

LENOTTI:
UNION & EXHORTATIONS
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**11nd Superior General
[1871-1875]**

DOMESTIC EXHORTATIONS

on the

**FOUNDER'S
ORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONS**

IV.
THE UNION OR UNITY OF THE SODALITY

- XXVII.** **Part X: Concerning the Union, or Unity of the Sodality –
Section II. Concerning the Positive Means**
- XXVIII.** **Those Exterior Circumstances which the more serve Unity.**
- XXIX.** **Uniformity in the Common Life: another Means for
the Increase of Fraternal Charity.**
- XXX.** **C. VII: Common Recreation and Conversation**
- XXXI.** **Part X. Section II. C. IX: Progress in the Mutual Care of the
Members**
- XXXII.** **Part XI: Familiar Conversation with one’s Neighbors for
Their Salvation.
C. 1: That kind of Familiarity to be avoided.**

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APPENDIX - MISCELLANEOUS EXHORTATIONS

- I.** **Exhortation to Silence**
- II.** **Failures in observing the Rules**
- III.** **Love for One’s Room**
- IV.** **Norms of Government – St. Alphonsus de Liguori**
- V.** **Notes for a Conference on the Spirit of Prayer**
- VI.** **Notes for a Conference on Good Manners and Religious Civility**
- VII.** **1st Exhortation on the Importance and the reasons for the
Manifestation of Conscience**
- VIII.** **2nd Exhortation**
- IX.** **3rd Exhortation**

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TENTH PART
THE UNITY, OR THE UNION OF THE CONGREGATION
SECOND SECTION
THE POSITIVE MEANS
CF ## 221-266

The negative, indirect means – Charity toward God, bond of charity with one's Brothers – the Eucharist – the First Christians – Prayer and Meditation – Devout Practices – Fra Vito's Vision – To look upon one's Brothers as God's image and the virtues – St. Antony, Abbot – Harmony.

We have already seen up to the present which negative, indirect means are prescribed in our Rules in order to obtain and to conserve among us fraternal charity: i.e., to keep us from offending our companions with words of disdain, so flee anger, cutting words, murmuring. Keep yourselves from using imperious manners, or the spirit of commanding with a sense of superiority and pride. Keep yourselves from differences in opinions and from those judgments also in the every day activities and duties, and from those contradictions and contrasts of words, and finally from those private affections and particular friendships.

Now, our Venerated Founder passes to teach us the positive and direct means in order to have and guard and to increase ever more that mutual love among us. Pay attention, my brothers. In this first Chapter he places that *interior propensity*, or that *disposition of spirit*. In a word, he wants to tell us that our love for our companions ought to have as its foundation and basis charity for God – and that the more we will love the Lord, the more will there be mutual love among us.

Chapter I
The Interior Inclination, or Disposition of Soul.

1. **CF # 221:** *This depends very much on one's internal spiritual progress, for when genuine charity, or love for God and Christ the Lord increases, that very union between confreres, by which individuals are united to God and our Savior, is increased and perfected.*

In fact, this is what St. John says: *...and this commandment we have from God, that who loves God, is to love also his brother...*¹ For what reason was it that Ignatius so loved his religious? He loved so much, and showed that he very much loved each and every one singularly, so much so that each one that he had been considered first by him.² Why is it that the Saints were always so tender toward their neighbors, and good and fervent religious, of heir companions? Precisely because they were well advanced and much inflamed with a genuine love for Jesus Christ.

The first Positive Means, then, is interior profit. As much as we will profit in the spiritual life, so much will we profit in charity. The reason for this is that by increasing in

¹ Fr. Stofella offers 1 Jn 4:11 – which does not quite jibe with the Douay version here. [**NB: the title here, Unity, or Union - may refer to unity of hearts, and then, juridical union under Chapters, Superiors]**

² cf. Daniel Bartoli's *Life*, Bk III, n. 40.

love for God and for Jesus Christ, one will grow also in being united in Christ, in the love of one's Brothers. Therefore, in the Heart of Jesus we ought always to find ourselves: that if we truly love Jesus Christ, we will also love indeed all our companions. The Eucharist! *For we, being many, are one bread, one body, all partake of one bread...* [cf. 1 Co 10:17]. Therefore, the early Christians *were persevering [in the doctrine of the Apostles], and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers...* [cf. Ac 2:2]. Many, many grains [form one sole bread!]. How many Communion! And we? And in order to have this flame of divine love which would enkindle fraternal love, and in order to increase and to enflame us with this love, as we should do? Our Founder tells us this by adding immediately in the following number;

2. CF # 222: *Hence, because this bond of union intensifies through prayer and meditation, as is noted in Ps 38:4: '...in my meditation a fire shall flame out.' As a result, beyond any doubt, this is the more sure and solid way to obtain this unity.*

Therefore, Prayer and meditation! Note well those words: *...this is the more sure and solid way...* Now I ask you: How is it that you are so narrow of heart toward your brothers, that you never see a gesture of charity, a service toward them? Why do you allow yourself to be carried away by some choleric movement, because there is not seen in you that serenity of countenance toward your companions?

Why is this so? I will tell you the reason: because the spirit of prayer is not in you. How do you make your meditations? If you were more fervent in making your meditation, in practicing the *additions*³, the reparatory, and so on, then your heart would burn more for love of God, and consequently, with fraternal love.

Whoever is not benign toward his brothers, who looks down on them, who cuts them with his words, who contradicts them, who does not help them willingly, who envies them, who offends them – in brief, whoever does not employ charity in their regard, gives a clear indication that he is not making his meditation, or prayer, or he is not attending to this well. If indeed we were men of prayer, as every Religious should be, we would also have charity. If we would make meditation fervently, how there would then be enkindled in our hearts the fire of the love of God and of our neighbor.

Therefore, my beloved brothers, prayer and meditation: since Religious Life is the *house of prayer* and the hotel of charity and peace. A Religious who does not use his prayer-time well, will never be able to make any profit, nor obtain the fruit of charity, nor of other virtues.

So, my most dear Brothers, I recommend to you giving your attention to your prayers, in hearing Mass, in reciting the Rosary, the *prayers at table*, and so on, in your visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament and in making our meditation. And come often, Novices, to give a report of all this, whether it is going well, or whether it is going poorly. The trees, in addition to water for which they have currents and sources, need rain that comes down from heaven: if they do not get it, then neither do they produce flowers

³ Rules of St. Ignatius for Meditation.

or fruit. And so it is with us who are Religious. Therefore, while he recommends charity to us, our Venerated Founder also recommends prayer and meditation to us: because as we are in continuous commerce with God in the most sweet Heart of Jesus, then we will also be united to our Brothers in charity. And this is the reason why the Demon of discord and hatred, envious of the peace that religious enjoy, seeks to take this away by impeding prayer on which it all depends.

There was – as is read in the Chronicles of the Capuchin Fathers – a Brother, Fra Vito, who having come that hour in which the Friars were recollecting themselves to go to make their meditation towards evening, had a vision. He saw the Devil who with the company of other devils was on his way toward the Church. And all had in their hands bench supports and cushions, and so on. Fra Vito asked the Devil why this was so. And he responded: ‘These poor Friars are tired from their labors; and so were are bringing for them these bench supports so that they can sit down comfortably, and these cushions so that they can repose their heads so they might sleep a little to restore themselves from their fatigue...’ For the Demon there burned more the fire that was enkindled in prayer and meditation that that the raged in hell: i.e., out of their fear that in the exercise of meditation of God there would break out that fire that would destroy and break down all his hidden efforts and his machinations.

3. **CF # 223:** *Furthermore, since nothing so connects the love of genuine charity toward another person than when we notice in him the singular qualities of virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit and we contemplate him as the image of God painted in the most excellent colors of grace. If, therefore, all strive to develop in themselves these virtues and gifts and often reflect on them in others, and to consider these others also as superior to themselves, and truly to rejoice in their spiritual goods, give thanks to God for them, indeed mutual charity will grow among them in a marvelous manner.*

Here our Venerated Founder proposes to us another means: that of looking toward our Brothers and at their virtues, not at their defects, but to notice in them – who are portraits of God – the gifts of the Lord. Whoever loves someone, loves also everything about him. Thus whoever loves God, loves also His images, and so on. We ought, therefore, to increase in ourselves, and to consider the virtues in others. If we want to be loved, then let us love. *If you wish to be loved, then love.* How would you pretend that others should love us, if we are ill-tempered, if we are proud, discourteous, if we are but little obedient?

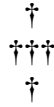
Here explain and note the example of St. Antony, the Abbot⁴, who, much like the bees, sucked at the flowers of the virtues of others: from one, he drew modesty, in another he admired and imitated humility, and so on. Do not pay attention to their defects, and criticize them with your companions. Charity *does not think evil*, but thinks always good. And when one tends always to notice the defects: in the painting the color black would always dominate, the shadows. And when the colors green, white, red and gold appear, the darkness does not. Another Religious will have so many virtues, but if one sees only his defects these are hardly noted. *Do not judge* your Brothers. Try, rather, to consider them all superiors before you, especially heads of certain offices. ***But, by the***

⁴ Fr. Bertoni notes the Saint of the Desert several times in his *Original Constitutions* : CF ## 274, 275.

envy of the devil death entered into the world; and they follow him that are of his side [cf. Ws 2:24].

Do not, therefore, envy or be displeased with the talents and the profit brought by others, but rejoice in this. Just remember, my most beloved Brothers that there is one defect that is really ugly and unworthy of a Religious and of an Apostolic Missionary, being indifferent regarding the good of one's companions. We ought rather to be cordially committed, and so on.

*By a sincere love, let us love one another*⁵, and let us show this in deeds, in our courteous manners, in our humility in speech and in the way we treat others.



⁵ Fr. Stofella believed it would be helpful to insert here a thought of Fr. Lenotti is found elsewhere, to define the harmony of the Confreres, of which the Introduction speaks: 'Harmony is that certain joining of hearts which together are united and come together in authentic thinking and right works. Like the union of the Divine Persons, distinct in themselves, but not divided, and rather are indivisible. *I pray, Father, ..for those who shall believe in Me, that they all may be one as we are one* [cf. Jn 17:20-22, *passim*] If not, all that will result will be confusion and Babylon. Harmony is union and peace which keeps united the bricks and stones of the house.'

And another note from Fr. Lenotti's pen concerns the diversity of opinions in daily living: ***Dissension is to be avoided, not only in opinions, but especially in activities; For example:*** [cf. **CF ## 197, ff.**] in performing a task; in sweeping, as some do it one way, and others, another, and so on; in Church, the way one might set up the benches, in arranging the books and the like; while going out for a walk, one goes in this direction, and another in that; in coming home, or following after; in visiting this Church, rather than that other one. Learn from the House of Nazareth harmony and concord. Come to agreement! For harmony is...[cf. above].

