

# THE RULE OF LIFE

Proposed

to the Religious Congregation of  
the Blessed Virgin Mary  
conceived without stain of sin,  
or the Marian Hermits,  
assisting the faithful departed,  
especially soldiers  
and those who died of pestilence,

and corrected

by the Most Eminent and Reverend Lord  
Leander Cardinal Colloredo, member of  
the Commission of the Congregation for  
Regulars and Bishops

In Rome, in the Year of the Lord 1694

## INTRODUCTION

The importance of the *Rule of Life* rests in the fact that Stanislaus Papczyński (1631-1701) presents in it principal ideas and fundamental elements, which were to constitute the Institute he founded. It is also the principal source from which we can see the most important elements of his spiritual life at the time of its writing – elements decisive for the growth and maturation of his interior life from 1673 until his death.

We can only estimate when Stanislaus prepared the first draft of the *Rule of Life*. It was only after the time of his departure from the Piarists (December 11, 1670) that he proposed founding the Society of the Immaculate Conception; and after 1671 that he was able to formulate a distinct idea of that society. So it is likely that not until sometime during 1672 – while he stayed at the Karski court – was he able to formulate his idea in writing: the first draft of the *Rule of Life*.

If this is actually the fact, then it was during October 1672 that he showed it to Stanislaus Krajewski, the first candidate to his institute.

### ***Changes in the Rule***

It seems that this stable “law” of Stanislaus (which was not judged as “too rigid”) was not followed at the Korabiew foundation. And so, a year later, Stanislaus was forced to “conform” his first formulation of the Rule of Life with the dispositions of Bishop Swiecicki for the Marian Hermits at Korabiew – a change that evidently gave the Rule an eremitical flavor.

Despite these changes, by 1677 (and the foundation of a Marian house at the Cenacle in New Jerusalem) only the Marians at Korabiew were obliged, in fact, to follow strict eremitical observance. By the time of its publication in 1687, Stanislaus had inserted into the Rule his permission for assisting in parishes (Ch. 1, n. 3), as well as new papal statements on communal life

(Ch.. 6, n.1) and particular directives for the Marians (Ch.. 7, n. 8). It is generally true that the *Rule* reflects only a little of the basic tendency of the Marians (in fact) toward an apostolic life outside the monasteries.

Why? It seems that it has something to do with the specific legal situation of the newborn Marian Institute: it was almost impossible to obtain apostolic approval. Therefore, the Marians were founded as hermits – a state already approved by the Church – as a legal expedient for establishing a new institute without papal approval, needing only the approval of the local bishop. In other words, in this way the Marians would be allowed to exist – in the status of hermits.

In the period 1687-1698, in defending the Marian community against the attacks of its opponents, it again became necessary to insist that the Marians were hermits, and, as such, did not need to rely on papal approval for their existence. Such was the scope of the argument contained in the “Informative Preface”, which Stanislaus wrote in 1697 as he prepared the text of the *Rule of Life* – as corrected in 1694 by Cardinal Colloredo – for publication. In this translation only excerpts from the “Preface” are included; the more general legal considerations were omitted.

The 1698 edition is the final edition of the *Rule of Life* to appear during the lifetime of Stanislaus, and it is the text of that Latin edition, on which this translation is based.

### **Sources**

In writing the “Informative Preface,” Stanislaus used as sources various works of his contemporary canonist-theologians. For the text proper of the *Rule of Life*, he uses other sources, the Scriptures, and papal decree and constitutions. Twenty times he cites – quoting or paraphrasing – the Word of God, almost always from the New Testament, in explanation of the law and ascetical norms prescribed for the Marians. Thus, the *Rule* possesses a distinctly evangelical flavor.

Among the papal documents considered as sources for the *Rule of Life* – which were cited individually – were the decrees of Clement VIII “for the reform of religious”: Nullus omnino, July 25, 1599; and his Constitution, Cum ad Regularum, March 13, 1603.

The *Rule of Life* undoubtedly owes much to his Piarist Constitution, especially to the original text composed by St. Joseph Calasanz. It is relatively easy to uncover in the *Rule* some typically Piarist traits; but these qualities were adapted to the different nature of the Marian community. It should be noted as well, that certain Piarists ideas evident in the Rule in 1687 were later abandoned or changed.

Besides these three sources – Scripture, the documents of Clement VIII, and the Piarist Constitution – it is difficult to uncover the other sources. This is because, for a certain number of prescriptions – which concern all religious institutes – the *Rule of Life* simply relies on the Church’s tradition.

### ***Original Latin Text of the Rule of Life***

Servi Dei Stanislai a Iesu Maria Papczyński: Positio, Rome, 1977, Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, Historical Office, p. 459ff.

## *Informative Preface* <sup>1</sup>

1. This Congregation of the Immaculate Conception, about which we provide to you, most benevolent reader, this information, was canonically erected in the eremitical status<sup>2</sup> by Bishop Stephen Wierzbowski, Ordinary of Poznań and elect Archbishop of Gniezno, who has laudably passed through this life. The Congregation was endowed with certain indulgences and a Confraternity by the Most Holy Father Pope Innocent XI of happy memory<sup>3</sup>, and it was approved and assumed in perpetual protection by the most august and invincible Prince John III, most happily reigning King of Poland<sup>4</sup> together with the whole Polish Republic in the General Diet celebrated in Warsaw in 1677.<sup>5</sup>

2. [...] the life of Hermits ... is approved in the status of penitents [...]. Hence they do not need any approval, once they are admitted juridically and canonically by an Ordinary of the place.

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<sup>1</sup> This Preface was written by Blessed Stanislaus Papczyński probably in 1697, when the Marians were getting the *Rule of Life* ready for publication. In fact, on Feb. 20, 1698, they obtained the necessary imprimatur from Bishop Nic. Popławski, but the text was not printed, because after the death of Bishop Witwicki (March 4, 1908) the Marians decided to try once again to obtain pontifical approval for their Institute (the present *Norma Vitae* would have had to be updated, if this effort were to meet with success).

<sup>2</sup> The date of the canonical erection: April 21, 1679. See the text of the document in *Positio*, pp. 392-400.

<sup>3</sup> The reference is made to the *breve* “Cum Sicut accepimus” of March 20, 1681. This was the first pontifical recognition of the Marians. In fact, it is difficult to see in the *breve* of the indulgences the asserted concession of a Confraternity of the Marinas. It is true that the text contains the phrase “Confraternity of the Faithful”, but it seems that it crept into it only by inadvertance of the one who was writing the *breve*. Nonetheless Bishop Wierzbowski (and the Marians) concluded from this phrase that the Holy See gives permission to establish a Confraternity. Accordingly, from that time on, the Marians started to erect the “Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception assisting the souls of the faithful departed” at their own churches; cf. below, Ch. VII, n. 8. See the text of the *breve* in *Positio*, pp. 404-409.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed Stanislaus speaks here about King John Sobieski (1674-1696).

