially when others fall silent. Otherwise, if all keep quiet, there would cease that common relaxation which the Rules demands. Furthermore, modesty implies especially in the young, that one should speak sufficiently to maintain the recreation, and that one should rather listen than to speak. So, a good rule is to be silent when others speak, and to speak when others are silent.

Furthermore, in recreations, it is necessary to keep oneself from speaking, or shouting loudly. Rather it is more fitting to discourse with restrained voice. Otherwise, recreation will become a Babylon, and a market-place, an uproar. Furthermore: be attentive not to take up questions that are excessively heated, in which imaginations are enkindled, and self-love will play its role, wishing to maintain one's own opinion at any cost: 'Put aside the knives!' - is what our Founder used to say. In fact, charity would thus be endangered as well as good edification, and thus some would leave recreations with bitterness of heart.

So, also a religious can see that he might actually belittle his own profession by saying words that are not very honest, or civil, and that he would use rather rude and coarse manners. Let it be known that all the words that smack of this world, are indecent for a religious. One should also abstain from certain jokes and saying that in some way others can be offended regarding certain real and known defects, and certainly practical jokes: because very often jokes can displease those on whom they are played, or about whom one speaks. What harm these overly spiced condiments do, these stinging witticisms do against our brother! However, even if someone else gives us the occasion of really being put out, and we offer to God this victory over ourselves, but do not return the unkindness, nor give back what we have received! Rather even if we feel that we are being ridiculed, let us not show our indignation, and let us not manifest our resentment. St. John Francis Regis, when he saw that he was being made the butt of a joke by his companions at recreation, he would join in the discourse with joviality, so that this derision aimed at him served to entertain all. This is what so many other saints did and what good Religious still do.

Keep an eye out from saying words in your own praise! When the tongue is warmed up, oh! what strange words might come forth from us that later we will regret! And perhaps these words will make us lose the merit from our previous good deeds. And when we are praised, let us raise our mind to the Lord, and seek to change the conversation.

One should speak with a low voice and not strong, which offends the ears of others. What a misfortune it is to hear a Religious speak at a high and unrestrained

voice, as one might do in the shop! *That a voice that is too loud never offend the year of another*, is St. Ambrose's recommendation ²¹⁹.

But, what will we say of those who make the subject of their conversations and recreations unsavory words, and spread these about? Alas! My brothers, let us guard ourselves well from this plague of murmuring, especially from criticizing the Superiors. What a poison this is! What evil seed does not one sow into the hearts of his companions! We religious place our own brothers in a pigeon-hole! Censuring their deeds, condemning them! Even if their observations are about manifest events, it does not matter! The perfection of charity to which we are called to attend, and the good edification of our brothers ought to lead us to keep silent and to hide as much as one can, the short-comings of others. And rather than placing these out for public view, rather we should speak and praise their virtues, their good actions, and their good qualities. How can one ever leave recreation with a contented heart after having murmured about one's companion or Superior?

Another defect also to be avoided from our discourses, and it is that of speaking of this world, of marriages, of festivals, and of certain facts that are so profane that they do not help at all, nor do they edify, but rather distract us, leaving in the soul of the one who is listening to all this, a very poor impression.

Even to speak of eating and drinking is something that is out of bounds for Religious. To praise, for example, or to criticize those foods brought to table, is it one of those activities that is befitting to us who profess penance and mortification? In this regard, St. Francis de Sales said: 'Persons of honor do not think about the table, except when they are seated there.' Let it be so also for us religious who ought to be dead to the delights of this earth and to have our hearts in heaven, and in heaven above to direct our thoughts and our conversation. I remember well, you know, that with our first Fathers and Companions, one never spoke of eating. And if anyone perchance ever did commence a discussion of that nature, it was had almost as a scandal, and that conversation was brushed away immediately and something indeed contrary and unfitting for the religious life.

Nonetheless, there are some who, if they are not complaining and bantering, and so on, and furthermore, enter into conversations of useless and frivolous matters, that do not add up to anything substantial. *Not concerning frivolous matters should conversations, or recreations be based.* This is the teaching of Fr. Lancisio ²²⁰: *in any religious, the speaking of profane matters is an indication of a non-religious heart.* . . And this is what Jesus Christ is reported to have said to St. Brigid: *What is more esteemed, is the more frequently mentioned.* Therefore, anyone who frequently

²¹⁹ *De Officiis*, Bk I, c. 18.

²²⁰ *Opusculum V: De Mediis conservandi spiritum*. C. 10.

speaks of his own family, his own nation is trying to say that he loves them more: whoever speaks often of food, and the like, whoever speaks often of study, and the like – and whoever speaks of the vanities of this world and makes certain remembrances of this world, shows ... *that is loved more...* which is what St. Ambrose notes: The mouth is the promptuary [the dispenser] of the will. And Seneca noted: *one's speech paints the picture of his soul*. And Clement of Alexandria noted: *the way one speaks, indicates his style of life* ²²¹.

Therefore, if the soul is full of God's love and of pious affections, that will appear also in the discourses that issue from one's mouth. Just observe an opened phial: how there is exhaled it seems and sent abroad a sweet odor! And from the odor that comes forth, one can know the sweet liquor that is included within. Now, with merit St. Ilarion of Arles in praising St. Honoratus, the Bishop, from the goodness of his discourses,, was drawn to the internal goodness of his heart and his soul. For which reason it is a great indication that Jesus Christ dwells in the heart of the one who willingly initiates conversations about God and of pious matters...

St. Lawrence Justinian said: What a waste! Farmers, as soon as they come together speak without getting annoyed about agriculture; artisans speak of their own arts, their shops; merchants speak of their commerce. *Unfortunately, only the Servants of God do not care, or do not know how, to listen, or to speak of matters that befit their own state...*

Tauler narrates that 'Christ appeared to a certain great servant and had lamented with vivid sorrow of the six manners with which He was dishonored by His Servants. The second was that in their gatherings and conferences they treated of vain and useless matters and that only with great effort, or never at all, would they make mention of Him...

Of St. Charles, Giussano notes that 'his speech was always either about matters concerning God, or those about the service of God.' And the Apostle held it as a firm principle that is demanded also of seculars: ***let that speech which is good proceed from your mouth, to the edification of faith, that it may administer grace to the hearers*** [cf. Ep 4:29]. How much more, then, will this not be demanded from those religious persons obliged to greater perfection...?

The Holy Spirit states: *choice silver is the tongue of the just man...* this means that the just out to shine out in the exemplary content of their discourse, and as for the sound, that it resound rightly due to the religious moderation of the voice, not to be spoiled by too much laughter, and by shouting, or by arguing. Therefore, Plato and St Pauline state: *conversation is the mirror of one's soul*. It is a great sign of a dissipated

²²¹ Cf. **CSL**, pp. 440, 442, ff.

spirit when irreligious discourse issues from the religious mouth in a Convent of Religious. And therefore, they ought to flee those who speak of profane matters, if we wish to conserve and to increase the religious spirit.

And this method ought to be maintained even in our speaking with seculars. Rather, this is another reason that our Founder placed this in the Rule, in order to stimulate us to speak of useful and spiritual matters among ourselves: i.e., to train us to do this then conversing with seculars. Here are his words here in c. VII, n. 6:

CF # 255: *Furthermore, since the principal end for our Congregation is the conversion of souls, this is achieved for the most part by conversing with human beings, and by speaking about divine realities gently and discreetly. For this, moreover, religious confreres can become proficient in this when they are accustomed to having conversations among themselves. These more often ought to be concerning divine matters...*²²²

The scope of our, what is it? Therefore, let us also look for it with this means of familiar conversations, and the like. What great good can we not do by this way! With this means what advantages did not the great Apostolic Missionary, St. Francis Xavier²²³ accomplish! What great good did not St. Ignatius achieve! What good St. Philip, St. Alphonsus, and so many other good religious and students, and also simply Lay Brothers. Fr. Biadego had a great rapport with the young students: he would stand near the door, or would approach one or the other, or along the street²²⁴. And Brother Paul in 1849 and 1850, how many soldiers who were stationed at the Stimate did he not draw to go to Confession! And they would communicate then on the Feasts with such edification. The seculars would be met by our men with their interests, but it is necessary to have them then leave by our way!²²⁵

But, you will say, what will be the content of our religious conversations? St. Lawrence Giustinian responds: ‘The supreme and endless matter of conversing all will find in speaking of the misery of this present life, the dangers of this pilgrimage, the various kinds of temptations, the deceptions of the devil, the deformity of the vices, the ornamentation and merits of virtue, the inevitable destiny of death, the pains of

²²² These private conversations are described by Thomas H. Clancy, SJ, as *The Conversational Word of God. A Commentary on the Doctrine of St. Ignatius of Loyola concerning Spiritual Conversations with Four Early Jesuits*. St. Louis: Jesuit Sources 1978; cf. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, December 8, 1975, n. 46: *...in addition to this public and general proclamation of the Gospel, the other form of individual communication of the Gospel from person to person must be encouraged and employed. This is the Method which Our Lord Himself constantly employed...*

²²³ St. Francis Xavier was also honored by this title for his work in Foreign Missions – yet, with the great arsenal of apostolic weapons at his disposal from the Jesuit Rule, private conversations worked wonders in the Missions.

²²⁴ Cf. **CSI**, p. 86, 440-442, ff.

²²⁵ Fr. Bertoni notes this Ignatian principle in his Spiritual Diary, **MP, August 20, 1808**.

hell, the Reign of God and the reward of paradise: and most often, of the ineffable charity of God shown to the human race, through Christ and in Christ. Of these themes, the Servants of God did not so much speak of these out of their own love and choice of God, as rather more for the edification of anyone who would listen to them, and for their own spiritual advancement: *spiritual matters lead to more spirituality*. Let them give to each one their own nourishment according to the quality of the persons and their circumstances.