XXVIII.

Chapter II:

Those External Circumstances which the more serve Unity

CF ## 224-226

Obedience – St. Peter Leonard – Likeness to God – St. Paul – Fr. Burchowski – St. Francis Borgia – St. John of the Cross – Poverty and Humility.

Speaking of obedience as a means for fraternal union, observe that in a circle of so many rays converge at the center, and in this center, they all unite with each other. In like manner, many individuals are united in the Superior. If there were many centers, that would not be any unity. Therefore...

1. **CF # 224:** *Union of this kind if produced in great part by the bond of Obedience, as St. Ignatius says*⁶.

This is clear: the members are joined under the head, if they are healthy, and they are in agreement with one another. The old axiom from philosophy rings true here: *those realities are the same which convene to a single third being, they thus convene one to the other.* The rays converge in the center. A tree, in order for it to bear fruit, must have unity, union, in its branches: but how? Union of the branches with the trunk, or at least, with the roots. If these are divided among themselves, they will bear neither flowers, nor fruits.

Obedience ought to unite us in the Superior with due dependence. And therefore... let us give ourselves in the meantime to obedience... as often as we have the natural inclination more to command than to obey. The Venerable Father Leonard, Founder of the Community of the Mother of God, begged and bothered by his disciples to write the rules, wrote on a single sheet this one word: *Obedience*: 'wanting to signify with this that in the religious Life obedience is the same reality as holiness, and that it is the same to be obedient as to be holy.'⁷

Obedience renders us similar to God. *All of us human beings - says St. Diadocus - are made to the image of God. That fact becomes a similitude in all those who exercise much charity, and in those who make their freedom a service of God.*⁸ And so, let us thank God what he has placed us in the House of Obedience: *house of prayer* and *a house of obedience.*

When St. Paul, overwhelmed by the light from heaven, was converted and said: **Lord, what will you have me do?** The Lord responded to him: **Arise, and go into the**

⁶ This is found in CSJ n. 659: cf. also nn. 284; 547; 551; 821.

⁷ The passage between quotes are taken from St. Alphonsus' *True Spouse*, to which Fr. Lenotti in his alphabetical index, under 'Obedience' refers to this citation: c. VII, 2, nn. 4. Fr. Leonard was canonized by Pius XIth. Regarding Obedience, we can also add here a note of Fr. Lenotti remains isolated: 'You see – St. Philip Benizi said, while he was serving as a Brother, that we are useless servants, if we are not united with God in carrying out our tasks. And then, everything will go well: we profit also in our failings that we commit in our duties. Have courage, my brothers! Obedience brings the light, and without this I would be a deranged person, who would not even know how to place a knife in place on table.'

⁸ C. 100, *De Perfectione Spirituali*, c. 4.

city and there it shall be told to you what you are to do [cf. Ac 9:6, f.].⁹ St. Bernard says¹⁰ that with this plan and for this same purpose he entered into the religious state: not without a sublime divine counsel does God place within you the fear for your salvation and gave you a great desire to serve His majesty, and to this effect, inspired you to enter into this city, and into this School of Virtue: here it will be said to you what God wants of you, and that which you must do to please Him. Move on and sacred history tells us that St. Paul, on entering into the city, ***when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. But, they leading him by the hands...*** [cf. Ac 9: 8]. *This, indeed, dear Brothers, is the form of perfect conversion*.¹¹ And in this consists the perfection of obedience which with open eyes you will not see your way clear to judge anything. But, you will allow yourself to be guided by your Superiors, placing yourself totally in their hands.

Fr. Florence Burchowski, even though a white-haired old man, was most obedient, and the personal authority that he had acquired for himself with his merit of so many outstanding virtues, he never assumed to himself any role of judge in the matter of obedience. Once, in order to give nourishment to his fervor, he asked of the Superior, I do not know which ministry it was, that he much desired. But, at the first hint of a contrary will that appeared in the Superior, he, too, immediately changed his own will, and with joyful detachment he brought himself into harmony in every way to the wishes of his Superior: in this way the Father Provincial greatly admired the great virtue of this man, and said one day in commendation of this good man to the other fathers: 'Fr. Florence is truly a son of obedience: this praise is the greatest that can be given to a son of St. Ignatius. St. Francis Borgia also manifested a singular veneration for all of his Superiors. When St. Ignatius had assigned to him a Lay Brother so that he would take care of his health, the saint showed to him the same obedience that he directed to his Founder. And St. John of the Cross studied doctrine only in response to an order received by his director.

Then, in order to have charity, there are necessary poverty and humility. Anyone who does not see this, the love and attachment to one's own things and esteem impedes charity. So it is with pride, ambition that seeks only one's own honor. And so it does not behoove anyone to disdain others, to neglect them. Fr. Francis Rogement, SJ, in Costry, while still not yet a priest, and when one of his companions was assigned a rather poorly lit room, one that looked like a grotto, with the excuse that it would serve him better, Francis asked for it for himself. And this is the way it was for many of our men. But, let us remember that it is not *poverty* – says St. Bernard – *but the love of poverty which is a virtue*. Should poverty be a burden to us, let us just think that Jesus and Mary and Joseph were poor, and poorer than we are. And regarding humility, let us observe that the humble person loves all, and is loved by all. He honors each and every one – and is honored by all.

†††††

⁹ This section quoted by Fr. Lenotti is from Rodriguez, Part III, Tr. V, c. 5, n. 2 – against from Fr. Lenotti's alphabetical Manual under the letter for *Obedience*. He only points out the Instruction here.

¹⁰ Sermon I, *Conversion of St. Paul*.

¹¹ This treatise is taken from Fr. Lenotti's usual Manual

XXIX.
THE UNIFORMITY IN THE COMMON LIFE
ANOTHER MEANS FOR THE INCREASE OF FRATERNAL CHARITY
CHAPTER III

THOSE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH UNIFORMITY OF LIFE-STYLE STANDS OUT
Life and the common table – the Monks of Tebaide – The Monk of Lycaonia – *Our daily bread* - Monastic legislation – with the exception, however, of charity because of age and personal needs – The Table and the Breads of Proposition – The Hebrews in the Desert – An Example.

1. **CF # 227:** *This uniformity and conformity must be in all matters, even including external realities, as in clothing, food, and all manner of living; similitude is the cause of love. And this uniformity of life and common consent, contributes greatly to the unity of spirits.*
2. **CF # 229:** *This is the purpose of the common table, so that no one, no matter how important and revered he may be, whether he be a Superior, or the more learned, or of any other condition, be excused from it, other than for the sake of illness ...*

Innocent IVth, derogating from what had been in the First Rule of each one eating from what was provided for him in his own cell, prescribed for the Carmelite Fathers that they instead would eat at the common table: ... *so that each you take in the common refectory whatever had been distributed commonly, while listening to some reading from Sacred Scripture, wherever this can readily be observed.* Therefore, insistence upon *in the common refectory and in common* - that all the religious together might convene at the same hour to take their refectory: and that the refectory of the body should always be accompanied with the nourishment of the soul.

All regular equality, all religious indifference, and all the décor of common life, particularly stands out and shines in the common table. All partiality where life is lived in common is pernicious and detestable. But, that which touches food strikes more to the core of the essence of the religious state. From this are derived bad and unhappy consequences. All the Founders of religious communities and all monastic rules intimate, therefore, that *all things shall be in common with you.* And 'common' can never be those matters that are divided, or when some individuals make their own of certain aspects of the life.

Therefore, neither outside of the place, nor outside of the time, it is not licit for religious to eat. This was established by the Council of Oxford – and this is what St. Benedict has in his rule, and this is found established in the Rule which St. Pachomius received from the angels, as well as in the Rules of St. Basil.

Cassian relates ¹² about those Monks of Tebaides in Egypt, that they had this laudable custom, and which they observed point by point and with such rigor, that walking about in the hour for recreation in the garden and meadow in the time which not only among the trees were hanging heavy with fruit, but throughout the alleys, they trod

¹² *De Institutis Coenobiorum*

it under foot. Not only did they not bring a bit of it to their lips, but even to touch it with their hands was considered to be a sacrilege, nor would such transgressions or faults every be corrected with merely a paternal correction, but they would be punished severely with public penances. St. Isidore of Seville¹³ in his Rule, would issue the excommunication against any who would dare in a hidden manner, or outside the common table, to taste anything.

A formidable fact - noted in the *True Spouse* - is narrated by St. Gregory in his *Dialogues*¹⁴ regarding that Monk, who apparently was of a very exemplary life, who lived in a Monastery in Lycaonia. Finding him dying, his confreres looked about his room in order to find some little *memento* from his life that they might retain as a souvenir of edification. And what did they hear? 'My Brothers' - said the dying man - you know that when you were fasting, I was eating hidden, and therefore, I have been handed over to the demon who is killing me, and carrying my soul away!' And in saying this, he expired. The table of the Lord is common for all, that of the Devil is not so. In the Table of the Lord, *one eats, a thousand eat, as much these latter, as the one.*¹⁵ Whereas, at the table of the Demon, ***one indeed is hungry and another is drunk.*** [cf. 1 Co 11:21].

In the Lord's Prayer, we pray: ***give us this day our daily bread.*** There should never be the saying: *this is mine, that is yours: this is a cold saying!*¹⁶ The prodigal son, though, said: ***Father, give me the portion of the substance that falls to me.*** [cf. Lk 15:12]. This is not the style of the father's common table: *Give to me* - and not *give to us*. But, unfortunately it happens that this is way certain religious act, who are not satisfied with what is given in the common refectory, as they would want always more...their stomachs are never full, never satisfied, they murmur at least in their hearts: ***they would fain have filled their bellies with the husks the swine did eat*** - i.e., with the chickory of this world - and as the prodigal son, ***but no man did give them to eat...!*** [cf. Lk 15:16].

But, why the common table? The Council of Cambrais responds: *Because the common table designates the union of charity*¹⁷. Therefore, St. John Chrysostom praises the common living of those monks of his time. And St. Basil in his Rules blames those who were negligent in going to table and to supper with the others. 'Since it is necessary that at the hour of dinner all should be together. And when someone is lacking, and that he come after dinner, how will we treat him? If being able to come, and if one were not hindered, let him remain without eating until the established hour the next day, as one who has fallen into a fault by his own negligence.'¹⁸

¹³ Author of the *Rule of the Monks*. As for the excommunication that would fulminate from him as it was a matter of domestic use relative to the Community.

¹⁴ I, c. 4 - cited in *True Spouse*, c. VIII, 2, n. 2.

¹⁵ The Sequence *Lauda Sion*.