<sup>5</sup> The document of the Approval is published in *Positio*, pp. 376-78.

[...] The one who has embraced this [eremitical] status, especially in some Congregation of Hermits approved at least by a Bishop, and has made the profession [of the vows] in it, he may not change this status, unless he has been dispensed by the Roman Pontiff at the request of the Superior of the said Congregation on account of most just and grave reasons involving a harm of the third party. Such declaration was made by the Sacred Penitentiary in 1691, when it was consulted by a certain Superior of this kind of Hermits.<sup>6</sup> Such Hermits, once they stay in small monasteries, are not included among those who are prohibited to receive new houses,<sup>7</sup> and those who live in a Congregation may have a way of life approved by a Bishop. [...] And nobody can doubt that the same may be ordained with the title of Poverty or Congregation (whichever is more favored in Rome).

3. These things have been prefaced briefly in order to inform those who feel and speak unfavorably about the present Institute, partly because of ignorance, partly due to bad information. If they will look with more kindly eye into the few chapters that follow, and which are proposed for observance to these Marian Hermits, certainly they will be more benevolent towards them, who seek or desire nothing else besides God and his glory, the honor of the Virgin, the salvation of souls and their own, assisting the dead. For the rest, although this Congregation is erected in the public status of Hermits, it does not insist so much on solitude as to consider unmeritorious for itself to sometimes engage also in spiritual services for the neighbors, – as far as it is lawful, – without doing harm to anybody else. Nor does it absolutely request the eremitical title in order to make itself equal

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<sup>6</sup> Most probably the Preface makes reference here to Fr. Stanislaus himself, who was in Rome in 1691. He wanted to obtain such a declaration from the Holy See, because he hoped that it would help to stop desertions of members from his Institute, who is increasing number were taking advantage of the opinion of some moralists according to whom any confessor could absolve a religious from simple vows. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 514–515.

<sup>7</sup> Maybe because of the contrary opinion the Marians were notable to accept some foundations offered to them; cf. *Positio*, p. 531–32.

to anybody. In truth, it is convinced that it should venerate each of the most holy, ancient and pious Orders and all Institutes to such an extent as to profess itself the last of all and recommend itself humbly to their protection and charity.

4. From all these things each one can conclude that his present Institute of Marians Hermits, founded in the status approved by the Canon Law, does not need any other approval.<sup>8</sup> For when the Superior General applied to the Holy Apostolic See for its confirmation,<sup>9</sup> the whole affair was first examined for almost a year by the Apostolic Nunciature in Poland. Then on the basis of its information the matter was also discussed for a longer time in Rome. Finally the answer came, through the aforesaid Cardinal,<sup>10</sup> that it is enough for the Institute to have the approval of the Ordinary of the place and this Rule of Life which has been studied by His Eminence with utmost assiduity and corrected with highest wisdom.<sup>11</sup> Such an answer is contained in the authentic letter of His Eminence directed to the Superior and his companions,<sup>12</sup> the letter with has been presented to and accepted by the present Bishop of Poznan.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This fact is stressed by Fr. Stanislaus, because some people claimed that the Marians, without a Pontifical approval, had no right to exist as a religious Institute.

<sup>9</sup> Fr. Stanislaus made a double petition in this sense in 1692; cf. *Positio*, pp. 515-519.

<sup>10</sup> He speaks here about Cardinal Leander Colloredo, whose name figures on the front-page of the Rule of Life.

<sup>11</sup> It is impossible for us to know the extent of the corrections made in the Rule of Life by Cardinal Colloredo, because we do not know if the text presented by Fr. Stanislaus for approval was exactly that of 1687. Hence it is possible that Fr. Stanislaus himself is responsible for some differences between the *Norma Vitae* of 1687 and that of 1694.

<sup>12</sup> This letter is no longer available to us, not even in a copy.

<sup>13</sup> He speaks here about Bishop John Stanislaus Witwicki, Ordinary of Poznań (1687-1698).

## CHAPTER ONE

# THE AIM OF THE COMMUNITY AND ADMISSION TO IT

1. Since no community can exist except under the guidance of laws, nor would it be possible for one to live without law in this earthly existence: because of this, you who have been gathered together in one society and enclosed in monasteries under the governance of one Superior, will strive to observe these very few Statutes (over and above the Rule of St. Augustine),<sup>1</sup> for your inner peace and security of your consciences.

2. First, consider diligently and assiduously what the aim of your Congregation is. [It is] the one that all the Orders have in common with you: the greater increase of God's glory, and care for your own salvation combined with serious striving for perfection. What does it profit a man, teaches the Savior, "if he gains the whole world, but suffers the detriment of his own soul?" (cf. Mt 16:26) But lest you remain without work in the Vineyard of the Lord (cf. Mt 20:31), to the utmost of strength you will promote devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God, and with utmost zeal, piety and fervor assist the souls of the faithful departed subjected to expia-

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<sup>1</sup> This reference to the Rule of St. Augustine is a real mystery to us. The fact is that the 1687 edition of the *Rule of Life* did not contain this parenthetical reference. Was it one of the "corrections" made by Cardinal Coloredo? Probably not, because he said that it was enough for the Marians to observe the *Rule of Life* (cf. *Informative Preface*, no. 4). Father Stanislaus himself in no other document or writing speaks about the Rule of St. Augustine as a possible or actual Rule binding the Marians. But we cannot exclude the possibility that he decided to adopt this Rule (at least as a spiritual orientation) towards the year 1697, as he was preparing the publication of his own *Rule of Life*, in order to strengthen the position of his Institute (which was still being accused of insufficient ecclesiastical approval). This kind of "spiritual" (and not juridical) adoption of the Rule of St. Augustine (which was one of the four Rules approved by the Holy See since 1215) did not bring with itself Pontifical approval of the Marians, but at least it gave them the semblance of an Institute firmly rooted in the sound religious tradition of the Church.

tory pains – especially the souls of soldiers and those who died of pestilence.

3. Since the contemplative life is not binding you so strictly, although you are founded in the eremitical status, those gifted with such talents will not be prevented from humbly helping pastors in their church work, if they would be called upon by pastors, and have previously obtained faculties from the Ordinaries and the Superiors.<sup>2</sup>

4. Those seeking to enter your Society should be well known to you, or at least they should have been recommended. They should, as well, present letters of legitimate birth. They should come with the intention of living their life in a more perfect way,<sup>3</sup> of accommodating their conduct to the norms, of striving toward the goal of their vocation; entangled by no censures, debts or lawsuits.