In this, our Venerated Founder was outstanding. He knew in a marvelous manner to adapt the familiar discourse and the terms and expressions to the person, or to the persons with whom he dealt in conversations: *he was made all to all*: as a result, all would leave him edified, consoled and content.

Thus, our Recreations will serve to foment fraternal charity, and to prepare us for speaking of God with our neighbor, and they will be the pledge of the perpetual recreation of Paradise, where we will all be together, not with divisions, but under one and the same tabernacle, and so on...²²⁶

Therefore, St. Teresa said: 'For the love of God, I beg you and urge you, that you deport yourselves in such a way that your conversation should always refer to something that is good for the person with whom you deal. And a little later, she adds: *See to it that you never say this within yourself: I wish that you would think well of me*, etc. And hold as a firm principle that one who delights in the special presence of God, not common to all the just, ought likewise to delight in pious conversations, since by means of them the Eternal Word enters to fill our hearts with pious affections. This is also what St. Lawrence Justinian says, in bringing the example of the two disciples who were on their way to Emmaus: speaking of the Scriptures, they experienced *that they were on fire with the blaze of charity*. They said to one another: *Did not our hearts burn while he was with us on the way and opened to us the Scriptures?* This makes it clear that the author of both these is always He: when he is heard physically, or when He is heard in the Scriptures. And so, those who do not speak willingly of the matters of Scripture left to us, nor about other pious matters, show by this deed that they do not delight in that special presence of God with which He blesses His beloved friends...



²²⁶ In an Appendix, Fr. Lenotti presents the so-called *Catalogue* of Fr. Jerome Nadal, SJ - cf. ***For Matters of Greater Moment, The First 30 Jesuit General Congregations*, St. Louis: Jesuit Source 1994**, the IInd General Congregation June 219, 1565, Decrees after the Election, nn. 28, 57, ff. - 119, ff., 125, ff. There was included various matters for recreation - this was read each year in Refectory. Some of this may be noted in **CS I, pp. 3, f., in the *Life of Anthony Caucigh***:

1. In Recreation our confreres should not be singular, solitary, of dark humor; 1. in the exchanges, they should not be light-weight; 2. Not immodest; 4. they should not be chatter-boxes; 5. they should not be irascible; 6. they should not be argumentative, or cutting; 7. not hurried in their gait; 8. not heavy or acerbic; nor should they raise their voices excessively, or break out in immoderate laughter. Fr. Lenotti continues:

XXXI.
TENTH PART –SECTION II
C. IX: MUTUAL CONCERN FOR THE SPIRITUAL PROGRESS OF THE
CONFRERES

[CF ## 262-266]

The first care towards our Neighbors ought to be that for our own Brothers: the concern for their Profit – The example of Fr. Lancisio – Also to cooperate in corrections.

A Community of Religious, dedicated to the service of their neighbor, is called to render great glory to God and to do much good to human beings. And precisely, by divine disposition, this is our Congregation of *Apostolic Missionaries for the Service of Bishops*. Now, to this scope we arrive certainly, o my beloved Brothers, if we procure to nourish in ourselves sentiments of sincere and vivid affection for the religious disciple and for the exact observance of the Rules that our Venerated Founder has left us: among these there is the one that today we read, in the Chapter entitled *The Mutual Concern for the Spiritual Progress of the Confreres* :

CF # 262: *Since the end of the Congregation is to work for the salvation of souls ,and as a result, this asks for ministries that are accommodated ²²⁷ to this end. Therefore, each member should in the very first place work for, and desire first and with greater commitment, for the salvation of his own brothers, over that of externs, because charity is most ordered. Hence, just as each one is inclined to seeking first his own spiritual salvation before that of others; so, too, he would intend first among these others, and would seek, the spiritual salvation of his own brothers, that of the entire Congregation, before that of externs.*

A religious who is cold, indolent, regarding the well-being of his Brothers and of his Congregation, might be described with this phrase: *they went out from us, but they were not of us* [cf. 1 Jn 2:19]. A Religious who is zealous for the spiritual advantages of his companions and of his Congregation can be said to be the arm, the soul of the Congregation, and that he is a true and loving child of God. The esteem and love for one's own Congregation and zeal for the glory of God, is too important: love and zeal for which we are obliged out of gratitude.

What an unfortunate experience it is never to hear a religious, who does not approve, and does not esteem, and does not praise anything other than what he was outside, or what might be found in other Communities - and then to hear him disdain and criticize whatever there is in his own house! I am not saying that we should place our Congregation ahead of all others in our dealings with externs: may God protect us

²²⁷ These *ministeria accomodata* seem to imply a broad sweep of ministries, as pertinent to the central idea of the *Apostolic Mission*.

from that! Rather, let us have humility, humility! Let us remain lowly, lowly! Fr. Lancisio was moved to enter into the Company of Jesus for this external moderation that he saw in the Jesuits, in addition to other virtues.²²⁸

Do not complain excessively about Superiors²²⁹.

Then, not to complain about their corrections: rather, each should accept them with internal and external humility. *He that hates to be reproved, walks in the trace of a sinner,* So, even as regards an observation, there are those who resent them. Do not make excuses: but, thank God, as that holy religious used to do, who would say a *Hail, Mary* every time someone pointed out something to him.

And wherever it should be necessary, attend to fraternal correction. For example, do not ever say: *Am I my brother's keeper?*²³⁰

Encourage others to good, especially by good example²³¹.

Each one should be committed to all the others! And all for each one, and in each one.

Pay for the Congregation.



²²⁸ Fr. Lenotti adds here a few principles that seem to be based on the *Original Constitutions*, that follow here.

²²⁹ **CF # 263:** *Therefore, there should arise that care and diligence which the Superiors of the Congregation ought to maintain for the spiritual progress of their sons.*

²³⁰ This is in the spirit of **CF # 264:** *From this also there should be manifest that inclination and preparation of soul for receiving correction from others, as well as assisting in the correction of others, with due charity.*

²³¹ This seems inspired also from: **CF # 265:** *As a result, in like manner, that mutual care for all through conversations and discourses favoring fraternal charity, and the zeal for encouraging each other to the exercise of virtues and perfection.*

XXXII.
ELEVENTH PART
FAMILIAR CONVERSATION WITH OUR NEIGHBORS TOWARD THEIR
SALVATION

CHAPTER I
That Familiarity to be avoided

CF ## 267-270

Exhortation: With which persons is it prohibited to speak – consequently, flee conversations with them.

Detachment from parents and seculars – Do not speak with them without permission – Dangers and harm in such conversations – St. Lawrence Justinian – St. Basil – St. John Climacus – Conversations prohibited between elders and the young – St. Ignatius – Avoid conversation with externs and with those who do not live spiritually – St. Ignatius – St. John Chrysostom – Origen.

1. CF # 267: *St. Basil says [Rules 5 & 13 from his Longer Rules] : ‘Unless we alienate ourselves from the necessity of family ties and from the familiar exchange with seculars, and shift away from that habit of mind as into another world, in no way will we attain the purpose of our spirit.*

For Religious, it is not licit to converse with just anyone, on an individual level. This is the Rule of just about every Religious Community comprised of observant members. Especially for Novices and young religious need to abstain from dealing with certain determined persons. It suffices it to say that there have been Papal Bulls that have spoken of this, and rigorously forbid everything of this nature: the matter is so important.

And so it is not permitted to speak with seculars, with the exception of those in the Oratory, when it is our duty to attend to them. And this is the advice of St. Basil: *It is not fitting to entrust yourself to just anyone, to manifest and lay before some one else the hidden area of your spirit:* for this has many attackers. *Rather every effort is to be given that only after employing great diligence* [rather, in a religious order – Fr. Lancisio adds - having obtained previously the permission of the Superiors] *and only do we proceed with great circumspection with externs.* For if the Son of God *did not entrust Himself to just everyone, He Who is all pure, and lacking in all fault, He Who was nothing other than virtue, did this* - then, what should be expected of the likes of us, considering what we are?

There is a further reason to flee from the conversation of externs that are forbidden to us - St. Ephrem says: *because whoever would enjoy worldly conversations shows that they have not yet left the world. For, just as one who lights a*

fire, arouses the flame, and so worldly conversations move depraved passions and affections in the heart of the monk. Let us hope, brother, that those who would make use of the grace of conversing, might in no way harm you. How many have been I in our times, who before men has shone like burning lamps and luminaries of this world; and which bit by bit become more trepid by their frequent contacts and by their gabbing with seculars, then returned wretchedly to the works of their secular life of once upon a time!

Therefore, there is no wonder that in former times such as this were punished with the very greatest severity. And so, among the penalties that St. basil presents, he tells us: *Whoever would be attached by a conversation to externs who might chance by the monastery, and having done this even before having received any permission from the one who has in hand the disciplinary government of the house, should live in segregation for a week.* And at n. 8: *If anyone would converse with externs, or with those pertaining to his own, with the permission of the Archimandrite, on heir coming to the Monastery, this one – other than those Monks destined for this service - will remain without blessings.* And at n. 13, we read: *If anyone enters into the entrance way of the house, without permission of the one in charge there, he will remain without the blessing.* St. John Climacus wrote: *If we frequent the company of the seculars and familiar converse with them, it is easier that we be converted more to the secular way.*

Consequently, one must decline conversation with externs, and it is forbidden to our young members. In this regard, we need to understand the advice of St. John Climacus: *As it is impossible to look with one eye toward heaven, and then with the other riveted on earth, so it is not possible for the soul not to run the risk for one who in thought and in person does not make himself a foreigner and a stranger from all other foreigners and strangers. With enormous effort and fatigue we acquire serious and perfect customs; and it can happen that with these have been acquired after a long commitment of time, in a single moment we might lose them*²³².

