

LENOTTI:
FORMATION
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Master of Novices

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

DOMESTIC EXHORTATIONS

on the

**FOUNDER'S ORIGINAL
CONSTITUTIONS**

**SECTION TWO
ADMISSIONS**

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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.*

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 imitation², 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.

[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.³

¹ [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:

² This may be Fr. Lenotti’s quoting from Rodriguez, Part I, Tr. VIII, c. 15, n. 6.

³ St. Bonaventure, in his *Life of St. Francis*.

And just read Lancisio ⁴, 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...*⁵

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*⁶. 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

⁴ 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.**

⁵ Fr. Lenotti offers the Italian Translation in a footnote here.

⁶ cf. Sermo XII, in Ps 118.

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 ⁷.

And, in fact, *for what reason have you come* ⁸? 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 ⁹.

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

⁷ Cf. *True Spouse of Jesus Christ*, c. III, n. 12.

⁸ 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.'

⁹ From a 'Spiritual Diary', a book cited by Fr. Lenotti – re-printed in Turin in 1923, p. 207.

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?’¹⁰

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.
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’¹¹.



¹⁰ The abbreviated account of this story is from Rodriguez, Part I, Tr. I, c. XV, n. 7.

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

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].

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 ¹²: 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.

¹² 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...***

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 the Religious right up until his death and even as an old man¹³. 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.'¹⁴ 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'¹⁵.

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 happens¹⁶.

¹³ cf. Instruction X, note 5

¹⁴ cf. Ep., 87.

¹⁵ Fr. Leonotti's citation here is: Rodriguez, Part II, Tr. III, c. 23, nn. 4-7 – whereas Fr. Stofella would eliminate n. 4.

¹⁶ cf. Rodriguez, n. 5.

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...*¹⁷

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 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.'¹⁸

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.*¹⁹

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...



¹⁷ This example may be found in the: *Summarium Constitutionum S.J.*, Rules 19 & 13.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ 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 DOCTRINE²⁰

The teaching of Christian Doctrine is obligatory for all ²¹ – 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.*

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.

²⁰ 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 conferees might not interest parishioners.

²¹ 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.

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*²² 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 Bellarmine²³: 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 knowledge²⁴, 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 peasant²⁵. 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 Doctrine²⁶: 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 day²⁷: 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.

²² 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*.

²³ 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.

²⁴ 1550-1614 – as for his learning, he was quite learned in the science of the saints.

²⁵ Cf. *Life*, Book 3, c. 14.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ Fr. Bertoni imitated this practice in his *Original Constitutions*: CF ## 180;181

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.*²⁸

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 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.

²⁸ Once on the 12th of June, the IVth Reading [historical.

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] ²⁹.

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...³⁰.

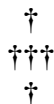
The second matter proper to Philosophy is to place in practice that which has been learned, and this is what urges more than everything else: because what good is it for you just to listen to the Doctrine, for example, what it means what it says: that *He has come to judge the living and the dead* - 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

²⁹ What follows here seems to have been from Fr. Lenotti's notes, prepared for the larger audience of a parish.

³⁰ 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 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..."

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...? ³¹



³¹ 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.*³²

In the end: *piety* : in the preparation, celebration and thanksgiving for holy Mass³³. 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.

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.*



³² 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.

³³ 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].

XIV.
THIRD PART – CHAPTER II
CONCERNING THE MANNER OF PENANCE³⁴
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 spirit³⁵.

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. Rodriguez³⁶]: 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 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...’

³⁴ 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 re-construction of that which Fr. Lenotti himself would then have stated to the Community of long ago.

³⁵ This heading calls to mind almost immediately Rodriguez’ treatise on *Mortification* in his c. 2 the first of his Second Part, or 2^o 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.

³⁶ Cf. c. 7: *Two Kinds that are found regarding mortification and penance.*

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 two 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 embraces³⁷.

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

³⁷ Rodriguez cites here the example of St. Alphonus Maria de' Liguori.

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 danged 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 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 consolations³⁸.

³⁸ From Bartoli’s *Life* of St. Ignatius. There follow now some further thoughts of Fr. Lenotti on Mortification, inserted here as an ‘Appendix’.

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 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.

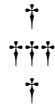
So, in the kitchen, for example, do we offer ourselves to do those duties, those things that are the more vile, the more burdensome: or perhaps do we withdraw ourselves, leaving them to others?

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 reproved 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 ³⁹.

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 ⁴⁰. 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.

Such Reading offers food, *it almost places food in the mouth*, says St. Bernard⁴¹. 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,

³⁹ Cf. 2 K 23:4-24.

⁴⁰ Cf. ib, c. 22:8-13.

⁴¹ Cf. *The School of the Cloistered*, c. 2 [found among Bernard's works].

with virtue, with paradise. *Spiritual Readings* are comparable to short letters written by heaven!⁴²

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 Reading⁴³.

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*⁴⁴. *Let him who reads not seek to listen to knowledge, but flavor, and the taste of the will* says St. Bernard⁴⁵. 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.

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.⁴⁶ *Do not be reluctant*, says St. Ephrem, *to repeat the same meaning*⁴⁷. And St. Bernard: *Let prayer interrupt reading*⁴⁸. Even if it is just a

⁴² cf. St. Alphonsus Liguori, *true Spouse*, c. 17, n. 6.

⁴³ *Ib*, nn. 7, 8, 10.

⁴⁴ Cf. *In the Mirror of the Monks*.

⁴⁵ In his book *On the Work of the Monks*.

⁴⁶ Cf. *True Spouse*, c. 17, n. 12.

⁴⁷ Sermon 7.

⁴⁸ *Epistle to the Brothers on God's Mountain*, c.10.

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.*⁴⁹ 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.

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. 8⁵⁰. 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 ...*⁵¹

Let us also learn this lesson, and so on.



⁴⁹ ib.

⁵⁰ This would be Ne 8:1-3, 6.

⁵¹ Passim, up to v. 18.

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.*⁵²

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!⁵³ 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.

⁵² 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].

⁵³ One of Rodriguez’ stories [cf. ‘Chastity’, Part III, treatise IV, C. 11, n. 1]

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 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. Pences: 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 every 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 pout 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***⁵⁴, feeling our way along without assurance and restlessly, and perhaps in danger of ruining our soul.

STILL MORE ON THE MANIFESTATION OF CONSCIENCE⁵⁵

CF # 47 *The manifestation of one's own conscience is to be made to the Superior, either in sacramental Confession, our 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.*⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Dt 28:29.

⁵⁵ 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.

⁵⁶ St. Bernard's Letter 87.

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.

It was constituted in all the Congregations from the time of the Apostles – St. Peter taught it, and persuaded⁵⁷ it, as St. Clement witnessed. Thus, many saints followed suit: St. Antony, Abbot; Pemene', 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.

⁵⁷ 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].

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 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.** ⁵⁸

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.*

1°

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. Ignatius⁵⁹ 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 adds⁶⁰ 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?⁶¹

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

⁵⁸ 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.

⁵⁹ In his **Constitution CSJ n. 63.**

⁶⁰ In his **Examen c. 4, 8 = CSJ n. 63.**

⁶¹ Fr. Lenotti leaves this as a rhetorical question.

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 your brother. And [even] if your 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*.⁶²

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

⁶² 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*.

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.