5. In the education of novices, let the Apostolic Constitutions<sup>3</sup> be followed, nor let novices be judged fit for the profession of vows and the oath of perseverance before they have been proven in every kind of mortification, prayer, penance, interior silence, in zeal for all other virtues. Let them know that having made profession, the way of deserting their vocation is perpetually blocked (except to go to a stricter observance of some – approved Order, with permission of the Superior of the Congregation and with Apostolic dispensa-

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<sup>2</sup> While the Marians are still called “Hermits“ by reason of their juridical status as hermits, which proved to be the only way to bring about their canonical foundation within the structure of the Church, right from the beginning Fr. Stanislaus tried to free himself and his religious from the restrictions imposed upon their apostolic activity by the eremitical status. Thus he succeeded in having the right of the Marians to external pastoral activity recognized even in this *Rule of Life*. It is a rather timid formulation, but we know that in the last decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Marians were already *de facto* a full-fledged *active* Institute, with members engaged in extensive missionary and pastoral work outside their own monasteries.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to Clement VIII’s constitution *Cum ad regularum*, 1603.

tion).<sup>4</sup> If anyone is found incorrigible, a plotter, a disturber, giving scandal, after the third admonition he should either be shut in a small room for six months, and unless he returns to his senses, he should be dismissed from the Congregation, or, if he chooses for himself some approved Order, and he will find those who will receive him kindly, let him be commended to this Order.

6. This will be the formula of making profession of vows, when the time of probation is completed:

I, *N.*, son of *N.*, of the diocese of *N.*, of *N.* years of age, freely and of my own will, out of pure love of God, for his greater glory, and the honor of the Virgin, for the assistance of the dead who lack suffrages, especially soldiers and those who died from pestilence, I offer myself to the Divine Majesty, and the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, in her religious Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of Clerics Recol-

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<sup>4</sup> This declaration was intended to counteract the growing phenomenon of desertions from the ranks of the Marians. We can easily understand how difficult it was to observe this austere and strict *Rule of Life* and how, after the initial period of spiritual zeal, the temptation to give up this kind of strict life came to the minds of quite a number of Marians. Father Stanislaus knew that some canonists and moralists did not think much of the binding force of *simple* vows (which were considered more in line of mere promises, dispensable by any confessor; in fact the *Rule of Life* of 1687 in the formula of the profession had “I promise” instead of “I vow” – the poverty, chastity and obedience). So, he re-enforced the simple vows of the Marians with an irrevocable oath of perpetual perseverance in the Congregation and tried to obtain in 1692 a decree from the Congregation for Regulars and Bishops stating that only the Holy See could dispense the Marians from their vows, and only for most grave reasons (cf. *Positio*, pp. 514-15). It is interesting to note that in the 1687 edition of the *Rule of Life* the Marians were forbidden to leave the Congregation even “under the pretext of wanting to follow a more strict observance”, since – Fr. Stanislaus argued – “any of you may profess such a strict observance in your present institute” (cf. *Positio*, p. 463, note “b”). What he meant, was probably that each Marian could apply for the residence in Korabiew Forest house, which was bound to a much more strict – penitential and eremitical – observance than the other Marian houses.

lect, or Marian Hermits. This [I do] perpetually and irrevocably.<sup>5</sup> And I vow Poverty, Chastity and Obedience to its Superior. May God and these holy Gospels help me.

## CHAPTER TWO LOVE

1. [St. Paul] the Teacher of the Gentiles has best compared a servant of God who is not glowing with true love to a tinkling bell and a clanging cymbal (cf. 1 Cor 13:1). For attainment of eternal life – and the value of meritorious works – is rooted in love. Therefore, more than any other good, any of you should try to gain for himself [this love], this pearl of great price, this treasure hidden in the field (cf. Mt 13:44-46). Although love is a gift of God, it is obtained and preserved however, by constancy of prayer and mortification. Therefore, let everything you do, be done in love (cf. 1 Cor 16:14).

2. The commandments of God and the Gospel counsels, the laws of the Roman Catholic Church, its prescriptions, decrees, rites, usages, dogmas; also this present Rule, (and if at some time further prescriptions are given) let all of these be observed out of the love of God. This is what [Jesus Christ] the heavenly Lawgiver said: “Anyone who loves me, will be true to My word.” (cf. Jn 14:23) And this is to be understood not only of His teaching and of Scripture, but equally of His Church, which He Himself forms and governs by His Holy Spirit, and its orders and documents, and the dispositions of the Superiors which flow from her or are confirmed by her.

3. Out of the love of God, you will perform every good and escape every evil; you will exercise every virtue possible, and detest every vice and sin. Out of the love of God, you will bear with willingness and fortitude mortifications, afflictions,

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<sup>5</sup>At that time, in the legislation of Religious Institutes there was no practice of *temporary* vows.

reproofs, injuries, calumnies, labors, pains, destitution, austerity, and other situations like these. Out of the love of God you will carry out in a most perfect way your exercises, duties, jobs entrusted to you, and whatever concerns your state and vocation. You will consecrate to divine Love all of your entire life, daily actions and sufferings, and each and every moment, particulars, circumstances, changes. Each and every action and suffering by due submission, confidence, and piety [will be consecrated] for all eternity on the altar of love, by a pure heart joined to the merits of Christ the Lord, His Immaculate Mother, all of the Saints, and the universal Church.

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength“ (cf. Dt 6:5; Mt 22:37) This, which Divine Wisdom wanted to be most recommended in both [Old and New] Testaments, (cf. Mk 12:30, Lk 10:27) should be your common rule and the safest way to heaven.

**4.** Concerning mutual love: let it be known that the one who excels in mutual love is more dear to the Divine Majesty. Each of you should keep in mind that the soul of his Institute is love, and to the extent that he withdraws from love, he withdraws from life. Therefore, even as he will promote the good, reputation, integrity and holiness of the whole Congregation, so he will render to the individual members of this same Congregation all those things, which he would wish for himself. And so he will avoid this contagious disease very opposed to love: envy, hatred, rancor, rivalry, suspicion, calumny, exclusive attachment, antipathy, jealousy, secret accusation, jeering, whispering, verbal abuse, annoyance, ambition, contempt for others, disturbances, agitations, quarrels, contentions. As he will watch over the tranquility of his own spirit, so the zealous guardian of love will also give great care to guarding the tranquility of others and of the whole house. He will suitably drive away any evil both from the whole Congregation and from each of its members. Call to mind the love of the early Church, about which the writer of the Acts of the Apostles says, “The community of believers were of one heart and one mind” (cf. Acts 4:32).