II. *There should also be avoided – as the Venerable Lancisio teaches – also those prohibited conversations between the younger men with the older, and with certain young people.* This was referred to be St. Ignatius as being so important, *that as a penalty for such conversations, he would impose a public discipline in the refectory; or abstinence for three days from ordinary food, allowing only bread and water at a small table, or some other penance in the judgment of the Superior.* This is what Fr. John Polanco wrote, as Secretary of the Company, to Fr. Soldevilla, the Rector of the College in Genoa, in the name of St. Ignatius, on November 15, 1554. And so that this would be observed in the Company, St. Ignatius himself wrote down in the First Draft of the old Rules, with which before the writing of the Constitutions, the

²³² *Scala Paradisi*, gr. II.

Company was governed. He wrote down four rules in his own hand, prohibiting the promiscuous conversation with anyone, and forbidding it with certain persons, and prescribing the manner of asking permission in order to be able to speak with certain persons, both domestics and externs: the saint placed so much importance in this matter. In the Constitutions treating of the conversation of our members in those matters which pertain to the soul, and for progress in virtue. In the very first place, he took away *all communication by speech and in writing with those who in his plan might be the cause of those lessening their resolve to enter the Institute*. They were only able to speak with those persons, and of those matters could they converse, that might help in the purpose that we have put before us of entering into the Congregation.

And so, from all that has been stated so far, what comes to you, my most beloved Brothers? There should come to your mind that we ought totally to avoid conversation with externs, while it is also prohibited to our young members. It is impossible – writes St. John Climacus in this regard - to look with one eye toward heaven, and with the other toward earth; and so, it *cannot be that in a single moment of time, we would lost all this*. At least, there will result some kind of stain, or bad impression in one's mind and heart.

And again, in the third place, one should decline from frequent conversation with those who do not live in a spiritual manner. It is difficult – states Lancelotti, supported in this by the authority of St. John Chrysostom – piously and holily to live conversing with those who do not live, nor speak in a religious or spiritual manner, and who are imbued with distorted and evil principles. And Origen, taking up that Gospel passage where Jesus Christ gives the order to avoid conversation with one who had been admonished and corrected some times, and does not emend, referring also to venial sins: *whoever in a light sin has been corrected, and yet does not change, we ought to consider him almost as a publican and an outcast, keeping distant from him...!*



APPENDIX – MISECELLANEOUS EXHORTATIONS

[I] Exhortation To Silence – Its Observance

1.

One singular benefice of the Lord is speaking. *Sermon*, like *reason*: differentiates humanity from animals. Therefore, the *Chaldean Paraphrastes*, in commenting on *Genesis*, rather than saying that *man was made a living soul*, translates: *man was made a speaking soul*: almost as though he would connect reason with the ability to speak. And therefore: 1° to be able to communicate one's thoughts; 2° because man is sociable by nature, and for this society, and for this society it is necessary to speak.

Furthermore, since nature has been vitiated, man easily is found lacking in his talking, either by defect, or by excess: when he is silent, and should speak – or when he does speak, and should be silent. Therefore, it is necessary to moderate, and to regulate one's tongue. There is thus a moral silence.

The philosophers knew of this: Moral Silence = Philosophical Silence. Plutarch, instructing the young, prescribes in the first place that they be taught on how to refrain their tongue, and this because opportune silence is so full of wisdom, and *superior to all discourse*, and also because the intemperate in the use of the tongue would encounter very great calamities. He also wrote a book: *On Avoiding Loquaciousness*.

Aulus Gellius also gathered many statements from most wise poets and from the most eminent philosophers. And Hesiod teaches that the tongue is an excellent and enormous treasure, but one that should be dispensed in a measured manner. And those who have the vice of talking too much are called: *verbose, blatherers, prattlers*. Also Seneca speaks of a certain will, and a terrible itch to speak, is like a drunkenness of talking – and he offers for this a medicine for such a malady: *Nothing helps more than being quiet, and speak with others the least possible, and most often within oneself*. Thus Philo adds: *silence, thanks to which the well brought up impose reverence - is a certain faculty of dividing well the times of speaking and keeping silence*.

Sacred Scripture tells us this through Solomon: ***A time to keep silence, a time to speak*** [cf. Qo 3:7]. The Prophets repent at times for having kept silence and at times, for having spoken. The holy Fathers of the Church, instructed by Scripture, persuade nothing more as a suitable means for healing and composing one's habits than this moderation in speaking.

This moderating virtue of the tongue is most laudable and to be yearned for most vehemently not only by man as man, but also as a Christian. But, for the religious man who tends toward perfection, this alone does not suffice; therefore, the masters and founders of religious communities were not content with it, but desired in us a

more noble virtue, almost heroic, moderating the tongue and of speaking in a most perfect manner: this, according to the word used, is called SILENCE.

‘The observance of silence was one of the means particularly employed by St. Oddo, Abbot of Cluny. To establish the reform, knowing how with it there would be maintained in a community charity and peace. And his Monks observed it scrupulously in the prescribed hours so much so that two of them were captured by the Normans on their way to Tours, and allowed themselves to be conducted and maltreated almost breathlessly, but the barbarians never succeeded in drawing from their mouths a single word, until the time of silence prescribed by the rule, had passed.’

St. Aelred of Scotia, ‘at the mere sight of religious who were outstanding for their fervor, experienced being moved by a holy emulation. One among these was called Simon, and he drew his attention more than the others. The love for penance had reduced him, this Cistercian Monk, to renounce all the advantages that in the world promised him by his illustrious lineage, a wealth without end, the most rare talents of intelligence and all the graces of his person. He was always recollected and absorbed in God, and *a most rigorous observer of Silence*. He spoke rarely, and laconically, and not with others, except for his Superiors, and only for the most urgent of reasons. And yet, he was most happy, pleasing, edifying was his appearance. This is the testimony that Aelred has left of him: *Just his virtue of humility confounded my pride, and made me blush with the lack of mortification of my senses. The Law of Silence which is observed among us, took from me the possibility of speaking with him at length. However, one day a word of mine slipped out, and he approached me with the air of his whole appearance, displeased that this infraction of silence had changed him; therefore, I threw myself at his feet and he let me for some time to expiate my fault, for which he later always corrected me, nor did he know how ever to pardon me of it.*

Therefore, silence helps: [1°] to flee defects; [2°] to acquire virtue.

2. SILENCE ²³³

The recommendation that I give to you could not be better: I recommend silence to you. How ancient is this requirement of silence. As old as God is. From all eternity, there was God, and with God silence: because God is all blessed in Himself, and has no need of speaking with anyone: ***And His place is in peace...*** [cf. Ps 75:3]. The word began with creatures. Also at the very beginning of the world – as we have it in the Apocalypse - ***there was silence in heaven*** [cf. Rv 8:1]. It is true that here silence means a great expectancy of grandiose and stupendous events, as was the battle of St. Michael the Archangel and Lucifer [cf. Rv 12:7], and others besides. But,

²³³ This seems to be one of Fr. Lenotti's Conferences as Superior General.

precisely after the silence, there are awaited beautiful and great events. From silence, the following are expected:

1. **the sparing of defects**
2. **there is awaited that there will be no need of rendering an account before the tribunal of God of so many words, at least those wasted words;**
3. **abnegation of self and the itch to talk;**
4. **recollection and compunction of heart;**
5. **there is awaited that the Lord would speak to us with his holy inspirations, because the Lord cannot speak with chatterers;**
6. **from silence there was awaited and there came to be the Incarnation of the word; *when all things kept silence...*²³⁴;**
7. **from silence, there is awaited the exercise of so many virtues, observance, religious fervor, the merit of having kept what the Rule prescribes. What a beautiful reality silence is!**

It seems that it is silence that God wants of us in a recommended manner. Do you see it? The Novitiate of Verona, restored by our venerated Father Marani, was a very ancient Convent of the Vallambrosians: 200 monks from the year 1100, and they were there for 400 years. Now, this Monastery passed into so many hands, and finally into ours. Just imagine: of the many articles that were left behind by those Monks in that Convent... we have only found three: a picture in the Cloister...the Madonna – and a great sign, or I would put it better to say a table of wood, where in square characters there was written ***Silence!*** It seems that from those Monks God wanted to hand down to us at least this: ***Silence!***

Do you see, then, what our commitment should be... But, I do not say that you should do – as that Monk who died not very long ago in Rome – 40 years of silence. But, observe it in its proper times, without human respect, conquer yourselves and do not allow too many exceptions. With the excuse of necessity, silence is put on the back-burner. And so, try during recreations, as the Rule prescribes for us, to speak willingly of useful and edifying matters, as did the holy religious; like Blessed John Berchmans, and others.

With silence, the saints conducted their lives. ***In silence and hope shall your strength be.*** [cf. Is 30:15]. The example of Mary and St. Joseph.



²³⁴ Antiphon at the *Benedictus* for the Sunday in the Octave of Christmas.

II. FAILINGS IN THE RULES

We have been called to perfection – the many times we have heard that. And how have we responded? Jesus Christ from the tabernacle repeats it to us: ***Be you, therefore, perfect as also your Heavenly Father is perfect.*** [cf. Mt 5:48]. Our perfection does not consist in grandiose endeavors, but in the little realities. Care in one's work is what renders a task perfect and precious. And love is shown in applying diligence to the small undertakings, not neglecting anything which might disgust the beloved. ***He that fears God, neglects nothing*** [cf. Qo 7:19]. – All the more is this true of one who loves God. ***In all your works, be perfect*** ²³⁵

Now, in order to reach this, it is necessary to keep oneself from small failings which while they may not be noticed, have a way of mounting up. I now would like to point out some of these defects in this matter. One failing against the rule would be in the morning, at the sound and the moment of arising, one decides to delay a little. And this happens also at other soundings of the bell, and so on. And what if one should anticipate the sound of the bell, would this be good? I read not very long ago, that there is more perfection to await the bell than to anticipate it: because the sound of the bell is the voice of God, and so, by awaiting its sound, one hears the voice of God. ²³⁶

To make one's meditation giving to it a little less time, even a moment or so, this would be another defect. O, to neglect the examen of this: if this is not on the Rule expressed, the Founder imposes this upon us. To miss a reading: if one cannot be there, then it is necessary to make it up, as soon as possible. To fail to make the examen: if one simply cannot make it at the time assigned, then at least he should attend to it later. Fr. Goswin Nichel, the General of the Jesuits, is said never to have missed it in 60 years ²³⁷ One who would fail in acts sorrow and resolution... We also have by rule that each one should confess once a week: who would fail in this, would fail in the Rule.