¹⁶ St. John Chrysostom, Roman Breviary, *Common of Confessors not Pontiffs*. Lesson V.

¹⁷ Executing the Decrees of the Council of Trent.

¹⁸ *Brief Rules*, n. 136.

The same Benedict establishes that *at the hour of eating one should not come before the verses* - so that all might offer together the verse and its response and prayer and they then sit down to table together – if it be out of negligence or through some fault, one is late, let him be *corrected* two times – if once more he does not emend himself, he will not be admitted to the common table. Rather, he will be separated from the community, and he will take his meals alone, deprived of his portion of wine, until he is corrected¹⁹.

As for the equality of good, all work in the same house, and all go out into the same vineyard, *for the weight of the day, and its heat:* then all should eat of the same plate, and all in one and the same manner ought to be restored...One and the same Jesus Christ, figured in the Father of the family, wishes then that all the workers at evening, even though they might have come in different hours of the day, might have the same supper, and the same pay, without any differences²⁰.

There is not meant by this that it is already forbidden that in the community there might be made some distinctions for someone who might have a special need due to his illness. Or that there should not be held a particular regard for the sick, by offering to them with the greatest possible charity, *keeping in mind the age and the needs of individuals*. Not to do this would be to destroy charity, and consequently would be to send the religious state into ruin. In these cases, necessity is required, a just cause and the permission of the Superior, to whom one should leave the judgment. For all the rest, though, no singularity, no differences. The Council of Oxford put in succinctly: *We interdict all singularity in the refectory*.

The Lord commanded Moses: ... *You shall make a table of setim wood...and you shall set upon the table loaves of proposition in my sight always...* [cf. Ex 25: 23, 30]: this is the first table about which mention is made in the Divine Scripture, set by the command of God, a prototype of those common tables of his religious servants. In the house of God all the breads are to be of the same whiteness, the same measure and color, two plates of gold, and therefore, breads of the same appearance, equal in every way: and the companions at a table are all equal, both young and old and rich and poor.

The Hebrews in the desert *complained: Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the flesh that we ate in Egypt free cost: the cucumbers come into our mind, and the melons and the leeks, and the onions and the garlic. Our soul is dry, our eyes behold nothing else but manna* [cf. Nb 11:4-6]. Some religious perform as did these Hebrews. They are nauseated at the foods that the Lord offers us in His house; and as malcontents, they desire the onions and garlic of Egypt. But, what is this? Like those Hebrews of old... the Lord will mete out to them accordingly.

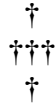
The flesh as yet was between their teeth, neither had that kind of meat failed ... and the Lord struck them with an exceeding great plague. And that place was called:

¹⁹ Chapter 43.

²⁰ cf. the Parable of the vineyard works; Mt 20:1-16.

'The Graves'... ²¹ This is the burial place of desires. The Lord will whip us religious into life and into health, and in body and soul.

Fr. Peter of the Mother of God, was a discalced Friar, and great servant of God, a great Preacher, and the General of his Community, an Apostolic Commissar of Clement VIII. He was in Rome and working very hard on the diverse Commissions that he had and charges from the Supreme Pontiff, in the worst heat of summer. He returned home exhausted, and the first sitting at table had already been conclude, and the Minister who was waiting on table, seeing him so bronzed by the sun, gave him an orange, having compassion upon him. That good Father asked if it had been given also to the others. And when he heard that it had not, no matter how much the other insisted, it was not possible that he would take it...



²¹ Cf. Nb 11: 33, 34.

XXX.
ON RECREATION
C. VII: COMMON RECREATION AND DIALOGUE
CF ## 250-256

Exhortation I²²

The Providence of the Congregation – two Rles - Recreation is necessary for all, but it should be moderate and modest – Modest also in laughing – recreation and spiritual profit.

Exhortation II

Do not talk too much, and too loud – ‘Out with the knife!’ – Nothing trivial, nor offensive and displeasing manners – However, to know how to support as St. Francis Regis – No murmurings or criticisms of Superiors - Do not speak of the world, nor of eating and drinking – Our old Fathers! – Do not speak of frivolous matters – The Lament of Jesus Christ - St. Ambrose – Seneca – Clement of Alexandria – To speak of God and of useful matters in the service of God – The teaching and example of the saints – Let us be an apprenticeship for apostolic conversations with secular- examples of the Saints – Our Fr. Biadego – Brother Paul Zanoli - The Teaching of St. Laurence Justinian – Our Venerated founder – The Norms of Fr. Nadal, SJ – St. Teresa – St. Laurence Justinian.

There are many necessities in human life, and to these, the Religious must also benignly assume. We need food, clothing, lodging, and all this has indeed been provided for us. We need also a certain rest and recreation and indeed our benign Mother, the Congregation, provides this for us, and even requires it, several times a day. This is both for the body and also for the spirit, since an arch that is retched too far breaks: with the fatigue, we need to interrupt it with rest, and this is also the Lord’s will: *...Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you just* says David [cf. Ps 32:11].

But let us see a bit what our Rules say in this regard. Attend to them well, as they are of grace, as you will see, and this is a rather important theme: here we are treating, my Brothers, that on our recreations well made, depends our spiritual profit.

1. **CF # 250:** *Every day, for an hour after lunch, and another after supper, or a half hour, if one abstains from supper, all the confreres will come together in the same place, if this is possible, and converse in a familiar and friendly manner.*

Have you heard? *All the confreres. In the same place, if this is possible, they will come together and converse in a familiar and friendly manner.*

2. **CF # 251:** *It is necessary that this be required of all without exception for the preservation of health, but principally for the development of charity. As Aristotle witnesses [VIII Ethic., 5]: friendship grows with communication, and is dissolved by taciturnity. And St. Teresa states: Charity grows by communicating²³.*

²² The matter of Recreations also has a number earlier in the Founder’s *Original Constitutions* [Part VII, Section III, c. 3, n. 5 = **CF # 132**: *each one should take part in the useful and proper common recreations. In these, no one should manifest inopportune harshness and excessive severity and a morose visage. This would inhibit the proper relief and rest of others. So, through religious modesty, there is avoided both in words and deeds in jest, every worldly impertinence, so that in no matter would the harmony of good works and virtues be broken.*

²³ *Life*, c. VII, near the end.

And this is not only *for the preservation of health: but, principally for the development of charity.* This is the over-riding reason: ...*charity grows by communicating; and it is necessary that this be required of all without exception.*

Also, recreation is necessary *not only for Novices, and the infirm, but also for the veterans and the perfect:...* otherwise, *they will fall into a lukewarm spirit, or certainly into a pernicious state of physical health* [n. 4 [n. 4 CF # 253]. Another reason is that this intervals of conversation and recreation then recall the men more willingly and avidly to solitude. Other reasons may be brought forward for these recreations, and we will see them another time.

For now, how should one participate in this recreation? According to the good pleasure of God: *In the Lord*, as David exhorts us: *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, you just...*: i.e., in a manner that is befitting the religious life that we profess. This means that our recreation should be *Moderate* and *Modest*.

Moderate: the reason is that when it is too long, it will always be defective: *Let it be never excessive.* Its time is already assigned by the rule and by the Superiors. But, it is necessary to remain attentive to be punctual in leaving it immediately and promptly, as soon as the assigned time comes. At the first sound of the bell, one should leave in the middle of a sentence the discourse and even the word and whatever other thing of game that is going on. Let us be like the lightning to cease and to leave all and everyone. Alas! Let us not do as some do, who want to finish the interrupted discourse, throwing that time away, and stealing it from the other occupations against obedience. St Frances de Chantal said: 'If I were to throw away a moment of time, I would think of myself as a thief before God. And what is this? Is it perhaps really my time that I am able to throw away at my own pleasure? God has given me the measure, and He wants an accounting of each moment.

Modest: our recreation ought to be: modest in comportment, modest in laughing, modest in speaking.

1. Our recreation is to be modest in comportment, i.e., in the conduct of one's person. The Religious ought to be always composed, but especially in the recreations, since in these one can offer much edification, and one can also be very destructive. Consequently, in sitting the person should be positioned in a decent manner, not with the legs either extended, or stretched out. In walking one's gait should be grave and measured. In one's gestures, moderate, without excessive agitation, but gently and courteously moving about. The eyes should be modest, not too free, or fixed on the face of others; the hands should be composed fittingly without playing, and so on.

2. Our recreation should be modest in our laughing: one should not laugh immoderately. It is true that a sweet and discreet smile and a rather just manifestation, one that is reasonable, are expected. However – as St. Francis de Sales points out – just as it is a disorder to laugh while conducting serious duties, so on the contrary it is most

important that one needs to be very careful always to avoid laughing in recreation. So it is that St. Frances de Chantal stated: ‘ Finding myself with our young Sisters, I laugh to give them confidence in recreating, as this is necessary.’ But, a laughter that is unruly, and strong - who would not see that this is very blameworthy, especially in a Religious. Does not this dissipate the spirit and dry up the vein of devotion? And then what does our Rule impose upon us? Where one speaks of Modesty, it is read thus *not to be easily moved to laughter* .²⁴

A smile on one’s lips is something that we must always have: this indicates contentment of heart and does edify one’s companions and neighbor, and approaches them in order to be of benefit to them. On the other hand, seriousness, severity, and harshness distance them and give very little edification. The smile on one’s lips is an indication of a friendly spirit, of a benevolent heart, one that is gentle, sincere and candid. The smile on one’s lips indicates a charitable spirit, and so on. Seriousness shows a spirit that is closed, and little interested in the good of others. Therefore, the Saints always have had this gentle smile on their lips, that showed their love for others, consoling them, and attracting their hearts to God. St. Romuald – as is read in his Life - always manifested a joyful countenance and this sweet smile on his lips. So did st. Philip Neri, and so on. And this is why in his *Rules for Modesty* St. Ignatius prescribes for us: *The lips should not be shown to be drawn, but open [n. 4] - One’s entire visage should show joy rather than sadness, or any other disordered affectation [# 5].*

Pay attention, therefore, my beloved Brothers, to this modesty even in your manner of laughing. Let us restrain ourselves out of love for God and for our neighbor. Let us edify, and not destroy, and so on. We will see in another Exhortation the modesty that is demanded in speaking in our recreations. In the meantime, let us keep well in mind that from our recreations there depends greatly also our spiritual progress. Rather, from these recreations depends also the good of the Congregation. Be that as it may, the recreations should be conducted in a religious manner, there be maintained and fomented the religious spirit and observance. When, in fact, they are conducted poorly, the spirit is dissipated, there is lost that little that is gained with the other exercise of piety, and there is lost that recollection. And woe to anyone who is the cause of this! Because he will indeed have to render his accounting before the Lord’s Tribunal.