5. You should always be mindful of the works of mercy<sup>6</sup> which, done to his members, are done to Christ the Head. On all (cf. Mt 25:31-46) occasions you will not neglect to show outsiders every possible love. You will surround with devoted love not only those you find benevolent to you, but adversaries as well, and enemies (whom our Lord rightly commanded us to love). These works alone will triumph at the final Judgement.<sup>7</sup> (cf. Mt 5:44; Lk 6:27-35)

### CHAPTER THREE OBEDIENCE, POVERTY, CHASTITY

1. In first place you ought to obey God, the Roman pontiff, the bishops, Superiors of your Order; then, their vicars, local officials, the bell calling you to common exercises. This you ought to do quickly, promptly, perfectly, patiently, humbly, decisively, perseveringly. Nor should you be ashamed to be subject – to men, since the Apostle [Peter] would wish us to be subject to all creatures, more so to every authority (cf. Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pt 2:13; 1 Tim 2:2). For there is no authority, he says, unless it is from God. He who resists this authority resists the divine Will and that is the highest form of stupidity. You should assume the motive and example of obedience of our Redeemer Himself, who “humbled Himself, being made obedient unto death, even death on the Cross” (cf. Phil 2:8) He who would refuse to imitate [Christ] would appear not to want to reign with Christ if he did not obey due authority who takes the place of Christ. The following order must be kept in obeying: the lesser power should yield to the greater power, nor should that lesser power attempt to weaken the greater. [Concerning what has been ordered:] if a previous order will clearly have been revoked, a later order should be given adherence. You should all respect the Ordinaries of the locality with

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Mystical Temple of God*, Ch. 21.

<sup>7</sup> For the sake of clarity the sentence order was rearranged in this paragraph.

due submission and be most ready to obey them. Nonetheless, in order to avoid confusion in jurisdiction and many disorders, only the Superiors will attend to the just orders of the bishops.<sup>8</sup> The members, on the other hand, will obey the Superiors and the laws without any reluctance and pretense. Nor should they believe they have any right or privilege to take the Superior to an outside court. This is stated to avoid many quarrels, scandals and rebellions. If ever any [of these] controversies should happen, or any less notable deficiency, then it should be settled and corrected within the congregation itself, in an ordinary way, peacefully and justly. Through this rule we nonetheless do not intend to contradict anything of Canon Law, nothing regarding the decrees and views of the Roman Church. If anyone among you has been found stubbornly disobedient, or a firebrand, or a wicked agitator of others, let him be restrained by the common action of all those who favor interior peace and good government (first, however, having given the possibility for a just defense and apology and due process of law having been kept). If necessary, even the force of civil authorities may be employed.<sup>9</sup> Truly it is right that a servant of God be a peaceful man. Should he consider the person he should obey? Or shouldn't he consider love on account of which he obeys? You should fulfill, with divine assistance, humbly and joyfully, all penances and mortifications assigned by a Superior, although they may seem burdensome. You should not murmur against the Superiors, or complain, but you should love and honor them. But if anyone should have been truly burdened by some Superior, let him either endure patiently what he finds oppressive for the merit of eternal life, or by himself or through another present with greatest meekness and humility, a petition to the Superior, by whom he is pressed, so that he might use due moderation in the situation.

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<sup>8</sup> This was the time when the Marians were still a diocesan institute dependent juridically on the bishop of the place. Only in 1699 did the Marians gain the privilege of exemption from this jurisdiction.

<sup>9</sup> It was common practice for civil authority to aid in ending rebellions in monasteries.

2. The essence of your poverty is found in this: that no one keeps anything privately without the consent of the Superiors, nor would he dare to call anything his own. However, those things given for his use let him preserve them neatly, carefully and for as long as possible. Let all income be turned over for common use whether it comes from alms or other sources. Let them observe absolutely and strictly the manner of collecting, saving and dispensing this income, the manner contained in the papal decrees<sup>10</sup> under the penalties specified there. Without the permission of the Superior, let none keep with himself either money or food or drink, under the penalty of losing active and passive voice. Such permission could be granted only for some good reason and for a short time, for all ought to live from common resources and the common table. However, foreseeing all the harm [that could come from its use], this permission is to be granted chiefly and only to the aged and the sick. No member should receive anything from anybody without the permission of the Superiors whether it be from a house member or an outsider; nor should he give anything to anyone. Before profession he should dispose of his inheritance and his goods in the world, if he had any. If he was hindered by something, then he should settle his affairs as quickly as possible after profession, since our Lord openly stated: "None of you can be My disciple if he does not renounce all his possessions" (Lk 14:33b). The Superiors will provide the members, as much as they will be able in the Lord, sufficiently in all things according to our norms, no superfluously however. Otherwise, on account of more rigorous want the members would be found slothful in their service of God. It is fitting for each one to be mindful that he is rather the imitator of the heavenly King in need, who, it is said, had neither His own home (cf. Mt 8:20; Lk 9:58), nor when He was thirsty, was ashamed to have asked for water (cf. Jn 4:7). So you, once you find yourself in a situation of utmost poverty<sup>11</sup>, rejoice exceedingly, because then you can be the true disciples and followers of Christ the Lord.

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<sup>10</sup> Clement VIII *Nullus omnino*, 1599.

3. Obedience guards chastity, and poverty nourishes chastity. Therefore, the one eager for purity exercises himself in obedience and poverty, and then he will possess chastity. The following means will be able to greatly aid anyone to preserve this angelic virtue [of chastity]: modesty of the eyes and the constant elevation of the mind to God; the flight from laziness, idle conversations, useless reading; prudent avoiding of dangerous company; love of one's cell, and respect for the cloister; an ardent invocation of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mother of God, your guardian angel, St. Joseph, the holy virgins. The Superiors will take pains lest they throw anyone into a situation endangering so great a virtue, or that they would neglect someone so endangered, seeing that they will have to render to God a most strict accounting of those entrusted to them.

## CHAPTER FOUR MORTIFICATION

1. Concerning internal mortification of passions, desires, and your own judgment and will – without which the old Adam can in no way be cast off – and in which it is fitting that you be most experienced: bodily chastisement greatly contributes to internal mortification. “Put to death whatever in your nature – says St. Paul in Colossians 3 – is rooted in earth” (Col 3:5; cf.

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<sup>11</sup>As a Piarist, Fr. Stanislaus was very much attached to the legal and ascetical concept of “utmost poverty” that he had learned in novitiate. Due to the reform of the Piarists in 1656, he was already not able to profess it. (Later he was evidently trying to preserve or bring back at least some of its elements, by writing the *Apology for the Utmost Poverty*.) We do not have any evidence that in his own Institute he ever tried to introduce the “utmost poverty – either in that most strict, of the Capuchins; or in that less strict of the Piarist since 1622 – in the legal sense. Nevertheless he cherished utmost poverty as an actual experience in religious life and insisted on the need of being satisfied with the true necessities of life, and with an utmost simplicity of life (cf. for example, below, ch. 5. n.9, towards the end). In 1679 Bishop Wierzbowski witnesses to the “utmost poverty” in which the Marians were living (cf. *Positio*, p. 399, n. 12).