One who would not show up for recreation, or would deport himself with little restraint, and would not know how to hold back some, especially in the presence of the Superiors: or commit contradictions with others, or be stubborn in maintaining his own opinion. We have by rule the requirement of the manifestation of one's conscience, at least from time to time, to the Superior: anyone who would not do this, would not keep that rule. One who commits defects and would not accuse himself in order to

²³⁵ The text suggests Si 30:3 – which does not jibe with this in the Douay version.

²³⁶ Fr. Stofella – an early riser [?] – adds this note: 'Unless there intervene a legitimate custom, or permission of the Superior!'

²³⁷ From Fr. The *Monologue* of Fr. Patrignani, SJ.

have a penance for them, would fail. Regarding denunciation of others' faults, one knows that a companion fails in one of his duties, or comes to see that he is undergoing some temptation, or that there is excessive communication between two, and the like, and does not make this known to the Superior, this would be a failing.

With regard to silence: one speaks in the time of silence: what need is there to say something or other? Another speaks too loudly; another pays no attention to whispering at the doors, and at the entrances, which as Fr. Pignatelli stated – a very holy Priest – that these ought to form part of our silence. Along the way, in the public streets, one should be silent. There is by rule that one should not talk with any woman, unless another is present, and so on, and one should not try to call the porter, and so on: this is a failing.

That one should not enter the room of another without permission. And when one has entered, the door should be left opened. Whoever, therefore, set foot in the room of another, and so on. Even to the laundry bag attached to the door, and so on, for the tailor, or the launderer²³⁸. One cannot use books without permission. To borrow, or to take something from another. Modesty regarding one's own person was so much recommended by our Venerated Founder. So, anyone who would walk about with his hands just drooping, is a failing against this Rule: whoever runs also fails – who sits with one leg over the other, this is a fault.

Whoever is absorbed in the broth or coffee while consuming it, surely there is needed a bit of attention, but it would be very strange for one to slurp it, and so on. Or one who remains in idleness: this is in itself a failing in that Rule which prohibits it. One would be failing in keeping his room neat, but then would neglect the cleanliness of his own person, and other matters of this nature. And who would dare to enter the room of the Superior, without first having had the permission to do so? And what about one who would ask something of the tailor, or the cobbler? To speak with seculars without permission, with externs ...

There are other examples found in the work of Fr. Patrignani, regarding the observance of the Rules. Fr. Fabio Fabi was called the living and breathing rule of the Jesuits: the most minute rules were most exactly observed by him, because as he felt, these were the most easily transgressed. Fr. Sertorio Caputo, for as long as he lived, never failed to do penance for any defect of his observance. Once it happened that he ate a few strawberries in a garden so that he would not sadden his student companions.

²³⁸ These few words seem to mean that the laundry bag should just be attached to the door of these confreres in charge of clothing in the Community.

Fr. Charles Hoffeo, often called upon the souls of the faithful departed for their help because they said that they were suffering atrocious pains for all the failures committed for little matters. He advised our young members to be punctual in their observance: 'Otherwise – he would say – you will come after death to ask me for help.'



III. LOVE FOR ONE'S CELL

The Cloister is Paradise – St. Peter Damian – Fr. Cainer – Love for one's cell, a sign of predestination - The cell and office – examples of the saints – Gospel warning – Brother Fly – he Abbot Serapion and the wandering Monk – The Monks of Egypt = St. Basil – The Dove of Noah – *From the cell to heaven.*

It is likewise true that the Cloister, the Religious State, is a Paradise: *truly the cloister is Paradise.* Such is precisely religious life, for any religious who lives it in accord with his profession. St. Peter Damian who had lived this by experience, affirms it. And when he had to leave his cell and go out from the monastery for his duties and occupations, he could not pass a single hour, or even a moment, without some regrets and laments. But, just as soon as he would return to his cell, the anguish ceased, and his afflictions vanished.

In like manner, one of our priest companions experienced the same thing. Since by his office he often had to go here and there throughout the city, he always seemed oppressed. And once he had returned home, when he had hardly put his foot inside the door,, he could not restrain himself from exclaiming: 'Now I can breathe!'. And then, coming out into the garden to be with us younger confreres, he would say: 'what a beautiful gift it is to be here, far from the tumult! At least here, one can breathe in holy peace. And he seemed blessed. This was Fr. Cainer.

Oh, what a great consolation it is for the religious that which St. Bernard brings to us when he says that *scarcely can anyone ever, unless predestined for heaven, remain in his cell until death!* This is the blessed comfort of good religious who *even until death remain* in the religious state: they have in this a sign of their predestination. And rather it is a sign of reprobation for restless religious, tepid, undisciplined, bad, who do not persevere until death in their vocation to which they were called by the Lord. *Like an alien, and as one who is not a son, very soon casts*

himself out almost as aborted, nor can he withstand for long within himself, the duties of piety... ²³⁹

And precisely, my most beloved brothers, it is in our cells in a special manner that we ought to find love: because it is precisely the cell which in the monastery itself that should form the delights of the good religious. And by the cell I do not mean solely one's own room assigned to him, but also in the place of his proper office, as the kitchen is for the cook, the shop for the tailor, and the shop for the cobbler, the school for the student, and so on: this ought to be the beloved domain, from which the religious should not depart without need and without a sufficient reason.

The cell ought to be one's garden, the desk of the accountant, the cabinet of divine love, his oratory, the place of one's peace. And thus becomes also the religious soul – as the Spouse of the Canticles – the enclosed garden for the heavenly Spouse, ***a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up, my Sister, my Spouse*** [cf. Ct 4:12: i.e., the cell becomes for the religious, the source of all goods, as St. Bernard explains: *the font and origin of all goods is for the spiritual man to dwell often*.

And so it is. In his cell St. Anthony of Padua merited to hold between his arms the Infant Jesus. In her cell, it was revealed to St. Teresa the ineffable mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. In her cell, St. Catherine of Siena received from her divine Spouse the crown of thorns. In summary, in their cells, all the monks and good religious penetrated with their sharp eye the eternal secrets, they had graces, inspirations, comforts and enjoyed great peace.

But, let us open the Holy Gospel up a bit and let us see what Jesus Christ Himself recommends to us regarding one's cell. ***But you, when you shall pray, enter into your chamber, and having shut the door, pray to the Father in secret*** [cf. Mt 6:6]. And so it is the Lord Who persuades us to retreat into our cells, *and having shut the door*, to offer our prayer. Now, the religious ought to be a man of prayer: prayer ought to be our continuous food; therefore it is necessary to maintain the recollection of one's own room. Therefore it is in the Rules of the Discalced Carmelites, where it is said” *Let each of them remain in their cells*.

Ah! Let us also tell the truth: that going about, walking here and there. That going out at every turn from one's own room without reasonable motives, how many inconveniences does that produce! What prejudice will not redound on silence, on that recollection of the spirit, on religious observance! Rather, acting in this manner thus breaks the silence, one comes to speak with this one and that other one, because opportunity makes a man a thief, one looks about in all directions, he criticizes, murmurs, becomes lazy, is lacking in his own duties, others are disturbed, bad

²³⁹ Fr. Lenotti's style is one that employs countless pious examples of yester-year. This one is from Guigo, the Carthusian [also quoted in the ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***. Fr. Leontti seems to be quoting his *Solitary Life for the Brothers of the Mount of God*, among the works of St. Bernard.

example is given, and there are committed other failings, which, were one to remain in his room, would all be avoided. There was that Franciscan Friar who was always out of his cell, and was called 'Friar Fly' ²⁴⁰. And so the name 'Brothers Fly' can be applied to those who can never stand still and stable at their place, but they go here and there, as flies do: ahead, backward, inside and out, they disturb their brothers, in that they *wander about lawlessly*, and perhaps they will even get stung. What a wonderful reputation we win for ourselves.

Cassian narrates, that there went to find the Abbot Serapion a certain monk, who in his habit, in his gestures, and in his words, he manifested a great humility and disdain toward himself. He never would tire speaking poorly of himself. The Abbot Serapion, after having eaten a bit of food with him, began to discourse on some spiritual matters as was his custom, during which the Monk guest played his part, in that with much charity and pleasing manner, he offered a good counsel. And do you know what it was? That since he was young and robust, that he should strive to reside in his cell and to work with his hands in order to earn his keep, in harmony with the rule of the Monks. He went on to say that he should not go about without much else to do, to the cells of the others. The guest monk took this recollection so badly that he could not hide the fact and he showed this in his face and in his appearance. From all this, the Abbot Serapion said to me: 'What is this, my son, that up to now you have been saying of yourself so many evils and so many aspects for your own great shame and dishonor – and now, due to a simple admonition, such as this has been which does not contain in itself any real injury nor any shame, but much love and charity, you have become so full of disdain and so changed, that you have been unable to hide it? I expected that you perhaps had heard that saying of the wise man from our mouth: *the just man is the poorest accuser of himself*? Did you think that we would praise you and hold you for good and just?