§§§

IInd Exhortation On Recreations

The other time we wanted to provide the reasons why by our Venerated Founder there have been prescribed the proper *Recreations*; the place... the time... and in part, too, also the manner. However, there still remains some points regarding our manner of speaking, and here there is not a little to say about it. The reason is that precisely here in

²⁴ CF # 122, 3 – Third degree of St. Benedict’s Humility.

this area of speaking is where one falls the most often, and is found lacking with real prejudice regarding oneself and his companions.

In the meantime I posit this question: have we truly striven with commitment of putting into practice, in the few recreations in which we find ourselves together in these few days, regarding what we have heard thus far? Let us examine ourselves well on this.

First of all, there is necessary in the recreations to heed the advice of not speaking too much: because it is known – and the Holy Spirit affirms this – that *in the multitude of words there shall not want sin* [cf. Pr 10:19]. How much should there not be said, especially by the Religious, that some are such chatter-boxes, and that they always seem to want to dominate in conversation, and, *for better or for worse*, some want always to put in their two-cents' worth in every discourse! With this it soon happens that one would show that he is quite proud, or at least a light-weight: *A fool multiplies words* [cf. Qo 10:14].

Consequently, when others speak, it is not proper to interrupt them: as the Holy Spirit says: *interrupt not others in the midst of their discourse* [cf. Si 11:8]. With what immodesty would a Religious manifest who wants to be the only one speaking! And when his companions say something he is always ready to cut off their words in their mouths, showing with this his own pride of knowing everything and of wanting to be the master of all: this is something that brings great disturbance to anyone involved in such a conversation.

It is fitting furthermore that in the time of recreation to say something from time to time, especially when others fall silent. Otherwise, if all keep quiet, there would cease that common relaxation which the Rules demands. Furthermore, modesty implies especially in the young, that one should speak sufficiently to maintain the recreation, and that one should rather listen than to speak. So, a good rule is to be silent when others speak, and to speak when others are silent.

Furthermore, in recreations, it is necessary to keep oneself from speaking, or shouting loudly. Rather it is more fitting to discourse with restrained voice. Otherwise, recreation will become a Babylon, and a market-place, an uproar. Furthermore: be attentive not to take up questions that are excessively heated, in which imaginations are enkindled, and self-love will play its role, wishing to maintain one's own opinion at any cost: 'Put aside the knives!'- is what our Founder used to say. In fact, charity would thus be endangered as well as good edification, and thus some would leave recreations with bitterness of heart.

So, also a religious can see that he might actually belittle his own profession by saying words that are not very honest, or civil, and that he would use rather rude and coarse manners. Let it be known that all the words that smack of this world, are indecent for a religious. One should also abstain from certain jokes and saying that in some way others can be offended regarding certain real and known defects, and certainly practical jokers: because very often jokes can displease those on whom they are played, or about

whom one speaks. What harm these overly spiced condiments do, these stinging witticisms do against our brother! However, even if someone else gives us the occasion of really being put out, and we offer to God this victory over ourselves, but do not return the unkindness, nor give back what we have received! Rather even if we feel that we are being ridiculed, let us not show our indignation, and let us not manifest our resentment. St. John Francis Regis, when he saw that he was being made the butt of a joke by his companions at recreation, he would join in the discourse with joviality, so that this derision aimed at him served to entertain all. This is what so many other saints did and what good Religious still do.

Keep an eye out from saying words in your own praise! When the tongue is warmed up, oh! what strange words might come forth from us that later we will regret! And perhaps these words will make us lose the merit from our previous good deeds. And when we are praised, let us raise our mind to the Lord, and seek to change the conversation.

One should speak with a low voice and not strong, which offends the ears of others What a misfortune it is to hear a Religious speak at a high and unrestrained voice, as one might do in the shop! *That a voice that is too loud never offend the year of another*, is St. Ambrose's recommendation²⁵.

But, what will we say of those who make the subject of their conversations and recreations unsavory words, and spread these about? Alas! My brothers, let us guard ourselves well from this plague of murmuring, especially from criticizing the Superiors. What a poison this is! What evil seed does not one sow into the hearts of his companions! We religious place our own brothers in a pigeon-hole! Censuring their deeds, condemning them! Even if their observations are about manifest events, it does not matter! The perfection of charity to which we are called to attend, and the good edification of our brothers ought to lead us to keep silent and to hide as much as one can, the short-comings of others. And rather than placing these out for public view, rather we should speak and praise their virtues, their good actions, and their good qualities. How can one ever leave recreation with a contented heart after having murmured about one's companion or Superior?

Another defect also to be avoided from our discourses, and it is that of speaking of this world, of marriages, of festivals, and of certain facts that are so profane that they do not help at all, nor do they edify, but rather distract us, leaving in the soul of the one who is listening to all this, a very poor impression.

Even to speak of eating and drinking is something that is out of bounds for Religious. To praise, for example, or to criticize those foods brought to table, is it one of those activities that is befitting to us who profess penance and mortification? In this regard, St. Francis de Sales said: 'Persons of honor do not think about the table, except when they are seated there.' Let it be so also for us religious who ought to be dead to the

²⁵ *De Officiis*, Bk I, c. 18.

delights of this earth and to have our hearts in heaven, and in heaven above to direct our thoughts and our conversation. I remember well, you know, that with our first Fathers and Companions, one never spoke of eating. And if anyone perchance ever did commence a discussion of that nature, it was had almost as a scandal, and that conversation was brushed away immediately and something indeed contrary and unfitting for the religious life.

Nonetheless, there are some who, if they are not complaining and bantering, and so on, and furthermore, enter into conversations of useless and frivolous matters, that do not add up to anything substantial. *Not concerning frivolous matters should conversations, or recreations be based.* This is the teaching of Fr. Lancisio ²⁶: *in any religious, the speaking of profane matters is an indication of a non-religious heart.* . And this is what Jesus Christ is reported to have said to St. Brigid: *What is more esteemed, is the more frequently mentioned.* Therefore, anyone who frequently speaks of his own family, his own nation is trying to say that he loves them more: whoever speaks often of food, and the like, whoever speaks often of study, and the like – and whoever speaks of the vanities of this world and makes certain remembrances of this world, shows ... *that is loved more...* which is what St. Ambrose notes: The mouth is the promptuary [the dispenser] of the will. And Seneca noted: *one's speech paints the picture of his soul.* And Clement of Alexandria noted: *the way one speaks, indicates his style of life* ²⁷.

Therefore, if the soul is full of God's love and of pious affections, that will appear also in the discourses that issue from one's mouth. Just observe an opened phial: how there is exhaled it seems and sent abroad a sweet odor! And from the odor that comes forth, one can know the sweet liquor that is included within. Now, with merit St. Ilarion of Arles in praising St. Honoratus, the Bishop, from the goodness of his discourses,, was drawn to the internal goodness of his heart and his soul. For which reason it is a great indication that Jesus Christ dwells in the heart of the one who willingly initiates conversations about God and of pious matters...

St. Lawrence Justinian said: What a waste! Farmers, as soon as they come together speak without getting annoyed about agriculture; artisans speak of their own arts, their shops; merchants speak of their commerce. *Unfortunately, only the Servants of God do not care, or do not know how, to listen, or to speak of matters that befit their own state...*

Tauler narrates that 'Christ appeared to a certain great servant and had lamented with vivid sorrow of the six manners with which He was dishonored by His Servants. The second was that in their gatherings and conferences they treated of vain and useless matters and that only with great effort, or never at all, would they make mention of Him...

²⁶ *Opusculum V: De Mediis conservandi spiritum.* C. 10.

²⁷ Cf, **CSL**, pp. 440, 442, ff.

Of St. Charles, Giussano notes that ‘his speech was always either about matters concerning God, or those about the service of God.’ And the Apostle held it as a firm principle that is demanded also of seculars: *let that speech which is good proceed from your mouth, to the edification of faith, that it may administer grace to the hearers* [cf. Ep 4:29]. How much more, then, will this not be demanded from those religious persons obliged to greater perfection...?

The Holy Spirit states: *choice silver is the tongue of the just man...* this means that the just out to shine out in the exemplary content of their discourse, and as for the sound, that it resound rightly due to the religious moderation of the voice, not to be spoiled by too much laughter, and by shouting, or by arguing. Therefore, Plato and St Pauline state: *conversation is the mirror of one’s soul*. It is a great sign of a dissipated spirit when irreligious discourse issues from the religious mouth in a Convent of Religious. And therefore, they ought to flee those who speak of profane matters, if we wish to conserve and to increase the religious spirit.

And this method ought to be maintained even in our speaking with seculars. Rather, this is another reason that our Founder placed this in the Rule, in order to stimulate us to speak of useful and spiritual matters among ourselves: i.e., to train us to do this then conversing with seculars. Here are his words here in c. VII, n. 6:

CF # 255: *Furthermore, since the principal end for our Congregation is the conversion of souls, this is achieved for the most part by conversing with human beings, and by speaking about divine realities gently and discreetly. For this, moreover, religious confreres can become proficient in this when they are accustomed to having conversations among themselves. These more often ought to be concerning divine matters...*²⁸

The scope of our , what is it? Therefore, let us also look for it with this means of familiar conversations, and the like. What great good can we not do by this way! With this means what advantages did not the great Apostolic Missionary, St. Francis Xavier²⁹ accomplish! What great good did not St. Ignatius achieve! What good St. Philip, St. Alphonsus, and so many other good religious and students, and also simply Lay Brothers. Fr. Biadego had a great rapport with the young students: he would stand near the door, or would approach one or the other, or along the street³⁰. And Brother Paul in 1849 and 1850, how many soldiers who were stationed at the Stimate did he not draw to go to Confession! And they would communicate then on the Feasts with such edification. The

²⁸ These private conversations are described by Thomas H. Clancy, SJ, as *The Conversational Word of God. A Commentary on the Doctrine of St. Ignatius of Loyola concerning Spiritual Conversations with Four Early Jesuits*. St. Louis: Jesuit Sources 1978; cf. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, December 8, 1975. n. 46: *...in addition to this public and general proclamation of the Gospel, the other form of individual communication of the Gospel from person to person must be encouraged and employed. This is the Method which Our Lord Himself constantly employed...*

²⁹ St. Francis Xavier was also honored by this title for his work in Foreign Missions – yet, with the great arsenal of apostolic weapons at his disposal from the Jesuit Rule, private conversations worked wonders in the Missions.