1 Pt 2:11).<sup>12</sup> Therefore, let your food be (cf. 1 Pt 2:11) moderate: such that prevents hunger, but does not fill your stomach. Food should not be prepared in an exquisite way, using vegetables, herbs, roots and relishes. You will not eat meat (the sick, the weak, aged, and travelers excepted). However, butter or some fat will be allowed to be used for condiment. But, outside your houses, what will have been put before you, with God's blessing, you will eat moderately (cf. Lk 10:8).

2. Your ordinary drink ought to be water. Should you have any other drink, it will be up to the Superior to allow you to drink it sparingly, with the exception of vodka, which is absolutely prohibited to you.<sup>13</sup> Away from the community meal or outside of the house, it is not allowed for anyone to eat or drink anything without the Superior's permission. Frequently think: food is destined for the stomach, but the stomach is destined for worms. By limiting yourselves to a small amount of food, you will render your nature satisfied, your spirit – vigorous. Certainly water and bread were the staple food at the beginning of humankind. When man thus feasted, he lived longer. The abundance of meals now brings about sicknesses, shortens life, opens up hell. Certainly, that one who feasted splendidly daily was buried in hell (Lk 16:19ff. The story of the rich man and Lazarus). Be content, therefore, with little and simple food and drink. Do not murmur on this account against anyone. If the Superior would see in the Lord that he can provide something beyond two courses – especially at the time of great celebrations and the monthly recreation<sup>14</sup> – then this is left to his prudence, since his authority will

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<sup>12</sup> The original is an apparent misquote: “Mortify your members which are of heaven.”

<sup>13</sup> This prohibition was stressed by Fr. Stanislaus also on April 10, 1701 in the first addition to his *Testament* (cf. *Positio*, p. 498). Probably shortly after, in *Praecepta* he specifies that the use of vodka is forbidden to Marians both at home and outside “under the loss of Divine blessing” (cf. *Ibid.*, p. 502, n. 5). This absolute abstinence from strong alcoholic drinks was in striking contrast with the prevalent customs of the Polish society of that time. Fr. Stanislaus saw how much moral, physical and material evil was caused by these customs. Hence he tried to oppose them at least by the example of his abstinence and that of his religious.

be able to mitigate, in the fear of the Lord, this norm in consideration of persons, places and times, both in quantity as in quality.

3. Besides the church's fasts and those customary in the region, you will observe the following: vigils of the seven feasts of Our Lady, and of the Saints Michael the Archangel, Joseph, Stanislaus<sup>15</sup> and Anna, with one meal or by limiting yourselves to bread and water. Also, you will use lenten foods, according to the custom of the place, from the feast of St. Martin to the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, and from the octave of the Immaculate Conception to the solemnity of Christmas. While you will hard press the body by abstaining from food, try all the more to abstain from vices. One fasts in a disorderly way if he is hard pressing the body while he neglects the spirit. Nor is food fruitfully taken away from the body unless the mind is recalled from evil.

4. Because softness of garment incites not only pride, but also lust, you, as hermits, will wear clothing from the most simple, rougher and thicker material: You will wear a habit stretching to the ankles – not one which trails on the ground or shows the ankles too much – and a short mantle reaching to the knees, and a shirt from coarse linen or some other stinging material. All of these will be white in color<sup>16</sup>, in honor of the pure Conception of our Lady, and the greatest cleanliness of them should be observed, because dirty poverty can please no one.

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<sup>14</sup> By the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the practice of *weekly* recreation was introduced, but the General Chapter of 1754 restored the original observance: one day of recreation per month.

<sup>15</sup> This is not a reference to Stanislaus Kostka, S.J., who was only canonized in 1714, but to Stanislaus, bishop and martyr (d. 1079), the principal patron of Poland and patron of the Servant of God. His feast is celebrated in Poland on May 8.

<sup>16</sup> Thus the white habit was designed by Fr. Stanislaus for the Marians as one of the means by which they were propagating the devotion to the Mary's Immaculate Conception. Later, he said: "I assumed the white habit in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary" (cf. *Positio*. p. 495). Strangely enough, the 1687 version of the *Rule of Life* gives a different significance of the white color of the Marians' clothing, namely: "in honor of Our Lord mocked [ridiculed?] by Herod."

5. At least when inside the house in summer, wooden sandals will be worn with bare feet. Outdoors, for the sake of propriety, and in the winter in cold regions for reasons of health, simple, uniform but not extravagant shoes are permitted. Hats lined with sheep's wool are not forbidden to be used to protect the body in a cold climate, after the Superior General of the Congregation has been consulted.

The brother-workers will have to wear a different habit from the priests: a habit reaching to the ankles, of grey color, and a mantle without a collar. (By worker are understood those who in choir cannot perform the *Office of the Dead* and devotions with the others in the Latin language.)

You must be very strict regarding modesty. When you are about to give your body rest, you will lay it down in the straw and cover it with your own mantle, or with some simple woolen cloth, or with a rough blanket.

All will have the uniform clerical tonsure, according to the size proper to each order.<sup>17</sup> Everyone will also shave their beard and moustache monthly.

6. Common flagellation will be on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, for your own sins and those of others, especially for the dead. However, anyone will be able to make use of flagellation on any day on rising or before going to bed to honor our Lord who was whipped, and as often as it will be imposed by the Superior.

## CHAPTER FIVE RECOLLECTION

1. Your continual interior silence will consist in this: that you will acknowledge, worship and bless God present everywhere, and thus you will walk in His sight modestly, faithfully and piously as it is proper for servants to behave in the pres-

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<sup>17</sup>That is, the minor and major orders such as porter, exorcist, etc.

ence of the Master. Make an effort to contemplate God in all creatures, and not only in yourselves, since we live and move and exist in Him (cf. Acts 17:28). In this way He will never slip away from your mind.

**2.** Examine yourselves each hour to see how much you have made progress in the Love of the Lord or have failed. In this way, correct the failure and bring about your progress. Each hour think that you are about to die, or at least that these hours slipping by will not return. In this way you will work hard to merit continuously as much as possible, with the help of God, expecting the day's wage which is infallibly given to faithful servants (\*cf. Mt 20:2)

**3.** In church, or as often as you will find yourself in chapel, think that you are in heaven. As many times as you cross before the Sacrament of the Altar you will humbly kiss the ground, adoring the Lord of heaven and earth really present, and worthily giving thanks for so admirable a memorial.

**4.** May silence – the custodian of blessed recollection – be continuous among you, especially in the chapel, the sacristy, the dining room and in other places designated for the community.