Rather, what a beautiful thing it is and so edifying to see a religious always in the established hours attentive to his office, keeping silence, being quiet, peaceful in his place, in his cell! Such a one remains there quietly and full of tranquility with His Lord. Such a one is well ordered, or is offering his prayer, or he is studying, or working at his projects. And often he breaks forth into fervent aspirations, in ejaculation, in loving sighs for Jesus or Mary or St. Joseph, or of his Guardian Angel: these are all witnesses and coadjutors of his retreat and of his solitude and of his peace.

Let us learn, o my Brothers, from those ancient Monks of Egypt, about whom Cassian narrates who had visited them.²⁴¹ They observed a most exact retreat in their cells, so much so that no one would dare to get out from them if he was not moved to

²⁴⁰ Cf. Thomas Celano, *Second Legend*, cc. 45, 49.

²⁴¹ In his *Original Constitutions*, **CF # 237** Fr. Bertoni refers to the care of the sick exercised by the Monks of Egypt, as related by St. Jerome.

do so by holy obedience. And if ever, once the Mass was over and the Communion distributed, or the other functions of the Church, *once the Communion was finished, anyone who did not return to his cell, was punished*.²⁴²

And what will we say of that great Father of the Monks, St. Basil? In his Rules, he condemns the departures from one's cell without some urgent need and without permission. And on going out, he says that the Monks needs to be *armed with his breast-plate of the love of God*. And then when it is necessary to go out, he orders the Monk: *immediately once the necessity has been met, do not remain in exile* - return immediately, and immediately return there, do not remain outside²⁴³.

It is necessary, o beloved, to do as did Noah's dove. You know well that once the great rain was over from the terrible cataclysm, Noah sent out the raven in order to explore, and this found the cadavers and rot, and he remained with them and did not return to the ark. Rather, the dove *where she not finding where to rest her foot*,²⁴⁴ in order not to become dirtied herself, and to keep herself neat and pure and clean, very soon returned to its quiet on the ark.

This is the way it is with us. Let us not do as the raven did: we are not like the 'ravens' as religious, tepid and so on, going forth willingly from the sure solitude of the cell. Nor, on going out, do we stop to view the voluptuousness and the wastes of this earth, being fed on those matters which distract us: but, rather, let us be like the dove; we are religious meant to be as 'doves', let us return immediately to the ark, i.e., to our rooms, the place of security and defense, of peace and repose. ***This is my rest forever and ever; here will I dwell, for I have chosen it.*** [cf. Ps 131:14].

Finally, let the cell be – and I will say it – our sepulcher. It is precisely so. Listen to what Isaiah says: ***Go, My People!*** And where? ***Enter into your chambers*** [cf. Is 26:20]. And St. Jerome adds, speaking to religious: *Enter into your chamber, into your sepulcher, shut your doors upon you*, and so on. Religious, who are dead to this world, *hey rest in peace*: they have quiet in there and repose, and what is for certain – as a holy author states - *the cell is a very close emulation of the Lord's sepulcher*: why? *Because of sin, it receives the dead, and by the breath of the Holy Spirit, this makes one live for God*.

Oh! How beautiful and consoling are the words of St. Bernard in this regard. Listen to them: *from one's cell, often does one ascend right into heaven: very rarely, or even never, does one descend from his cell into hell. Unless, as the Psalmist says, the living will descend into hell... i.e., lest the dying descend there*.

²⁴² *De Institutis Coenobiorum*.

²⁴³ *Regulae fusius disputatae*.

²⁴⁴ The text given is Gn 7:9 – the details are not clear in the text.

Therefore, what is to be drawn from all this? That we religious ought to love our room tenderly; and if by necessity we should be outside of it, that we be like fish out of water: *as water is for the fish, so the cell is for monks* - is what he said. One day one monk went to see another old Monk, a great servant of God, begging him that he might offer him some spiritual insight to increase his fervor. And the old man, who knew well this one as one of those Friars who love to pass out of their cells, responded to him: *go, and sit in your cell: for your cell can teach you everything, if you will only remain in it.*

The cell, then, my brothers, let it be our beloved dwelling, our consolation, our Paradise. Let us try to keep it neat, the chairs in order, the bed neatly made, and everything clean. Let us keep in mind that observation of that Monk, who used to say: Moses up there on Sinai, as long as he remained *in the clouds*, recollected and closed in the clouds, spoke with god. But, when he came out, only then would he speak with the people, with other human beings.

And so it is with the religious: as long as he remains closed and recollected in his cell, as in a mysterious cloud cover, he speaks with God and deals with His Divine majesty, and hears His voice and His orders: but, if he comes out of that cloud, he speaks with other human beings, and eventually meets even *with devils*.



IV. NORMS OF GOVERNMENT LEARNED IN THE SCHOOL OF ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

The soul of government is love – The Chapters – Various points of advice – And recommendations – A Citation from St. Ignatius.

The holy Patriarch, Benedict, employed great prudence and gentleness in correcting his religious, thus making clear that it is most true that in order to wash and make clean the stains on the soiled linens and to return them to the earlier cleanliness, there are to be sought sweet waters, and not harsh and bitter bleaches. And in fact, this saint wanted to say this: *that the soul of government is to love dearly those who are governed, and to be likewise tenderly loved by them.*

Of St. Alphonsus there is narrated that in his life that his religious desired him in the Chapter, while he was Bishop, and that he had every care to be there, even though these capitular gatherings always frightened him. In so far as he could, he sought always to impede them, and he would say to those congregated: **‘One outside of Chapter does not know what he is talking about and may not even merit to be**

understood, but in a Chapter he is considered to be Solomon, and with a black ball he can change have the world.'

Another time, as his Congregation was being persecuted, he wrote to his men: 'Regular observance has fallen away, and God is punishing us. Let us hope in his divine mercy and goodness which does not wish to permit seeing this community destroyed: but, let us strive to placate him with prayers. And with avoiding voluntary defects, especially those against obedience.'

He wrote once to Fr. Villani: 'Advise the new rectors not to put up new buildings without the approval of the Consulters of the house, since buildings are of very small importance. But what is a much more important matter, that there not be undertaken any of them without my permission. That there not be spent much for the buying of books of notable value. It is good that they think of treating better our men in food, that they may not lament, and be more careful of regular observance. Moreover, let them extend gentleness with everyone, that the members might correct one another in a friendly manner and in secret, and that even when the defects are public, let them first make the correction in secret. Sweetness, and also strength, with all. That which without special purpose is granted to one, only with difficulty can this be denied to some one else, and thus, the whole matter of regular observance falls apart. This is what I would want that the rectors should command.'

'I ask you to make this known to the Community of Nocera [which was frequented by the local gentry and exposed to the regular commerce of friends who came and went from Naples] the following orders of mine: that no one should go into the kitchen, neither the fathers, nor the Brothers, nor the boarders, except for those assigned to work there. That all should take part in the common exercises, except for the actual sick men, or those who have an expressed permission to be absent. Outside of Thursdays; according to the Rule, no one should go out from the College for a walk, and especially on the solemn feasts. Finally, our Fathers and Brothers should not talk long in the entrance way, or in the garden, and even less in the rooms with priests, or seculars, without the express permission of Your Reverence and with just reason.'

Writing to Fr. Gaio, the Rector, he said to him: 'I beg you to recommend to all the regular observance, the humility and charity with the brothers: do not complain about the poverty, suffering humiliations, and do not pretend to be listened to – but, even more do not work against the Superiors, and do not resist obedience. The acts of the lack of observance are those which make me tremble the most than all the persecutions. Let us conduct ourselves well with God, that Jesus Christ and the Madonna might not fail to help us.'

'I do not want Parish Missions with the heat of summer – he once wrote to one of the Rectors - because the men can lose their heads. In all the new foundations there is much to suffer, and this greatly, because of poverty.' 'The persecutions – he used to

say – are for the works of God as are the ice in the winter for the plants: rather than hurting them they help them to deepen their roots and to render them more fruitful. The worm is what can damage the plants: the worms that we have to avoid are the voluntary defects and failings. Let us rid ourselves of these defects so that God will not fail to provide for us.’

‘Let us not build castles in the air. All are deceptions from the devil, in order to lead us not to appreciate our vocations. To me, a lack of observance affects me more than a hundred persecutions. Let us kiss the walls of our rooms: the more we see ourselves persecuted, so much the more let us cling to Jesus Christ.’

St. Alphonsus wrote to the rectors and often recommended the following matters; ‘I want that every member should have his own room: when a confrere does not have his own room, he is the most unhappy man, not having the freedom for his own bodily and spiritual needs. Look to the care of each one’s health. When one’s health is ruined, the confrere does not serve neither his neighbor, nor himself. I recommend charity to you with utmost urgency: if there is lacking the bond of charity that unites us among ourselves and with Jesus Christ, then everything is lacking, even though we might become as rich as Croesus. When peace and harmony are lacking, God is lacking.’

St. Ignatius comes along and severely castigates anyone who would speak and work against charity. ‘I do not ask’ – he said to his followers – ‘I do not ask for grandiose endeavors; I do not ask even for smaller ones, but permanent results’ – ‘this is such a fertile principle, and at the same time, one that is easy for all in its realization.’



V.

A CONFERENCE ON THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER ²⁴⁵

1. The question is in what does this consist. And one might respond: In the habit of praying always, or in a certain habitual inclination of praying and staying in communication with God.
2. Means to acquire it and to practice it: *Seek the spirit of praying in Prayer.*
3. The use of ejaculatory prayers and aspirations – Renewal of intentions in single actions – Modesty of the eyes and restraint of the tongue and recollection – A Meditation well conducted, with an attentive recitation of all the oral prayers – Mass

²⁴⁵ These are just outlines of two Conferences – the contents of which have not come down to us.

and Communion - To speak often of God and of the matters pertaining to the spirit – the exercise of the presence of God and mortification.