³⁰ Cf. **CSI**, p. 86, 440-442, ff.

seculars would be met by our men with their interests, but it is necessary to have them then leave by our way! ³¹

But, you will say, what will be the content of our religious conversations? St. Lawrence Giustinian responds: ‘The supreme and endless matter of conversing all will find in speaking of the misery of this present life, the dangers of this pilgrimage, the various kinds of temptations, the deceptions of the devil, the deformity of the vices, the ornamentation and merits of virtue, the inevitable destiny of death, the pains of hell, the Reign of God and the reward of paradise: and most often, of the ineffable charity of God shown to the human race, through Christ and in Christ. Of these themes, the Servants of God did not so much speak of these out of their own love and choice of God, as rather more for the edification of anyone who would listen to them, and for their own spiritual advancement: *spiritual matters lead to more spirituality*. Let them give to each one their own nourishment according to the quality of the persons and their circumstances.

In this, our Venerated Founder was outstanding. He knew in a marvelous manner to adapt the familiar discourse and the terms and expressions to the person, or to the persons with whom he dealt in conversations: *he was made all to all*: as a result, all would leave him edified, consoled and content.

Thus, our Recreations will serve to foment fraternal charity, and to prepare us for speaking of God with our neighbor, and they will be the pledge of the perpetual recreation of Paradise, where we will all be together, not with divisions, but under one and the same tabernacle, and so on...³²

Therefore, St. Teresa said: ‘For the love of God, I beg you and urge you, that you deport yourselves in such a way that your conversation should always refer to something that is good for the person with whom you deal. And a little later, she adds: *See to it that you never say this within yourself: I wish that you would think well of me*, etc. And hold as a firm principle that one who delights in the special presence of God, not common to all the just, ought likewise to delight in pious conversations, since by means of them the Eternal Word enters to fill our hearts with pious affections. This is also what St. Lawrence Justinian says, in bringing the example of the two disciples who were on their way to Emmaus: speaking of the Scriptures, they experienced *that they were on fire with the blaze of charity. They said to one another: Did not our hearts burn while he was with us on the way and opened to us the Scriptures?* This makes it clear that the author of both these is always He: when he is heard physically, or when He is heard in the Scriptures. And so, those who do not speak willingly of the matters of Scripture left to us, nor about other pious matters, show by this deed that they do not delight in that special presence of God with which He blesses His beloved friends...

†††††

³¹ Fr. Bertoni notes this Ignatian principle in his Spiritual Diary, **MP, August 20, 1808**.

³² In an Appendix, Fr. Lenotti presents the so-called *Catalogue* of Fr. Jerome Nadal, SJ - cf. *For Matters of Greater Moment, The First 30 Jesuit General Congregations*, St. Louis: Jesuit Source 1994, the IInd General Congregation June 219, 1565, Decrees after the Election, nn. 28, 57, ff. - 119, ff., 125, ff. There was included various matters for recreation - this was read each year in Refectory. Some of this may be noted in **CSI, pp. 3, f., in the Life of Anthony Caughigh**:

1. In Recreation our confreres should not be singular, solitary, of dark humor; 1. in the exchanges, they should not be light-weight; 2. Not immodest; 4. they should not be chatter-boxes; 5. they should not be irascible; 6. they should not be argumentative, or cutting; 7. not hurried in their gait; 8. not heavy or acerbic; nor should they raise their voices excessively, or break out in immoderate laughter. Fr. Lenotti continues:

XXXI.

TENTH PART –SECTION II

C. IX: MUTUAL CONCERN FOR THE SPIRITUAL PROGRESS OF THE CONFRERES
[CF ## 262-266]

The first care towards our Neighbors ought to be that for our own Brothers: the concern for their Profit – The example of Fr. Lancisio – Also to cooperate in corrections.

A Community of Religious, dedicated to the service of their neighbor, is called to render great glory to God and to do much good to human beings. And precisely, by divine disposition, this is our Congregation of *Apostolic Missionaries for the Service of Bishops*. Now, to this scope we arrive certainly, o my beloved Brothers, if we procure to nourish in ourselves sentiments of sincere and vivid affection for the religious disciple and for the exact observance of the Rules that our Venerated Founder has left us: among these there is the one that today we read, in the Chapter entitled *The Mutual Concern for the Spiritual Progress of the Confreres* :

CF # 262: *Since the end of the Congregation is to work for the salvation of souls ,and as a result, this asks for ministries that are accommodated³³ to this end. Therefore, each member should in the very first place work for, and desire first and with greater commitment, for the salvation of his own brothers, over that of externs, because charity is most ordered. Hence, just as each one is inclined to seeking first his own spiritual salvation before that of others; so, too, he would intend first among these others, and would seek, the spiritual salvation of his own brothers, that of the entire Congregation, before that of externs.*

A religious who is cold, indolent, regarding the well-being of his Brothers and of his Congregation, might be described with this phrase: *they went out from us, but they were not of us* [cf. 1 Jn 2:19]. A Religious who is zealous for the spiritual advantages of his companions and of his Congregation can be said to be the arm, the soul of the Congregation, and that he is a true and loving child of God. The esteem and love for one's own Congregation and zeal for the glory of God, is too important: love and zeal for which we are obliged out of gratitude.

What an unfortunate experience it is never to hear a religious, who does not approve, and does not esteem, and does not praise anything other than what he was outside, or what might be found in other Communities - and then to hear him disdain and criticize whatever there is in his own house! I am not saying that we should place our Congregation ahead of all others in our dealings with externs: may God protect us from that! Rather, let us have humility, humility! Let us remain lowly, lowly! Fr. Lancisio was moved to enter into the Company of Jesus for this external moderation that he saw in the Jesuits, in addition to other virtues.³⁴

Do not complain excessively about Superiors³⁵ .

³³ These *ministeria accomodata* seem to imply a broad sweep of ministries, as pertinent to the central idea of the *Apostolic Mission*.

³⁴ Fr. Lenotti adds here a few principles that seem to be based on the *Original Constitutions*, that follow here.

³⁵ **CF # 263:** *Therefore, there should arise that care and diligence which the Superiors of the Congregation ought to maintain for the spiritual progress of their sons.*

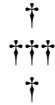
Then, not to complain about their corrections: rather, each should accept them with internal and external humility. *He that hates to be reprov'd, walks in the trace of a sinner*, So, even as regards an observation, there are those who resent them. Do not make excuses: but, thank God, as that holy religious used to do, who would say a *Hail, Mary* every time someone pointed out something to him.

And wherever it should be necessary, attend to fraternal correction. For example, do not ever say: *Am I my brother's keeper?* ³⁶

Encourage others to good, especially by good example ³⁷.

Each one should be committed to all the others! And all for each one, and in each one.

Pay for the Congregation.



³⁶ This is in the spirit of **CF # 264**: *From this also there should be manifest that inclination and preparation of soul for receiving correction from others, as well as assisting in the correction of others, with due charity.*

³⁷ This seems inspired also from: **CF # 265**: *As a result, in like manner, that mutual care for all through conversations and discourses favoring fraternal charity, and the zeal for encouraging each other to the exercise of virtues and perfection.*

XXXII.
ELEVENTH PART
FAMILIAR CONVERSATION WITH OUR NEIGHBORS TOWARD THEIR SALVATION
CHAPTER I

That Familiarity to be avoided
CF ## 267-270

Exhortation: With which persons is it prohibited to speak – consequently, flee conversations with them.

Detachment from parents and seculars – Do not speak with them without permission – Dangers and harm in such conversations – St. Lawrence Justinian – St. Basil – St. John Climacus - Conversations prohibited between elders and the young – St. Ignatius – Avoid conversation with externs and with those who do not live spiritually – St. Ignatius – St. John Chrysostom – Origen.

1. **CF # 267:** *St. Basil says [Rules 5 & 13 from his Longer Rules] : ‘Unless we alienate ourselves from the necessity of family ties and from the familiar exchange with seculars, and shift away from that habit of mind as into another world, in no way will we attain the purpose of our spirit.*

For Religious, it is not licit to converse with just anyone, on an individual level. This is the Rule of just about every Religious Community comprised of observant members. Especially for Novices and young religious need to abstain from dealing with certain determined persons. It suffices it to say that there have been Papal Bulls that have spoken of this, and rigorously the forbid everything of this nature: the matter is so important.

And so it is not permitted to speak with seculars, with the exception of those in the Oratory, when it is our duty to attend to them. And this is the advice of St. Basil: *It is not fitting to entrust yourself to just anyone, to manifest and lay before some one else the hidden area of your spirit: for this has many attackers. Rather every effort is to be given that only after employing great diligence [rather, in a religious order – Fr. Lancisio adds - having obtained previously the permission of the Superiors] and only do we proceed with great circumspection with externs. For if the Son of God did not entrust Himself to just everyone, He Who is all pure, and lacking in all fault, He Who was nothing other than virtue, did this - then, what should be expected of the likes of us, considering what we are?*

There is a further reason to flee from the conversation of externs that are forbidden to us - St. Ephrem says: *because whoever would enjoy worldly conversations, shows that they have not yet left the world. For, just as one who lights a fire, arouses the flame, and so worldly conversations move depraved passions and affections in the heart of the monk. Let us hope, brother, that those who would make use of the grace of conversing, might in no way harm you. How many have their been I n our times, who before men have shone like burning lamps and luminaries of this world; and which bit by bit become more trepid by their frequent contacts and by their gabbing with seculars, then returned wretchedly to the works of their secular life of once upon a time!*

Therefore, there is no wonder that in former times such as this were punished with the very greatest severity. And so, among the penalties that St. basil presents, he tells us: *Whoever would be attached by a conversation to externs who might chance by the*

monastery, and having done this even before having received any permission from the one who has in hand the disciplinary government of the house, should live in segregation for a week. And at n. 8: If anyone would converse with externs, or with those pertaining to his own, with the permission of the Archimandrite, on heir coming to the Monastery, this one – other than those Monks destined for this service - will remain without blessings. And at n. 13, we read: If anyone enters into the entrance way of the house, without permission of the one in charge there, he will remain without the blessing. St. John Climacus wrote: If we frequent the company of the seculars and familiar converse with them, it is easier that we be converted more to the secular way.

Consequently, one must decline conversation with externs, and it is forbidden to our young members. In this regard, we need to understand the advice of St. John Climacus: *As it is impossible to look with one eye toward heaven, and then with the other riveted on earth, so it is not possible for the soul not to run the risk for one who in thought and in person does not make himself a foreigner and a stranger from all other foreigners and strangers. With enormous effort and fatigue we acquire serious and perfect customs; and it can happen that with these have been acquired after a long commitment of time, in a single moment we might lose them* ³⁸.