After the evening blessing<sup>18</sup> and before morning blessing no one is allowed to say anything. If anyone should need to speak to another, let it be done with the Superior's permission. He should precede his words with, "Blessed be God!" and the other replying, "Forever!" You will speak in a more subdued voice to the bishops or any Superiors – venerating Christ in them – having first asked for their blessing.

**5.** Each day you will spend two hours in meditation. Each month, taking turns one after another, you will make a retreat – which we call Spiritual Exercises. We do not wish to have the Superiors exempt from this, unless they are prevented by duty. It will be the Superiors' duty to be certain that someone is continually on retreat, with all fervor praying the Divine Goodness

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<sup>18</sup> This is the blessing given by the Superior at the end of night prayer.

on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church, Christian leaders, the Order, the house, benefactors and the dead.

6. So that you will be mindful of your vocation, and avid for the rewards prepared for those who loyally struggle until death, each day renew your vows privately before the Blessed Sacrament.

7. Any of the novices after entrance – and as well before profession – as well as those to be ordained, will diligently spend at least two weeks apart in their cell in private retreat.<sup>19</sup> The time will be spent in assiduous mental and vocal prayer, in a general examination of conscience, and in considering their calling.

8. Lest you also be disturbed by outsiders, the door of the house will always be kept locked. No one is allowed to bring in anyone from the outside, without the Superior's permission, nor will it be allowed for any of the members to go out (under severe punishment) without the same permission of the Superior. As often as anyone will be sent outside the house, he will always go out with a companion unless the most important reason would demand otherwise. When outside the house, he will direct his attention to the good edification of men by words and actions, neglecting nothing of his rule, praying intently while on his way. Having returned at the assigned time, he will candidly tell the Superior all the things he has done.

Once the signal for nightly rest has been given, no one will dare to wander through the corridors, in which (according to papal decree) a lamp should be lit for the whole night.<sup>20</sup>

9. In order that you may have tranquility also in the house, no one should venture from his cell for any reason unless forced to do so by a legitimate necessity. Even less should he enter another's cell, or admit anyone to his cell.

<sup>19</sup> "In private retreat" is not in the Latin, but is implied.

<sup>20</sup> Clement VIII, *Nullus omnino* 1599: "lamps will be lit in the middle of dormitories for the whole night."

This cell should always be kept clean, the bed made, holy water present along with a picture of [Christ] Crucified, or of the Blessed Virgin or some patron saint – a simple picture in printed reproduction rather than a painted one.

Always be mindful here of the Divine Presence, the angel watching over you. Never be idle, but always occupied either in reading, or writing, or prayer, or with some other useful work. Without the Superior's permission he should not sleep in his cell outside the accustomed time.<sup>21</sup> He should be cautious in using light. He should not keep in his cell anything which would not be in agreement with utmost poverty. Let him love his cell as if it were a temporary heaven, and desire to go out of his cell, by the mercy of God, only to heaven.

## CHAPTER SIX SCHEDULE

1. "The day evolves by God's arrangement".<sup>22</sup> Therefore the day is to be passed, for God's glory, in good order. Rising a little after the middle of the night, you will move together to the church, when the second signal has been given. There, during the verse *Tantum ergo Sacramentum*, you will adore the Blessed Sacrament. Then you will say devotedly, distinctly, with attention and clearly the *Little Office of the Immaculate Conception*<sup>23</sup> to the end of None (according to the Roman correction, approved by Pope Innocent XI in the brief sent to the Emperor Leopold I, December 18, 1678) together with the first part of the Rosary, in the vernacular because of the brother-helpers. After the rosary, you will spend an hour in mental prayer, at the end of which you will receive the Superior's blessing with holy water.

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<sup>21</sup> or, "take rest"

<sup>22</sup> Latin proverb: "ordinatione Dei perseverat dies."

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Lucien Ceysens, OFM, *Le Petit Office de l'Immaculée Conception Prétendue Approbation, Condemnation* (1578). *Tolérance* (1679), in *Virgo Immaculate XVII*, Romae 1957, pp. 41-124; *Positio*, p. 474, note 67.

2. From six to nine o'clock, devote your time to reading, studies, or works according to the Superior's wishes. At nine thirty you will recite the *Office of Readings* and Morning Prayer of the *Office of the Dead*. At ten you have the conventual Mass; at eleven, examination of conscience, reflecting on the Four Last Things,<sup>24</sup> then the *Litany of the Name of Jesus*, and the meal preceded by the blessing and customary prayers. The meal will be seasoned with the reading of Sacred Scripture – especially the New Testament – or the lives of the Saints, your Rule, and spiritual books for growth of the soul and perfection. All will remain silent trying to keep the reading in their memory and to apply and imitate it.

3. After having given thanks, everyone will sit together and the work of some moral theologian of good standing will be read to them.

On other days will be read the rubrics of Mass or of the Roman Breviary together with the explanation of an approved author, which they will then observe. Following the reading, they will pray another part of the rosary with the usual litanies of the Blessed Virgin. Until three o'clock they will be occupied with spiritual reading, writing or manual works, according to the disposition of the Superior.

4. When the bells of three o'clock have been heard, you will pray Evening Prayer of the *Little Office* and the *Office of the Dead*. You will spend a whole hour in meditation, first saying the psalms of the Name of Mary. After this hour, say the third part of the rosary.

5. At seven o'clock you will go together to the dining room to eat supper with reading. When supper is finished, sitting together, you will discuss – modestly and not jokingly – either religious perfection, promoting the glory of God, or cases of conscience.<sup>25</sup>

At eight, after examination of conscience, profession of faith and acts of contrition, love and gratitude have been made,

<sup>24</sup> i.e., death, judgement, heaven, hell.

<sup>25</sup> Referring to matters regarding confession and spiritual counselling.

and having received the blessing of the Superior,<sup>26</sup> prepare yourself for rest, falling asleep in the Saving Wounds of our Redeemer.

**6.** The decrees of the Supreme Pontiffs should absolutely be read at a prescribed time at meals. The Superiors should not think that they have the right to interpret them.<sup>27</sup> Rather, they should try to keep them with utmost effort, and let the penalties contained in them be applied to transgressors.

**7.** When the Canonical Hours are said in common, any of the Superiors has the power to change this schedule for the convenience of their house and better order, provided nothing which is prescribed here has been left out.

## CHAPTER SEVEN SUPERIORS

**1.** One Superior will govern your whole Congregation for a six year term. At the end of this term – as indicated below<sup>28</sup> – you will either choose another or confirm the same one. It is his office to admit or dismiss members, to approve confessors, preachers and novice masters, moderators of your Confraternity, to approve books to be published, to create or depose Local Superiors, to accept endowments, to make visitation of the houses, correct those erring and if it be necessary, also to punish them. It is also up to him to establish, impose and carry out other responsibilities which are proper to the office of General Superiors.