4. How fitting all this is, rather necessary, for religious: because a religious without this spirit is only disguised as a religious, rather he is a body without a soul. The reason is a religious is the Lord's page-boy, an intimate in His house, familiar with God, obliged to pray for himself and for his neighbor, by whom he is charged in a certain sense.

How many good seculars are imbued with this spirit, and how much more should we be!



VI. A CONFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS MANNERS AND PLITENESS WITH DOMESTICS AND EXTERNS

1. It is asked whether this is befitting Religious, especially those of mixed life and missionaries.
2. It is asked on what should this be based. On humility and charity. A farmer, a porter endowed with Fear of the Lord, with courtesy and nobility of manners!
3. It is asked in what it consists. It may be responded: In a certain air of sweetness in speaking, in dealing with others, in conversing, in a certain interest in others' afflictions and consolations, of the good and difficulties of others: not being indifferent, insensible to the prosperity or adversity of others.
4. It ought to be totally exempt and free of those vicious flaws of a worldly treating of others. It should not be motivated by ambition, nor for astuteness, politics, not for self-interest, and not to be loved.
5. Its Practice: with those of the house, and especially with Superiors. With respect toward all. And how with regard to Superiors? By meeting with them, speaking with them, asking if they needed anything, how they are after their journeys and so on. With others, whether priests, or companions. With externs, with familiar members, acquaintances, or visiting priests and so on.



VII.
EXHORTATION I:
THE IMPORTANCE AND REASONS FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF
CONSCIENCE.²⁴⁶

Fr. Lancisio – St. Ignatius and our Venerated Founder – The text of the Rule – there follows from this the commitment of knowing well one’s own duty – The motives: the better government of the community – The better assistance of the Superior toward the Subjects – A better distribution of personnel in the Institute – This weighs on the conscience of the confreres – Exercise of Humility – the Example of our Fathers and Brothers – The Words of St. John Berchmans – Substantial Rules of the Institute.

I will begin this present exhortation with the words of the well known Fr. Nicholas Lancisio: ‘It is the office and duty of good subjects and of those religious who are solicitous for the spiritual profit of one’s own soul, that of opening up their conscience to their Superiors, holding nothing hidden, neither good, nor evil, that might contribute to their direction and government, thus to preserve them from dangers and evils, as well as to promote them in virtue.’

As for St. Ignatius of Loyola, how is it that he came to see this as having such great importance, that all the subjects each year, should render a full account of their conscience to their Superiors, either in Confession, or outside of it? And our Venerated Founder established this and prescribed it in his *Original Constitutions*, both for the good government and direction of our very small Society:

CF # 47: *The manifestation of one’s own conscience is to be made with the Superior, either in Sacramental Confession, or outside it, whenever he sees fit.*

Therefore – here Fr. Nicholas Lancisio - mentioned above, continues – the Superiors and Spiritual Fathers should on their part cooperate that the subjects should manifest their conscience with all sincerity to their Superiors and Spiritual Fathers. Do you see, then, o my Brothers, most dear in Jesus Christ - and I will also say, beloved children – do you not see how great should my commitment be, and my study in order to instruct you in this, and to animate you to render a clear and sincere account of yourselves to the one whom the Superior has given you to govern you: all the more, from being well educated and trained in the practice of this rule, depends the continuing then for the whole rest of your lives. It is for this reason that I, in order to satisfy my most principal duty, I will do my best to speak to you in some exhortations: since it is too important that you should come to know how this manifestation of conscience demands this among us: i.e., in accord with the traces and the norms of the early Fathers and Founders. Let us see today, *why*: why, and for what reasons there is

²⁴⁶ Both Fr. Bertoni [cf. **CF ## 47, 107, 111**] and St. Ignatius had rather sweeping legislation in this regard – greatly restricted by modern Church legislation.[cf. for example Can. 630, §§ 1-5].

ordered this manifestation and this rendering an account of one's conscience, and this clarity that the subjects ought to have with their Superiors.

In the 1st Place: religious ought to proceed with this clarity of conscience with their Superiors, so that these latter might govern the subjects. The Superior has the strict obligation to rule us, to direct us: who is there who could deny this? The Superior is responsible before God and the Congregation for the progress and the salvation of each one of us. Consequently, if the Superior has the strict duty to do this, he also has the strict right of knowing our consciences, our interior – and we have the strict obligation of manifesting ourselves and of opening ourselves with all sincerity. If the Superior does not know us, nor do we manifest our consciences to him, he will not be able certainly direct us in good and guide us in the way of the spirit. ***He that hides his sins, shall not prosper*** [cf. Pr 28:13]. And then the religious houses are like so many hospitals²⁴⁷, and we are the patients: but if the sick man does not make known to the doctor his infirmity, how can he ever be cured of it? *What it does not know* – says, St. Jerome – *medicine does not cure*. And if our infirmities, or indispositions are many, it is needed – says Fr. Rodriguez - that we manifest all of them to him, that is very helpful to the one to whom we manifest it. The Chinese who are ill, do not speak when the doctor comes, to leave to him the expertise of knowing their malady. But, in our case, it cannot be this way: because the Lord, grants the gift of seeing the secrets of the heart to certain saints. When the Doctor knows fully the sick man and his complexion and his offending inner humors, then he can get to the root of the evil, and he is at a good point in order to cure it. The Superior is our doctor, and let us thank God that we have him always in the house, and so handy, that we can, whenever we want, consult him to be medicated and governed.

In the 2nd Place: it is so important that these sincere manifestations of conscience take place, because in this way the Superior will be able all the better to assist and direct our souls from various inconvenient situations and dangers. *It is not enough to make a good manifestation* - notes St. Ignatius – *it needs be thorough*. This is so that the Superior might have a comprehensive knowledge of the inclinations and temptations of the confreres, and to what defects and sins they, or have been, inclined the more, because with this information, the Superior might rule and direct better, not so much by commanding, or not permitting and one something that might be above his abilities, nor by placing them in greater dangers and fatigue that they could reasonably support, or expose them to dangerous occasions for their souls. Or if, he would have to place them in occasions, or would have to permit some things, he might fore-arm them with such means as to be able to save them from every detriment, or prejudice.

In the 3rd Place: it is clear that this manifestation helps and aids the Superior greatly so that he might better order, and provide that which is better for the body of the entire Congregation, the good and honor of which, together with that of each one

²⁴⁷ In his *Spiritual Diary*, Fr. Bertoni thinks of the whole world as a large hospital – cf. **MP, March 6, 1809**

of us, he is obliged to take responsibility. And if we do not further this for him, we will expose to danger perhaps our honor and our soul and also the honor of the Congregation which depends on ours.

And then, my beloved Brothers, the sincere manifestation of ourselves is something that ought to interest very much each and every religious: do you know why? For the emptying out and security of our own consciences. Otherwise, you see, that will land on him all these dangers or disorders that would derive from one's taciturnity: which if one had indeed manifested to the Superior his own weakness and his meager spiritual forces, he would not have found himself in those occasions or hazards – or, the Superior would have armed him in a manner that he might protect himself. You wish to do your work as a big-shot or strong man, by hiding from the Superior your inner weakness and wretchedness: all right, then, but remember that the fault of everything will fall on your own heads. The Superior can wash his hands of the entire matter before God, and can say with even greater reasons than could Pilate: ***I am innocent of his blood!*** [cf. Mt 27:24. And he can say with the Apostle to the Ephesians: ***I am clear from the blood of all men; For I have not spared to declare unto you all the counsel of God*** [cf. Ac 20:27]. O Lord, I have done all that I could, I have exposed to him the rule, and recommended it to him so many times: he should have manifested his heart to me. If he is ruined, the fault is his own: ***...Destruction is his own!*** [cf. Ho 13:9].

So it is that you can see that were it not for anything else other than for our own consolation and security, for the possibility of unloading our conscience, to remain without scruples, and so that the many dangers that we might have to run might not fall on our shoulders alone, for this motive alone we should render this account to the Superior. And also, though, thus to oblige even more greatly that the Lord come to help us and to place us in safety from the dangers and occasions...

What comfort is there not in being able to say: If now I find myself in this occasion, if I have to undertake this study, if I have to work so hard in this other matter, if I have to hear confessions, preach, and so on, I have nothing else that brings me such fear: rather, the Lord surely will assist me, because I have told all, I have manifested all my imperfections and miseries to the Superior, so I may be quiet!

In addition to this, it is a great relief to be able to open up our afflictions to another, to let off steam from our hearts and to pour everything out – I will put it this way – into his lap! ***A faithful friend... is medicine for life...and a strong defense... and he that finds one, has found a treasure*** [cf. Si 6:14, ff.]. ***Woe to the one who is***

alone! ²⁴⁸ And further, one exercises humility by making this manifestation, and by this humility the Lord assists us. Mortification is exercised, obedience and so on ²⁴⁹.

For these reasons our Venerated Father Bertoni has ordered us and prescribed for us this Rule. And whoever enters into our Institute is obliged to observe it if he wants to be a true member of this Congregation. All the more so does this oblige those who have pronounced their vows: because such as these even more than others are committed to its Constitutions.

We ought also to imitate those good Fathers and Brothers who have preceded us. It was beautiful to see them kneeling before the bed of our Venerated Founder to accuse themselves, and opening up to him their hearts.

Regarding the Venerated Berchmans ²⁵⁰ it was noted of him: that he was most sincere, most open, and was as most pure water with his Superiors and Spiritual Father.