II. *There should also be avoided – as the Venerable Lancisio teaches – also those prohibited conversations between the younger men with the older, and with certain young people. This was referred to be St. Ignatius as being so important, that as a penalty for such conversations, he would impose a public discipline in the refectory; or abstinence for three days from ordinary food, allowing only bread and water at a small table, or some other penance in the judgment of the Superior. This is what Fr. John Polanco wrote, as Secretary of the Company, to Fr. Soldevilla, the Rector of the College in Genoa, in the name of St. Ignatius, on November 15, 1554. And so that this would be observed in the Company, St. Ignatius himself wrote down in the First Draft of the old Rules, with which before the writing of the Constitutions, the Company was governed. He wrote down four rules in his own hand, prohibiting the promiscuous conversation with anyone, and forbidding it with certain persons, and prescribing the manner of asking permission in order to be able to speak with certain persons, both domestics and externs: the saint placed so much importance in this matter. In the Constitutions treating of the conversation of our members in those matters which pertain to the soul, and for progress in virtue. In the very first place, he took away all communication by speech and in writing with those who in his plan might be the cause of those lessening their resolve to enter the Institute. They were only able to speak with those persons, and of those matters could they converse, that might help in the purpose that we have put before us of entering into the Congregation.*

And so, from all that has been stated so far, what comes to you, my most beloved Brothers? There should come to your mind that we ought totally to avoid conversation with externs, while it is also prohibited to our young members. It is impossible – writes St. John Climacus in this regard - to look with one eye toward heaven, and with the other

³⁸ *Scala Paradisi*, gr. II.

toward earth; and so, it *cannot be that in a single moment of time, we would lost all this*. At least, there will result some kind of stain, or bad impression in one's mind and heart.

And again, in the third place, one should decline from frequent conversation with those who do not live in a spiritual manner. It is difficult – states Lancisio, supported in this by the authority of St. John Chrysostom – piously and holily to live conversing with those who do not live, nor speak in a religious or spiritual manner, and who are imbued with distorted and evil principles. And Origen, taking up that Gospel passage where Jesus Christ gives the order to avoid conversation with one who had been admonished and corrected some times, and does not emend, referring also to venial sins: *whoever in a light sin has been corrected, and yet does not change, we ought to consider him almost as a publican and an outcast, keeping distant from him...!*



APPENDIX – MISECELLANEOUS EXHORTATIONS

[I] Exhortation To Silence – Its Observance

1.

One singular benefice of the Lord is speaking. *Sermon*, like *reason*: differentiates humanity from animals. Therefore, the *Chaldean, Paraphrastes*, in commenting on *Genesis*, rather than saying that *man was made a living soul*, translates: *man was made a speaking soul*: almost as though he would connect reason with the ability to speak. And therefore: 1° to be able to communicate one's thoughts; 2° because man is sociable by nature, and for this society, and for this society it is necessary to speak.

Furthermore, since nature has been vitiated, man easily is found lacking in his talking, either by defect, or by excess: when he is silent, and should speak – or when he does speak, and should be silent. Therefore, it is necessary to moderate, and to regulate one's tongue. There is thus a moral silence.

The philosophers knew of this: Moral Silence = Philosophical Silence. Plutarch, instructing the young, prescribes in the first place that they be taught on how to refrain their tongue, and this because opportune silence is so full of wisdom, and *superior to all discourse*, and also because the intemperate in the use of the tongue would encounter very great calamities. He also wrote a book: *On Avoiding Loquaciousness*.

Aulus Gellius also gathered many statements from most wise poets and from the most eminent philosophers. And Hesiod teaches that the tongue is an excellent and enormous treasure, but one that should be dispensed in a measured manner. And those who have the vice of talking too much are called: *verbose, blatherers, prattlers*. Also Seneca speaks of a certain will, and a terrible itch to speak, is like a drunkenness of talking – and he offers for this a medicine for such a malady: *Nothing helps more than being quiet, and speak with others the least possible, and most often within oneself*. Thus Philo adds: *silence, thanks to which the well brought up impose reverence - is a certain faculty of dividing well the times of speaking and keeping silence*.

Sacred Scripture tells us this through Solomon: ***A time to keep silence, a time to speak*** [cf. Qo 3:7]. The Prophets repent at times for having kept silence and at times, for having spoken. The holy Fathers of the Church, instructed by Scripture, persuade nothing more as a suitable means for healing and composing one's habits than this moderation in speaking.

This moderating virtue of the tongue is most laudable and to be yearned for most vehemently not only by man as man, but also as a Christian. But, for the religious man who tends toward perfection, this alone does not suffice; therefore, the masters and founders of religious communities were not content with it, but desired in us a more noble virtue, almost heroic, moderating the tongue and of speaking in a most perfect manner: this, according to the word used, is called SILENCE.

‘The observance of silence was one of the means particularly employed by St. Oddo, Abbot of Cluny. To establish the reform, knowing how with it there would be maintained in a community charity and peace. And his Monks observed it scrupulously in the prescribed hours so much so that two of them were captured by the Normans on their way to Tours, and allowed themselves to be conducted and maltreated almost breathlessly, but the barbarians never succeeded in drawing from their mouths a single word, until the time of silence prescribed by the rule, had passed.’

St. Aelred of Scotia, ‘at the mere sight of religious who were outstanding for their fervor, experienced being moved by a holy emulation. One among these was called Simon, and he drew his attention more than the others. The love for penance had reduced him, this Cistercian Monk, to renounce all the advantages that in the world promised him by his illustrious lineage, a wealth without end, the most rare talents of intelligence and all the graces of his person. He was always recollected and absorbed in God, and *a most rigorous observer of Silence*. He spoke rarely, and laconically, and not with others, except for his Superiors, and only for the most urgent of reasons. And yet, he was most happy, pleasing, edifying was his appearance. This is the testimony that Aelred has left of him: *Just his virtue of humility confounded my pride, and made me blush with the lack of mortification of my senses. The Law of Silence which is observed among us, took from me the possibility of speaking with him at length. However, one day a word of mine slipped out, and he approached me with the air of his whole appearance, displeased that this infraction of silence had changed him; therefore, I threw myself at his feet and he let me for some time to expiate my fault, for which he later always corrected me, nor did he know how ever to pardon me of it.*

Therefore, silence helps: [1°] to flee defects; [2°] to acquire virtue.

2. SILENCE ³⁹

The recommendation that I give to you could not be better: I recommend silence to you. How ancient is this requirement of silence. As old as God is. From all eternity, there was God, and with God silence: because God is all blessed in Himself, and has no need of speaking with anyone: ***And His place is in peace...*** [cf. Ps 75:3]. The word began with creatures. Also at the very beginning of the world – as we have it in the Apocalypse - ***there was silence in heaven*** [cf. Rv 8:1]. It is true that here silence means a great expectancy of grandiose and stupendous events, as was the battle of St. Michael the Archangel and Lucifer [cf. Rv 12:7], and others besides. But, precisely after the silence, there are awaited beautiful and great events. From silence, the following are expected:

1. **the sparing of defects**
2. **there is awaited that there will be no need of rendering an account before the tribunal of God of so many words, at least those wasted words;**
3. **abnegation of self and the itch to talk;**

³⁹ This seems to be one of Fr. Lenotti’s Conferences as Superior General.

4. recollection and compunction of heart;
5. there is awaited that the Lord would speak to us with his holy inspirations, because the Lord cannot speak with chattering;
6. from silence there was awaited and there came to be the Incarnation of the word; *when all things kept silence...*⁴⁰;
7. from silence, there is awaited the exercise of so many virtues, observance, religious fervor, the merit of having kept what the Rule prescribes. What a beautiful reality silence is!

It seems that it is silence that God wants of us in a recommended manner. Do you see it? The Novitiate of Verona, restored by our venerated Father Marani, was a very ancient Convent of the Vallambrosians: 200 monks from the year 1100, and they were there for 400 years. Now, this Monastery passed into so many hands, and finally into ours. Just imagine: of the many articles that were left behind by those Monks in that Convent... we have only found three: a picture in the Cloister...the Madonna – and a great sign, or I would put it better to say a table of wood, where in square characters there was written *Silence!* It seems that from those Monks God wanted to hand down to us at least this: *Silence!*

Do you see, then, what our commitment should be... But, I do not say that you should do – as that Monk who died not very long ago in Rome – 40 years of silence. But, observe it in its proper times, without human respect, conquer yourselves and do not allow too many exceptions. With the excuse of necessity, silence is put on the back-burner. And so, try during recreations, as the Rule prescribes for us, to speak willingly of useful and edifying matters, as did the holy religious; like Blessed John Berchmans, and others.

With silence, the saints conducted their lives. *In silence and hope shall your strength be.* [cf. Is 30:15]. The example of Mary and St. Joseph.



⁴⁰ Antiphon at the *Benedictus* for the Sunday in the Octave of Christmas.

II. FAILINGS IN THE RULES

We have been called to perfection – the many times we have heard that. And how have we responded? Jesus Christ from the tabernacle repeats it to us: ***Be you, therefore, perfect as also your Heavenly Father is perfect.*** [cf. Mt 5:48]. Our perfection does not consist in grandiose endeavors, but in the little realities. Care in one's work is what renders a task perfect and precious. And love is shown in applying diligence to the small undertakings, not neglecting anything which might disgust the beloved. ***He that fears God, neglects nothing*** [cf. Qo 7:19]. – All the more is this true of one who loves God. ***In all your works, be perfect*** ⁴¹

Now, in order to reach this, it is necessary to keep oneself from small failings which while they may not be noticed, have a way of mounting up. I now would like to point out some of these defects in this matter. One failing against the rule would be in the morning, at the sound and the moment of arising, one decides to delay a little. And this happens also at other soundings of the bell, and so on. And what if one should anticipate the sound of the bell, would this be good? I read not very long ago, that there is more perfection to await the bell than to anticipate it: because the sound of the bell is the voice of God, and so, by awaiting its sound, one hears the voice of God. ⁴²

To make one's meditation giving to it a little less time, even a moment or so, this would be another defect. O, to neglect the examen of this: if this is not on the Rule expressed, the Founder imposes this upon us. To miss a reading: if one cannot be there, then it is necessary to make it up, as soon as possible. To fail to make the examen: if one simply cannot make it at the time assigned, then at least he should attend to it later. Fr. Goswin Nichel, the General of the Jesuits, is said never to have missed it in 60 years ⁴³ One who would fail in acts sorrow and resolution... We also have by rule that each one should confess once a week: who would fail in this, would fail in the Rule.

One who would not show up for recreation, or would deport himself with little restraint, and would not know how to hold back some, especially in the presence of the Superiors: or commit contradictions with others, or be stubborn in maintaining his own opinion. We have by rule the requirement of the manifestation of one's conscience, at least from time to time, to the Superior: anyone who would not do this, would not keep that rule. One who commits defects and would not accuse himself in order to have a penance for them, would fail. Regarding denunciation of others' faults, one knows that a companion fails in one of his duties, or comes to see that he is undergoing some temptation, or that there is excessive communication between two, and the like, and does not make this known to the Superior, this would be a failing.