**2.** Let all of the Superiors remember this warning of the Divine Spirit: “If you are chosen to preside ... be not puffed up, but with (them) be as one of themselves . . .” (cf. Eccl 32:1).<sup>29</sup> Therefore, be not a dictator, but be an example that the flock can follow (cf. 1 Pt 5:3) Let him then first do by example what

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<sup>26</sup> After night prayer.

<sup>27</sup> Evidently, interpret in the sense of relax or ease.

<sup>28</sup> Ch.9, no. 1.

he is about to order others by word. He is equally an observer of the law with others, not only its custodian. Let him be endowed with piety, discretion and prudence, moderating zeal with mildness and moderating mildness with zeal, lest through too much strictness or indulgence he hurts the Institute, rather than contributing to its good. He should not aggravate his own men with rigid penances or commands. Rather, he should burden each with what conforms to his strength, talents and abilities. Since his subjects are bound to obey without any excuses, the one in command must foresee that he imposes on each such things as they will be able to fulfill for God's glory and their own merit.

3. For their part, the members should not trouble the Superiors either by their impudence or stubbornness, but they should agreeably acquiesce, in the Lord, to the Superior's wishes, respecting them rather from love, than being afraid of them out of empty fear. If any one of the Superiors should seem to someone somewhat negligent or less than exemplary, he should not – because of the Lord – on that account cease to honor and obey him. The Lord himself warns, “. . . do everything and observe everything they tell you. But do not follow their example” (Mt 23:3). Indeed, the Superiors are worthy of much compassion, since while they serve all, they are at times forced to neglect themselves. Therefore, the members will always pray for the Superiors, so that God may enlighten, direct, help and keep them in His grace.

4. The Superior of the entire Congregation will visit the whole congregation every three years; the Provincial,<sup>30</sup> his houses every year; but the Local Superior will visit the rooms of all members almost every single month, lest anything be found in them not according to your vocation and poverty, or neatness. All Superiors will unanimously apply themselves to this, that there may flourish: an ever greater worship of God,

<sup>29</sup> The text makes reference mistakenly to Eccl 31. The proper reference is given here; the text was freely altered.

<sup>30</sup> The Latin term “Diocesanus“ probably supposes a division of the Congregation into Provinces according to the lines of dioceses, i.e., houses in a diocese form a separate Province.

in their churches; peace, recollection, love, uniformity, in their houses; holiness, in their members; and conservation of temporal goods. They may not give away these goods of the Congregation to outsiders, under ecclesiastical penalties.

5. If it will be necessary in any of your churches to preach the Word of God, this task is to be given by the Superior to such ones who have been instructed in the necessary doctrine and who have virtuous qualities, so that their preaching may bring salutary fruit to the listeners, enlightening by their teaching, stirring by their persuasion. Let them always attempt to speak those things which would bring forth more praise of God than of themselves; those things which would call forth in the people, with God's help: edification, correction of behavior, love and fear of God, exercise of virtue and good works, contempt for the world, and fervent desire for and striving after eternal happiness, just as in their own churches they will not preach without the mandate of the Superior, so in other churches they will not preach without the blessing of the Ordinary.<sup>31</sup>

6. Let the professors perform the duty of teaching imposed on them (if at some time it comes to instituting them) for the glory of God, carefully and diligently and with progress of the students. Let them use the textbooks of the most acknowledged authors, rather than fatigue themselves and their students with writing. Let them, however, not so immerse themselves, together with their students, in their subject matters that they forget prayer and mortification.

7. Masters of novices should be appointed who are exemplary, prudent, industrious, endowed with discernment of spirits. They should teach their novices all of the [spiritual] exercises perfectly. Likewise, they will occupy and exercise them in denial of themselves and of what belongs to them, in the following of Christ the Lord, in contempt for passing goods and the desire for

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<sup>31</sup> In the 1687 edition of the *Rule of Life* Fr. Stanislaus had more extensive instruction included in this paragraph concerning preaching the Word of God (see: *Positio*, p. 477, note "p" and p. 478, note "g"). Obviously he was giving here the fruit of his own experience as a preacher. The Marians partially restored the missing text in their *Statutes* of 1778.

the eternal, in patience, humility, modesty, silence, penitence, zeal for prayer, regular observance, and most of all, in the love of God. Novice Masters will always have before their eyes that the care of those to be formed has been entrusted to them – care, first of all for attaining the salvation of their souls, and in the second place for the honor and advantage of the Congregation.

8. The Superior [General] will assign to each house the promoter of the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception<sup>32</sup> assisting the souls of the faithful departed. It has been erected or is to be erected in your churches on the basis of the permission granted by the Holy Father Innocent XI on March 20, 1681, and on the basis of the admission of this document on the part of the Ordinary. He to whom this duty, full of merit, shall be entrusted will in every way apply himself to this so that he may bring forth as many fervent and devout members, lovers of the Immaculate Virgin, and helpers of the dead as possible. Let him administer this Confraternity prudently so that he may obtain great profit for souls. To this end he will especially exhort and incite those who become members of this Confraternity by inspiring them to the frequent and salutary use of the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, as well as to works of charity and to the abandonment of vices.

9. The same Superior [General] will take care to have other officials throughout the whole Congregation – Procurators, Economes, Zealots<sup>33</sup> – who will try to fulfill their duties most diligently from a love of God, for the merit of obedience, so that they may one day receive an assured reward for their love and their labors from our Lord Jesus Christ.

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<sup>32</sup> See footnote 3.

<sup>33</sup> The task of the “zelator” was to “proclaim” or denounce the faults of others in the Chapter of the Faults (cf. Ph. Schmitz, *Chapitre des Coulpes*, in *Diet. Theol. Cath.* II/1, col. 485). It is surprising that Fr. Stanislaus does not mention “zelator” in the paragraph dedicated to the Chapter of the Faults (see above, ch. 4, no. 3).

**CHAPTER EIGHT**  
**ON THE RECEPTION AND ADMINISTRATION**  
**OF THE SACRAMENTS**

1. Both clerics and brother-helpers will receive Holy Communion with utmost reverence on each Sunday and on feasts, and as frequently as the Superior wishes (the domestic family will receive once a month). It should be preceded by sacramental confession and some prayerful recollection. In the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament – which we wish to be done very seldom – the greatest care both in decoration and lighting should be observed. At least one member should be engaged in continual prayer.