My Brothers, this is such a substantial matter for our Institute, that without it, it certainly cannot be conserved. Some historians observe that in some religious communities, for all the time that this holy custom remained, of going to communicate all important matters to their Superiors and Spiritual Father, and that the confreres keep these well informed and manifesting their souls to them, they walked ahead with great fervor. On the contrary, experience shows us that the usual path for which one eventually gets lost, is this: when the members begin to be silent and hide from their Superior some passion or weakness of theirs: and so, the community goes on being infected and the wound becomes even more inflamed, and then little by little it becomes incurable, and it all ends quite badly. My most beloved Brothers, keep uppermost in your minds, that if you love your soul, if you love this, your Congregation, then, I beg you, and I urge you in the name of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and in the name of our Protectors Mary and Joseph, to decide to be exact observers of this Rule. May your heart be placed before your Superior, as a transparent crystal where everything can be seen: and do not have an regard, or fear, overcome every obstacle, and the Lord will bless you and you will draw much profit in the service of God, and you will be protected from so many traps that the Devil also in Religious Life unfortunately sets for the Servants of God.



²⁴⁸ The text given here is Qo 10:11 – which does not fully jibe with the Douay version in English. There is also noted Qo 4:10.

²⁴⁹ Cf. Rodriguez, Part III, tr. VII, Chapters II-V.

²⁵⁰ Beatified in 1865.

VIII. EXHORTATION II

Examen of the Rule, word for word, and Responses to objections, *passim* - The ancient Spartans – The fear of losing honor, while the contrary is the truth - What will the Superior say?

We saw the other time the great importance of the sincere manifestation of our conscience to anyone who rules us in the place of God, and the reasons for this ordination. Let us stop a bit here today to examine ore in depth this Rule, and to dissolve those objections that might be brought up against its exact observance. What is meant, then, by what this Rule says:

CF # 47: The manifestation of one's conscience is to be made to the Superior, either in sacramental confession, our outside it, whenever he sees fit.

Manifestation: this means to render an accounting of one's own conscience, of one's interior life: i.e., to open up oneself each and ever day – as Clement VIII expressed himself, in a Bull speaking to Novices – the internal movements of one's heart, to manifest one's own temptations, *especially by a daily opening up of all the internal motions of ones heart, and the manifestation of his temptations* [cf. Roman Collection of Papal Bull]. So, it is not enough to accuse oneself, or to make a manifestation of one's defects, or exterior failings, as would be the case were one to forget something, or if one took a needle from the tailor shop, or when one breaks silence, or passes a cutting remark: this is not really a *manifestation of conscience, of oneself*, rendering an account of one's deepest self. But, further there is asked here for a clear and sincere manifestation of the internal workings of one heart, and his temptations.

This manifestation of oneself is to be made to the Superiors : i.e., the local Superior where one dwells, and at the same time – from time to time – to the Superior General, or Provincial²⁵¹ of the Congregation. *Nevertheless it will be the duty of the members to make themselves known quite openly to the Superiors, so that this manifestation of conscience to be given will find its place at least once, or several times a year, at stated times, by recurring to them, and frequently going to them.*

Either in Sacramental Confession, our outside of it, whenever he sees fit. This means either under the seal of Confession, or outside of confession, as might better redound to our consolation. But precisely right here, it might pass through the mind of someone: since it is up to me to give an accounting of my conscience, either in confession, or outside of it, I will manifest my interior life to my Ordinary Confessor,

²⁵¹ From the language here it is evident that Fr. Lenotti hoped for the day when the Congregation would be numerous enough to have individual Provinces. There are hints of a broad base of membership in the Founder's *quocumque euntes* [cf. **CF # 5**]; kindness to confreres of differing nationality [cf. **CF ## 193;245; 246** - respecting the customs of the different regions.

and no more would be asked of me: in this way, I would have fulfilled this Rule. But, listen well: if the Rule is understood in this way, who is it that cannot say that it would be useless to make it, while just a little before, prior to this Rule, there is that other important one of confessing every eight days? *Sacramental Confession will be made very eighth day!* [cf. **CF # 47**].

The Rule states: *The manifestation of one's Conscience is made to the Superior, either in Confession, or outside it:* it is understood that it will always be to the Superior, and that it might be done in confession, or outside of it, but always to the **Superiors**: otherwise the Rule would be an illusion, and it would make no difference between a religious, or a secular. The reason is that the manifestation of one's own conscience in going to confession, to one's own confessor, obliges also seculars, ladies, soldiers, everyone. A manifestation of this kind would only take place between the religious and the Confessor.

How often, then, to render this accounting to the Superior of one's own conscience in confession, or outside of it, lies within our good judgment. Furthermore, as Rodriguez and the spiritual masters point out – it is better that the Religious – having taken away something, if one would wish – would be to manifest one's conscience rather outside of Confession: the reason here is that this shows more confidence with one's Superior who is meant to be a loving father for us, and also the Superior might be able to help us the more. But, right here, someone might object: If I give an accounting of my conscience to the Superior outside of confession, he might then would be free to speak of it.

Let it be known, my dear Brothers, that this matter of the manifestation of one's conscience even outside of Confession, is something that passes only between the confrere and his Superior to whom he manifests himself. The Superior who receives the accounting of one's conscience remains a secret, as Fr. Lancisio and Fr. Rodriguez make clear. And a few years or so ago, while I was reading the Pontifical Collection of Papal Bulls in this matter, to get information concerning it, I found that the Roman Pontiff, in the Rules of the Basilian Fathers, or Monks, places a secret upon them.

The ancient Spartans on the door of the hall where they would hold their meetings, had written: *What is said here, is not to leave here*. Thus, you see – as far as the manifestation of conscience is concerned – on the Superior's door should be written: *What is said here, will not leave from here*. Rather it all remains buried in his heart, with him speaking of it with anyone. Thus, therefore, from this aspect no one should have any fear toward anyone, nor any pretext not to be sincere and to bring up anything that one has given an account of his interior life to his Superior. The reason for this is that for the Superior this remains secret. Otherwise, there would be in this one more of the objects or pretexts which would serve our self love, or the devil, that we might not be fully sincere and open with one's own Director, and Superior.

One of the greater difficulties – and the greatest of all – that is usually brought forward by some as the reason for not manifesting themselves, and for not opening their own hearts to their Superior is – according to Rodriguez – this: If I say all that passes into my mind and into my heart to the Superior, I will remain too ashamed, I will lose my good name, my credit. From this moment on, he will not look favorably on me, nor will he bear much love toward me. This is the great *Achilles' heel*, the most powerful spring in the hands of the demon, so that some either will not open up to their Superiors, or will not do so in any total manner.

But, what if I should say to you that the opposite is true? Let us take one matter at a time. First, I assure you – and I prove it to you – that it is rather by manifesting oneself, and opening up oneself very boldly to the Superior, one comes to acquire even greater esteem and honor – while by not making such a bold declaration, one loses this. In fact, there is nothing with which one would lose more the good reputation and good opinion towards one's Superior, as by hiding oneself, and thinking too much about oneself: since this gives him the occasion of being considered a hollow, two-faced person. This is what will make one suspect before him. It might be thought of such a person: 'This man is all closed in, is sneaky: and what do I know that if he is hiding this matter, that there are not also other matters that he keeps hidden? I do not know what to think of him, what he does on his own, what he has in his heart.' Which do you want? This alone is the most sorrowful and worst opinion that could be had concerning one. Precisely where one makes known his whole soul to his Superior, he declares to him his temptations, his tendencies and his defects, he is candid and simple of heart, the Superior not only does not lose a good opinion concerning him, but on the contrary gets a better opinion of him, because he thinks of him as humble and mortified, as sincere and very open. And that candid nature, that simplicity makes him loved the more, and leads him to a higher opinion of his confrere.

I know that there are certain religious who work themselves into great apprehension in saying: Who knows what the Superior will say! What surprise will he not experience in hearing about such a terrible temptation, a matter that is so extraordinary and particular to me! This will be something he has never heard before: what corrections will he not mete out to me!

Fr. Rodriguez explains that a temptation of this sort is really that of Novices, to whom – since they do not yet have knowledge of these matters – everything seems new and unheard of before. But I am able to tell you that the Superior to whom the manifestation will have heard such things a million times, without any exaggeration [sic!]. ***There is nothing new under the sun.*** [cf. Qo 1:10]. This type of worry is something that makes us Confessors smile – as when sometimes someone or other comes to go to confession and begins saying: 'Father, I have a sin, but I do not have the courage to say it, since you will never before heard such a confession.' And the Confessor responds; 'Please go ahead...' And then they ask: 'Father, has Your reverence ever heard anything like it?' And the truth is these would be matters we

will have heard a thousand times. Therefore, for any such reason as described here do not fail to bring out anything on our mind, temptation, or failure of any kind. And what kinds of corrections would you expect to hear? The Superior knows that we are all made up of lowly clay that easily breaks. The Superior, from the knowledge that he has of himself, knows rather well the weakness and fragility of the confrere, because we are all of the same flour. He knows well that if the Lord did not hold onto him from head to toe, he, too, would be worse than all...

The Superior does not have a heart of stone, or bronze. He is actually a father, and on hearing that one sincerely makes known to him his miseries, no matter how wretched and shameful these may seem to be, all the more is he moved as a father. What do you expect? That humility and frankness with which one accuses himself of his faults, and makes known his interior life, that desire for his own spiritual profit and of being medicated and healed, naturally moves whoever the Superior may be and he becomes more tender toward his confrere, and with a truly paternal affection, he commits himself totally toward him in everything.

And this is precisely so that the Superior, for the opening up of our consciences and our miseries, rather than losing affection for us, the exact opposite happens. I assure you that there is no more efficacious means to be loved and esteemed by the Superior, and to win over more of his love, than occurs in manifesting to him, and making known to him, one's own heart, without holding anything back in secret.