⁴¹ The text suggests Si 30:3 – which does not jibe with this in the Douay version.

⁴² Fr. Stofella – an early riser [?] – adds this note: 'Unless there intervene a legitimate custom, or permission of the Superior!'

⁴³ From Fr. The *Monologue* of Fr. Patrignani, SJ.

With regard to silence: one speaks in the time of silence: what need is there to say something or other? Another speaks too loudly; another pays no attention to whispering at the doors, and at the entrances, which as Fr. Pignatelli stated – a very holy Priest – that these ought to form part of our silence. Along the way, in the public streets, one should be silent. There is by rule that one should not talk with any woman, unless another is present, and so on, and one should not try to call the porter, and so on: this is a failing.

That one should not enter the room of another without permission. And when one has entered, the door should be left opened. Whoever, therefore, set foot in the room of another, and so on. Even to the laundry bag attached to the door, and so on, for the tailor, or the launderer⁴⁴. One cannot use books without permission. To borrow, or to take something from another. Modesty regarding one's own person was so much recommended by our Venerated Founder. So, anyone who would walk about with his hands jus drooping, is a failing against this Rule: whoever runs also fails – who sits with one leg over the other, this is a fault.

Whoever is absorbed in the broth or coffee while consuming it, surely there is needed a bit of attention, but it would be very strange for one to slurp it, and so on. Or one who remains in idleness: this is in itself a failing in that Rule which prohibits it. One would be failing in keeping his room neat, but then would neglect the cleanliness of his own person, and other matters of this nature. And who would dare to enter the room of the Superior, without first having had the permission to do so? And what about one who would ask something of the tailor, or the cobbler? To speak with seculars without permission, with externs ...

There are other examples found in the work of Fr. Patrignani, regarding the observance of the Rules. Fr. Fabio Fabi was called the living and breathing rule of the Jesuits: the most minute rules were most exactly observed by him, because as he felt, these were the most easily transgressed. Fr. Sertorio Caputo, for as long as he lived, never failed to do penance for any defect of his observance. Once it happened that he ate a few strawberries in a garden so that he would not sadden his student companions.

Fr. Charles Hoffeo, often called upon the souls of the faithful departed for their help because they said that they were suffering atrocious pains for all the failures committed for little matters. He advised our young members to be punctual in their observance: 'Otherwise – he would say – you will come after death to ask me for help.'



⁴⁴ These few words seem to mean that the laundry bag should just be attached to the door of these confreres in charge of clothing in the Community.

III.

LOVE FOR ONE'S CELL

The Cloister is Paradise – St. Peter Damian – Fr. Cainer – Love for one's cell, a sign of predestination - The cell and office – examples of the saints – Gospel warning – Brother Fly – the Abbot Serapion and the wandering Monk – The Monks of Egypt = St. Basil – The Dove of Noah – *From the cell to heaven.*

It is likewise true that the Cloister, the Religious State, is a Paradise: *truly the cloister is Paradise.* Such is precisely religious life, for any religious who lives it in accord with his profession. St. Peter Damian who had lived this by experience, affirms it. And when he had to leave his cell and go out from the monastery for his duties and occupations, he could not pass a single hour, or even a moment, without some regrets and laments. But, just as soon as he would return to his cell, the anguish ceased, and his afflictions vanished.

In like manner, one of our priest companions experienced the same thing. Since by his office he often had to go here and there throughout the city, he always seemed oppressed. And once he had returned home, when he had hardly put his foot inside the door,, he could not restrain himself from exclaiming: 'Now I can breathe!'. And then, coming out into the garden to be with us younger confreres, he would say: 'what a beautiful gift it is to be here, far from the tumult! At least here, one can breathe in holy peace. And he seemed blessed. This was Fr. Cainer.

Oh, what a great consolation it is for the religious that which St. Bernard brings to us when he says that *scarcely can anyone ever, unless predestined for heaven, remain in his cell until death!* This is the blessed comfort of good religious who *even until death remain* in the religious state: they have in this a sign of their predestination. And rather it is a sign of reprobation for restless religious, tepid, undisciplined, bad, who do not persevere until death in their vocation to which they were called by the Lord. *Like an alien, and as one who is not a son, very soon casts himself out almost as aborted, nor can he withstand for long within himself, the duties of piety...*⁴⁵

And precisely, my most beloved brothers, it is in our cells in a special manner that we ought to find love: because it is precisely the cell which in the monastery itself that should form the delights of the good religious. And by the cell I do not mean solely one's own room assigned to him, but also in the place of his proper office, as the kitchen is for the cook, the shop for the tailor, and the shop for the cobbler, the school for the student, and so on: this ought to be the beloved domain, from which the religious should not depart without need and without a sufficient reason.

The cell ought to be one's garden, the desk of the accountant, the cabinet of divine love, his oratory, the place of one's peace. And thus becomes also the religious soul – as the Spouse of the Canticles - the enclosed garden for the heavenly Spouse, *a*

⁴⁵ Fr. Lenotti's style is one that employs countless pious examples of yester-year. This one is from Guigo, the Carthusian [also quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Fr. Leontti seems to be quoting his *Solitary Life for the Brothers of the Mount of God*, among the works of St. Bernard.

garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up, my Sister, my Spouse [cf. Ct 4:12: i.e., the cell becomes for the religious, the source of all goods, as St. Bernard explains: *the font and origin of all goods is for the spiritual man to dwell often.*

And so it is. In his cell St. Anthony of Padua merited to hold between his arms the Infant Jesus. In her cell, it was revealed to St. Teresa the ineffable mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. In her cell, St. Catherine of Siena received from her divine Spouse the crown of thorns. In summary, in their cells, all the monks and good religious penetrated with their sharp eye the eternal secrets, they had graces, inspirations, comforts and enjoyed great peace.

But, let us open the Holy Gospel up a bit and let us see what Jesus Christ Himself recommends to us regarding one's cell. ***But you, when you shall pray, enter into your chamber, and having shut the door, pray to the Father in secret*** [cf. Mt 6:6]. And so it is the Lord Who persuades us to retreat into our cells, *and having shut the door*, to offer our prayer. Now, the religious ought to be a man of prayer: prayer ought to be our continuous food; therefore it is necessary to maintain the recollection of one's own room. Therefore it is in the Rules of the Discalced Carmelites, where it is said" *Let each of them remain in their cells.*

Ah! Let us also tell the truth: that going about, walking here and there. That going out at every turn from one's own room without reasonable motives, how many inconveniences does that produce! What prejudice will not redound on silence, on that recollection of the spirit, on religious observance! Rather, acting in this manner thus breaks the silence, one comes to speak with this one and that other one, because opportunity makes a man a thief, one looks about in all directions, he criticizes, murmurs, becomes lazy, is lacking in his own duties, others are disturbed, bad example is given, and there are committed other failings, which, were one to remain in his room, would all be avoided. There was that Franciscan Friar who was always out of his cell, and was called 'Friar Fly' ⁴⁶. And so the name 'Brothers Fly' can be applied to those who can never stand still and stable at their place, but they go here and there, as flies do: ahead, backward, inside and out, they disturb their brothers, in that they *wander about lawlessly*, and perhaps they will even get stung. What a wonderful reputation we win for ourselves.

Cassian narrates, that there went to find the Abbot Serapion a certain monk, who in his habit, in his gestures, and in his words, he manifested a great humility and disdain toward himself. He never would tire speaking poorly of himself. The Abbot Serapion, after having eaten a bit of food with him, began to discourse on some spiritual matters as was his custom, during which the Monk guest played his part, in that with much charity and pleasing manner, he offered a good counsel. And do you know what it was? That since he was young and robust, that he should strive to reside in his cell and to work with his hands in order to earn his keep, in harmony with the rule of the Monks. He went on to say that he should not go about without much else to do, to the cells of the others. The guest monk took this recollection so badly that he could not hide the fact and

⁴⁶ Cf. Thomas Celano, *Second Legend*, cc. 45, 49.

he showed this in his face and in his appearance. From all this, the Abbot Serapion said to me: ‘What is this, my son, that up to now you have been saying of yourself so many evils and so many aspects for your own great shame and dishonor – and now, due to a simple admonition, such as this has been which does not contain in itself any real injury nor any shame, but much love and charity, you have become so full of disdain and so changed, that you have been unable to hide it? I expected that you perhaps had heard that saying of the wise man from our mouth: *the just man is the poorest accuser of himself?* Did you think that we would praise you and hold you for good and just?

Rather, what a beautiful thing it is and so edifying to see a religious always in the established hours attentive to his office, keeping silence, being quiet, peaceful in his place, in his cell! Such a one remains there quietly and full of tranquility with His Lord. Such a one is well ordered, or is offering his prayer, or he is studying, or working at his projects. And often he breaks forth into fervent aspirations, in ejaculation, in loving sighs for Jesus or Mary or St. Joseph, or of his Guardian Angel: these are all witnesses and coadjutors of his retreat and of his solitude and of his peace.

Let us learn, o my Brothers, from those ancient Monks of Egypt, about whom Cassian narrates who had visited them.⁴⁷ They observed a most exact retreat in their cells, so much so that no one would dare to get out from them if he was not moved to do so by holy obedience. And if ever, once the Mass was over and the Communion distributed, or the other functions of the Church, *once the Communion was finished, anyone who did not return to his cell, was punished*.⁴⁸

And what will we say of that great Father of the Monks, St. Basil? In his Rules, he condemns the departures from one’s cell without some urgent need and without permission. And on going out, he says that the Monks needs to be *armed with his breast-plate of the love of God*. And then when it is necessary to go out, he orders the Monk: *immediately once the necessity has been met, do not remain in exile* - return immediately, and immediately return there, do not remain outside⁴⁹.

It is necessary, o beloved, to do as did Noah’s dove. You know well that once the great rain was over from the terrible cataclysm, Noah sent out the raven in order to explore, and this found the cadavers and rot, and he remained with them and did not return to the ark. Rather, the dove *where she not finding where to rest her foot*,⁵⁰ in order not to become dirtied herself, and to keep herself neat and pure and clean, very soon returned to its quiet on the ark.

This is the way it is with us. Let us not do as the raven did: we are not like the ‘ravens’ as religious, tepid and so on, going forth willingly from the sure solitude of the

⁴⁷ In his *Original Constitutions*, **CF # 237** Fr. Bertoni refers to the care of the sick exercised by the Monks of Egypt, as related by St. Jerome.

⁴⁸ *De Institutis Coenobiorum*.

⁴⁹ *Regulae fusius disputatae*.