2. The priests, as far as they are allowed to do so, will offer the Sacrifice of the Mass each day for the sacristy intention, not being forgetful of the dead who lack assistance. They should be aware that, on the basis of a pontifical decree, only two [personal] Masses are granted them each month. So that for their part, they may perform their duty worthily, let the priests never approach the altar with some sin on their conscience, nor without the greatest interior silence nor without sufficient preparation. Let them be exemplary, sober, modest, devoted, expert and observant of the rubrics and rites of the Roman Church. In celebrating Mass, let them neither hurry nor protract it; rather, reading everything distinctly, attentively and with devotion, not protracting this divine work beyond half an hour. Let them recite the canonical hours<sup>34</sup> in common rather than privately. Let them give themselves to spiritual reading and to study of moral theology insistently, and to prayer without ceasing. Thus, by integrity of life and the works of piety they will not only render illustrious support and promotion to the Congregation, but they will, at the very least, be of spiritual help to the whole Catholic Church.

3. The Superior of the whole Congregation will promote only members endowed with solid virtue and sufficiently instructed with doctrine to this royal priesthood. They

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<sup>34</sup> i.e., the Breviary.

are to be ordained under the due title<sup>35</sup> with the intention that a more abundant worship of God may flourish among you, and that the help of the dead – to which you have been called – may be more effective and frequent. So that he may appoint to this place and office those who would hold and exercise it worthily and well, the Superior will have a good knowledge of the qualities of all members of his Congregation.

4. It would be expedient for preserving the spirit of humility, if, as much as possible, the priests themselves would sweep out the church, clean the linens and vessels, and attend to the decoration and maintenance of the churches and their furniture. Nor should they pompously push themselves ahead of others whom they surpass in [the] dignity (of their office), even though the greatest esteem is owed them on account of the reverence due to Christ. In hearing confessions, let them join sweetness to prudence. They should be cautious in examining the consciences of penitents, especially the simple folk. They should be careful in assigning penances, careful about becoming friends with outsiders, and learned in resolving doubts and scruples. They should not be ignorant of those cases reserved to the Apostolic See, or the bishop or the Superior; knowing that absolution is not always to be given to all. These laws [this Rule] do not oblige under any pain of sin whatsoever, except for the obligations which come from the simple vows and the oath [of perseverance].

## CHAPTER NINE ON HAVING MEETINGS

1. You will gather together, one or more [delegates]<sup>36</sup> for the following reason:

First, every six years for choosing, or confirming, a Superior of the whole Congregation, his assistants, and the

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<sup>35</sup> No one can be ordained without being “attached“ either to a bishop or a religious community; those being ordained are being ordained “under the title” of a Congregation.

Diocesan (Provincial) Superiors. Those who have an active and passive voice – three from each diocese (or Province) – will gather, having been called to one house by the letter of the Superior [General] concluding his term. There having spent one day of abstinence, having sung the Mass to the Holy Spirit, they will be cloistered until by secret vote they have chosen one noted for integrity, prudence, religious discipline, outstanding in learning. The secretary and the discretus<sup>37</sup> will sign the certificate of the one elected by the consent of the greater part of the electors. All will kiss the hand of the elect as a sign of reverence and obedience. After the election, they will go to the church to sing the hymn *Te Deum laudamus*. If anyone [during the election process] will have been noted for his ambition, let him be perpetually declared unfit for all offices. Afterwards, an election of assistants, the Procurator General, then of the Provincials shall be held – also by secret ballot. If anything will be decreed in this meeting, let it be inscribed in the General Acts.

2. The Diocesan Meetings will be held every three years, for establishing some good or abolishing evil; and for [the election of] those to be sent to General Chapter, according to what was noted above. To these meetings will go the local vicars<sup>38</sup> of each house, along with the delegates chosen by secret vote.

3. The Local Superior will call together the members twice each week. On Fridays he will gather them to assign adequate penance in order to make up for their faults. Kneeling, each one will manifest his faults clearly, openly, with pious disposition, and without excusing himself. He will humbly accept a penance imposed there. If someone is falsely accused at that time [by another], he will not respond; afterwards, meeting with the Superior he will testify to his innocence (unless he would

<sup>36</sup> “Singuli, vel aliqui.” This is a difficult phrase to translate, but this appears to be the sense intended.

<sup>37</sup> Probably the one who verifies the vote.

<sup>38</sup> The. Local Superiors were considered the vicars of the General (or later, the Provincial Superior).

prefer to innocently suffer with Christ). A liar will be punished, without being pardoned, with the penalty that would have been given to the one he accused.<sup>39</sup> Absent from this distinguished Tribunal of Love should be hatred, envy and excessive zeal. In fact in telling another's faults – unless there is a risk in delay – it is praiseworthy to follow the Gospel's rule: remind him privately [then] with a companion, admonish him; [and then,] unless he has come back to his senses finally, bring him to the Church (cf. Mt 18:15ff). But concerning the faults of outsiders, consider that nothing about it pertains to you – so much so that, unless you seem to be moved by good zeal, you should think that it is not your job to give an opinion about their faults.

4. The second time that the Local Superior will gather his members together is on Sundays, after evening meditation (or at another suitable time) for a spiritual conference in Latin (or in the vernacular) using simple, clear, flaming language in order to kindle their spirits to the practicing of virtues, eliminating disordered affections and pursuing holiness. Or you may read a good book on this matter – namely, one that will exhort everyone quietly, yet efficaciously to loving God, following in Christ's footsteps, observing religious discipline and persevering in holy penance. After the conference some mortification, or prayer, or act of virtue will be assigned to be exercised by everyone during the coming week. If the occasion or necessity shall have demanded it, during the same gathering, the Superior with the senior [members] will be able to treat whatever concerns the welfare of the community.

5. Lastly, everyone will be gathered together – by the common signal of the bell – to help the soul of any member departing from this human life. They will commend him with pious admonition, prayers and humble tears to God's goodness and mercy, striving with all fraternal strength that in this agony no one would be in danger concerning his own salvation. Indeed, the Superior will, with greatest charity, be certain to

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<sup>39</sup> Literally, "will be punished with the law of retaliation," i.e., the Old Testament "eye for an eye." Cf. Dt. 19:21.

give the sick not only the bodily medicine they need at the right time, but especially to give them the remedies or eternal life. These are: earnest confession of sins, and detesting of them public declaration of [one's] faith, protesting against the plottings of the Devil, the handing over of his soul to the hands of God and his confessor, devoted reception of the holy Eucharist and of the Last Rites,"<sup>40</sup> the invoking of heavenly aid, and absolute hope and confidence in the merits of our Savior.

6. The Church's customary prayers at the side of the dying<sup>41</sup> are to be said devotedly. Their soul should be fervently entrusted to God. The body of the deceased should be fittingly washed, and piously laid to rest within three days. As quickly as possible, the news of the death should be spread amongst the other houses, so that the deceased [member] may be helped – with the sacrifice of Masses and with prayers and mortifications – by everyone. Together, all of you may bless the merciful God of heaven, who, though unworthy, you serve on earth.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Literally, "extreme unction."

<sup>41</sup> Literally, "the agonizing [one]."

<sup>42</sup> Other editions close with the inscription "God's Honor and Glory alone."