It could not be otherwise, and might even be established in a philosophical manner. Since the old saying is true: *if you wish to be loved, then love!* Love precisely is shown by communicating everything in one's heart to a friend: since, between friends nothing is ever held hidden. And so, one of the principal matters in which one can show that he loves his Superior much is in making known to him all of one's interior life, and all of one's secrets, both great and small. When, therefore, the Superior sees that one does make known to him his own interior life, and that there does not remain anything within that he does not reveal, then the Superior realizes that this confrere truly loves him, and considers him his father, and standing in the place of God, since the confrere is willing to confide his whole soul in honor of this, and places all things in his Superior's hands. This obliges the Superior to love his confrere more and to have a greater care for him.

However, if the Superior sees that his confrere really is not fully declaring himself, but is rather proceeding with great reserve and with circumlocutions, this is sufficient reason for the Superior not to form all that good of an idea of his confrere, and might come to love him less. The reason is that in this, the Superior concludes that the confrere really does not love him, nor does he esteem him, nor consider him really as his father, because he does not trust him, nor does he find the spirit to make all known to his Superior, and this naturally brings about a certain aversion. How do you

expect that the Superior should love you as his sons, if you do not love him as a father, entrusting yourselves to him, and treating with him with clarity and sincerity?

‘But precisely [the objection might go] in my manifesting my interior life entirely to the Superior, he will no longer have any trust in me.’ Listen: just suppose that there is a father who has two sons. One of these is so sincere and open – almost I would say - like water! He does not hide anything from his father, none of the dangers he undergoes. He speaks to his father of his victories as well as his defeats in school. And when he goes to make his confession, he very simply opens himself up to his father – with which companions he usually associates, if they are honest or not. And should he receive some book, he shows this to his father – if the servant has insulted him in some way, if he is undergoing some affliction, or sadness that is still with him, he hides nothing. He is all candid and sincere. What a beautiful thing this is! The other son, though, just imagine that he is quiet reserved and secretive. If he has something that bothers him, he never says anything. If he takes part in any conversation, he makes sure that his father will not know of it. The father never knows with whom his son goes, what companions he has, what books he reads, and he is duplicitous in their relationship. He will go to Church, but even there seeks to hide everything. Just tell me now: in which of these two sons can the father and should he trust? Should it be the one who is candid, simple of heart – or the silent one, the one who remain mute? It might even be that the gloomy and quiet one is more devout, might even be better than the other: but which of the two would you have more trust in? Certainly, at least as far as I am concerned, that openness of the former assures me the more, and of him I would live in tranquility because I would know all about him, and I could remedy his difficulties and guide him and save him. But of the latter, who is more duplicitous and secretive, no matter how good he may be, I do not know what he is thinking and what he does, and I cannot live secure regarding his conduct ... Thus it is of the two servants, and he master of the house... and so on.

And the same happens with the Superior of Religious. The Superior with a confrere who opens up his heart to him, makes known to him his interior life, and so on, he is able to trust in because he knows that if his confrere has something on his mind, or is in some danger, he will say it to him forthrightly: he is not afraid of him, but lives in tranquility. But, with another confrere who seeks by every deception to keep himself hide, to say the least that he can, what do you think? The Superior could not rely on him, he cannot be at ease regarding his conduct, because he just does not know what he thinks, or does.

And so – to conclude – the manifestation of conscience is a Rule which rather than bring u difficulties, ought to result as one of the most gentle, one of the easiest to observe. And there is no other way to acquire the esteem and the love of the Superior than being candid and sincere with him. Nor is there anything else that would so much detach the Superior from his confrere than being with him closed, and most cautious in manifesting oneself.

In brief, do you grasp what I have just said to you? That in order to convince oneself of all this, it would be necessary that each Religious should for at least a week serve as Father Master of the Novices – and I am sure that you would be firmly persuaded of all this by your experience.



IX. EXHORTATION III

Fr. Lenotti as Superior General – The little booklet transcribed from the Founder and its content – Fr. Acquaviva – St. Francis de Sales – Director and Confessor - Review, and words of Clement VIII.

The grave and delicate office which the Lord's Providence has imposed on my week shoulders, and the most strict obligation of conscience that I feel urging me ever more for the account that I will have to make one day, and the increase which out of goodness that the Lord is bestowing on our Institute, and therefore, the interest that all of you might be well trained and prepared – moves me ever more to seek in the fulfillment of my duties and yours, and on the practical application of our rules.

But, in a very marked way the serious importance that experience and study make me ever more convinced to think of the sincere manifestation of one's heart and conscience, and especially the very unfortunate consequences that from the lack and relaxation of this Rule would bring to your souls and to the entire Congregation, it is this that makes me very much more convinced of this matter, that is not yet totally presented.

In fact, I have only thus far exposed to you how pressing is the observance of this Rule, and that there should not be for you an excuse, or difficulty that would hold you back from placing our hearts precisely in the hands of one who governs us in the name of God, but I have not yet laid out in any real detail what are the matters that all should make known and manifest.

Now, in order to present this, just who is the one to whom we should the more recur, if not to the man whom our Founder has indicated for us? Here, then, is the instruction on rendering an account of one's conscience, which it seems he himself had written in his own hand. [Here is presented the little booklet transcribed by him].

What do you think of this? Before setting down to read this above noted writing, I wanted to go slowly in receiving the manifestation of others' consciences, out of fear that I might be too demanding: but, once I had read this document, I see that I have been excessively indulgent. You have seen how he has said that the confrere, after having said that, that in order to provide a full consciousness of

himself will have judged what he should say, just ask the Superior that he might ask you some questions, or help you to bring out further matters, if perchance there might still be something which he might judge – for the greater glory of God and the better understanding of his confreres – he would want to know. And then, one should make known if he lives content with his vocation – and then about obedience, poverty and chastity, and then move on to the passions, or sins, toward which one might feel the more inclined. And then the confrere should make known whether he has any persistent convictions harbored against the Constitutions, Rules, or orders of the Superiors, or has disputed against any of these. And then to make known what idea he has concerning the Institute, and the like, and whether he has any real conviction for spiritual matters – and then what fruit does he can from Holy Communion and Sacramental Confession, the examen of conscience, especially the Particular Examen. Then he should bring up whatever might be of help to know since his last manifestation of conscience, whether he has drawn greater or lesser fruit from his life, and so on, and then how he observes the rules. Then he should speak about his mortifications and penances and other exercises that he makes, and so on. And then he should speak of his companions, and how from their conversations he is helped in the Lord, and if he is more familiar with one than with others. And then, he should make known whether he experiences any aversion toward anyone, and whether he has experienced some disgust from anyone of the Superiors or other Officials, or from any person at all, and how he finds his relationship toward his Superiors. And then he should manifest whether he has undergone any temptation, that others might have known of, especially regarding his vocation.

Do you want to hear even more? Just read from Fr. Lancisio and what he says about Fr. Acquaviva – the most famous General of the Company of Jesus after St. Ignatius – and what he wrote to Fr. Otto Eisenreich, in these words: *The quest for perfection demands this, that one render a manifestation of his conscience even of those cases of reservation into which one might fall, even though this is still hidden, because he should never hide anything.* For my part, I tell you the truth, I was amazed to read this. Therefore, if even a Religious, by some disgrace, might have committed a reserved sin the quest for perfection demands that in the rendering of his account of his conscience should manifest this to the Superior, even though the sin might already have been confessed and had already been absolved: and note well the reason behind this: **that he hide nothing**: this is precisely that St. Ignatius states: *The members should conceal nothing of their external or internal life* ²⁵².

But do you wish that our wonder come to a halt regarding such a demand? Just listen to what St. Francis de Sales teaches: a famous Master of the Spirit states this: having constantly present before you the distinction that St. Francis de Sales makes between the Director and the Confessor: to the Spiritual Director, one would make known all there is to know about his soul, whereas to the Confessor, only that which is

²⁵² Fr. Stofella has suggested the Jesuit Constitutions, Part VI, c. 1, n. 2, which would be CSJ n. 551

sinful. Further, the saint would want that there not even be an atom of our spirit that is not manifest to the Director.

But, to what purpose is it that we keep adding reasons, and calling upon authorities to convince you of the importance of this Rule and to animate ourselves to practice it entirely? O, my most beloved brothers and sons, if we are truly lovers of our own spiritual progress, and if we really that presses upon us the well-being of our Congregation, we will find no difficulty in this, nor will we have any reserve about opening up our hearts to the Superior, without keeping hidden anything from him. Let us go forward with simplicity, and we will also proceed with confidence: ***He that walks sincerely, walks confidently*** [cf. Pr 10:9].

Let us review this, then. You have seen the relevance and the motives for this holy ordination which impacts so profoundly our spiritual well-being. We have already seen how this accounting of oneself ought to be about both ***external matters, as well as those interior***, and it should be made to the Superior: ***...This manifestation of one's own conscience is to be made to the Superior, either in Sacramental Confession, or outside it...*** [cf. CF # 47]. We have clearly understood how the one who receives this accounting of our hearts is dealing with a most secret of secrets, and that everything that we can make known to him remains buried in his breast. We have understood that there is no more efficacious means to acquire the esteem and love of the Superior as much as opening up to him without reserve and with all confidence – and that with this manifestation we come to practice many virtues at the same time, and we commit the Lord to assist us.

Now, then, it is up to you to give all your resources to the observance of this, and with filial confidence to have recourse to him who ought to direct you in the spiritual life. All the more, you see, in this House of Formation and of Study, where the Master of Novices is also the Prefect of Spiritual Matters for the Novices and also for the Students. And even more also, that since almost all of you are dedicated to study, and this might also contribute to the distraction regarding spiritual matters, as Fr. Lancisio points out, it is necessary that more often you should be in the room of the one who is supposed to direct you, in order to maintain within yourselves something of your fervor.

In summary, I will conclude this matter by repeating to you the words of the Supreme Pontiff, Clement VIII, who recommends to the Master of Novices that he make every effort to help the Novices in the restraining their passions, *especially by the daily practice of opening themselves up regarding the internal motions of their heart, and the daily manifestation of their temptations...*