⁵⁰ The text given is Gn 7:9 – the details are not clear in the text.

cell. Nor, on going out, do we stop to view the voluptuousness and the wastes of this earth, being fed on those matters which distract us: but, rather, let us be like the dove; we are religious meant to be as 'doves', let us return immediately to the ark, i.e., to our rooms, the place of security and defense, of peace and repose. ***This is my rest forever and ever; here will I dwell, for I have chosen it.*** [cf. Ps 131:14].

Finally, let the cell be – and I will say it – our sepulcher. It is precisely so. Listen to what Isaiah says: ***Go, My People!*** And where? ***Enter into your chambers*** [cf. Is 26:20]. And St. Jerome adds, speaking to religious: *Enter into your chamber, into your sepulcher, shut your doors upon you,* and so on. Religious, who are dead to this world, *hey rest in peace:* they have quiet in there and repose, and what is for certain – as a holy author states - *the cell is a very close emulation of the Lord's sepulcher: why? Because of sin, it receives the dead, and by the breath of the Holy Spirit, this makes one live for God.*

Oh! How beautiful and consoling are the words of St. Bernard in this regard. Listen to them: *from one's cell, often does one ascend right into heaven: very rarely, or even never, does one descend from his cell into hell. Unless, as the Psalmist says, the living will descend into hell... i.e., lest the dying descend there.*

Therefore, what is to be drawn from all this? That we religious ought to love our room tenderly; and if by necessity we should be outside of it, that we be like fish out of water: *as water is for the fish, so the cell is for monks* - is what he said. One day one monk went to see another old Monk, a great servant of God, begging him that he might offer him some spiritual insight to increase his fervor. And the old man, who knew well this one as one of those Friars who love to pass out of their cells, responded to him: *go, and sit in your cell: for your cell can teach you everything, if you will only remain in it.*

The cell, then, my brothers, let it be our beloved dwelling, our consolation, our Paradise. Let us try to keep it neat, the chairs in order, the bed neatly made, and everything clean. Let us keep in mind that observation of that Monk, who used to say: Moses up there on Sinai, as long as he remained *in the clouds*, recollected and closed in the clouds, spoke with god. But, when he came out, only then would he speak with the people, with other human beings.

And so it is with the religious: as long as he remains closed and recollected in his cell, as in a mysterious cloud cover, he speaks with God and deals with His Divine majesty, and hears His voice and His orders: but, if he comes out of that cloud, he speaks with other human beings, and eventually meets even *with devils.*



IV.
NORMS OF GOVERNMENT LEARNED IN THE SCHOOL OF ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

The soul of government is love – The Chapters – Various points of advice – And recommendations – A Citation from St. Ignatius.

The holy Patriarch, Benedict, employed great prudence and gentleness in correcting his religious, thus making clear that it is most true that in order to wash and make clean the stains on the soiled linens and to return them to the earlier cleanliness, there are to be sought sweet waters, and not harsh and bitter bleaches. And in fact, this saint wanted to say this: *that the soul of government is to love dearly those who are governed, and to be likewise tenderly loved by them.*

Of St. Alphonsus there is narrated that in his life that his religious desired him in the Chapter, while he was Bishop, and that he had every care to be there, even though these capitular gatherings always frightened him. In so far as he could, he sought always to impede them, and he would say to those congregated: **‘One outside of Chapter does not know what he is talking about and may not even merit to be understood, but in a Chapter he is considered to be Solomon, and with a black ball he can change have the world.’**

Another time, as his Congregation was being persecuted, he wrote to his men: ‘Regular observance has fallen away, and God is punishing us. Let us hope in his divine mercy and goodness which does not wish to permit seeing this community destroyed: but, let us strive to placate him with prayers. And with avoiding voluntary defects, especially those against obedience.’

He wrote once to Fr. Villani: ‘Advise the new rectors not to put up new buildings without the approval of the Consulters of the house, since buildings are of very small importance. But what is a much more important matter, that there not be undertaken any of them without my permission. That there not be spent much for the buying of books of notable value. It is good that they think of treating better our men in food, that they may not lament, and be more careful of regular observance. Moreover, let them extend gentleness with everyone, that the members might correct one another in a friendly manner and in secret, and that even when the defects are public, let them first make the correction in secret. Sweetness, and also strength, with all. That which without special purpose is granted to one, only with difficulty can this be denied to some one else, and thus, the whole matter of regular observance falls apart. This is what I would want that the rectors should command.’

‘ I ask you to make this known to the Community of Nocera [which was frequented by the local gentry and exposed to the regular commerce of friends who came and went from Naples] the following orders of mine: that no one should go into the kitchen, neither the fathers, nor the Brothers, nor the boarders, except for those assigned to work there. That all should take part in the common exercises, except for the actual sick men, or those who have an expressed permission to be absent. Outside of Thursdays;

according to the Rule, no one should go out from the College for a walk, and especially on the solemn feasts. Finally, our Fathers and Brothers should not talk long in the entrance way, or in the garden, and even less in the rooms with priests, or seculars, without the express permission of Your Reverence and with just reason.'

Writing to Fr. Gaio, the Rector, he said to him: 'I beg you to recommend to all the regular observance, the humility and charity with the brothers: do not complain about the poverty, suffering humiliations, and do not pretend to be listened to – but, even more do not work against the Superiors, and do not resist obedience. The acts of the lack of observance are those which make me tremble the most than all the persecutions. Let us conduct ourselves well with God, that Jesus Christ and the Madonna might not fail to help us.'

'I do not want Parish Missions with the heat of summer – he once wrote to one of the Rectors – because the men can lose their heads. In all the new foundations there is much to suffer, and this greatly, because of poverty.' 'The persecutions – he used to say – are for the works of God as are the ice in the winter for the plants: rather than hurting them they help them to deepen their roots and to render them more fruitful. The worm is what can damage the plants: the worms that we have to avoid are the voluntary defects and failings. Let us rid ourselves of these defects so that God will not fail to provide for us.'

'Let us not build castles in the air. All are deceptions from the devil, in order to lead us not to appreciate our vocations. To me, a lack of observance affects me more than a hundred persecutions. Let us kiss the walls of our rooms: and the more we see ourselves persecuted, so much the more let us cling to Jesus Christ.'

St. Alphonsus wrote to the rectors and often recommended the following matters; 'I want that every member should have his own room: when a confrere does not have his own room, he is the most unhappy man, not having the freedom for his own bodily and spiritual needs. Look to the care of each one's health. When one's health is ruined, the confrere does not serve neither his neighbor, nor himself. I recommend charity to you with utmost urgency: if there is lacking the bond of charity that unites us among ourselves and with Jesus Christ, then everything is lacking, even though we might become as rich as Croesus. When peace and harmony are lacking, God is lacking.'

St. Ignatius comes along and severely castigates anyone who would speak and work against charity. 'I do not ask' – he said to his followers – 'I do not ask for grandiose endeavors; I do not ask even for smaller ones, but permanent results' – 'this is such a fertile principle, and at the same time, one that is easy for all in its realization.'



V.
A CONFERENCE ON THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER⁵¹

1. The question is in what does this consist. And one might respond: In the habit of praying always, or in a certain habitual inclination of praying and staying in communication with God.
2. Means to acquire it and to practice it: *Seek the spirit of praying in Prayer.*
3. The use of ejaculatory prayers and aspirations – Renewal of intentions in single actions – Modesty of the eyes and restraint of the tongue and recollection – A Meditation well conducted, with an attentive recitation of all the oral prayers – Mass and Communion - To speak often of God and of the matters pertaining to the spirit – the exercise of the presence of God and mortification.
4. How fitting all this is, rather necessary, for religious: because a religious without this spirit is only disguised as a religious, rather he is a body without a soul. The reason is a religious is the Lord's page-boy, an intimate in His house, familiar with God, obliged to pray for himself and for his neighbor, by whom he is charged in a certain sense.

How many good seculars are imbued with this spirit, and how much more should we be!

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VI.
A CONFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS MANNERS AND PLITENESS WITH
DOMESTICS AND EXTERNS

1. It is asked whether this is befitting Religious, especially those of mixed life and missionaries.
2. It is asked on what should this be based. On humility and charity. A farmer, a porter endowed with Fear of the Lord, with courtesy and nobility of manners!
3. It is asked in what it consists. It may be responded: In a certain air of sweetness in speaking, in dealing with others, in conversing, in a certain interest in others' afflictions and consolations, of the good and difficulties of others: not being indifferent, insensible to the prosperity or adversity of others.
4. It ought to be totally exempt and free of those vicious flaws of a worldly treating of others. It should not be motivated by ambition, nor for astuteness, politics, not for self-interest, and not to be loved.
5. Its Practice: with those of the house, and especially with Superiors. With respect toward all. And how with regard to Superiors? By meeting with them, speaking with them, asking if they needed anything, how they are after their journeys and so on. With others, whether priests, or companions. With externs, with familiar members, acquaintances, or visiting priests and so on.

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⁵¹ These are just outlines of two Conference – the contents of which have not come down to us.

VII.
EXHORTATION I:
THE IMPORTANCE AND REASONS FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF
CONSCIENCE.⁵²

Fr. Lancisio – St. Ignatius and our Venerated Founder – The text of the Rule – there follows from this the commitment of knowing well one’s own duty – The motives: the better government of the community – The better assistance of the Superior toward the Subjects – A better distribution of personnel in the Institute – This weighs on the conscience of the confreres – Exercise of Humility – the Example of our Fathers and Brothers – The Words of St. John Berchmans – Substantial Rules of the Institute.

I will begin this present exhortation with the words of the well known Fr. Nicholas Lancisio: ‘It is the office and duty of good subjects and of those religious who are solicitous for the spiritual profit of one’s own soul, that of opening up their conscience to their Superiors, holding nothing hidden, neither good, nor evil, that might contribute to their direction and government, thus to preserve them from dangers and evils, as well as to promote them in virtue.’

As for St. Ignatius of Loyola, how is it that he came to see this as having such great importance, that all the subjects each year, should render a full account of their conscience to their Superiors, either in Confession, or outside of it? And our Venerated Founder established this and prescribed it in his *Original Constitutions*, both for the good government and direction of our very small Society:

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

Therefore – here Fr. Nicholas Lancisio - mentioned above, continues – the Superiors and Spiritual Fathers should on their part cooperate that the subjects should manifest their conscience with all sincerity to their Superiors and Spiritual Fathers. Do you see, then, o my Brothers, most dear in Jesus Christ - and I will also say, beloved children – do you not see how great should my commitment be, and my study in order to instruct you in this, and to animate you to render a clear and sincere account of yourselves to the one whom the Superior has given you to govern you: all the more, from being well educated and trained in the practice of this rule, depends the continuing then for the whole rest of your lives. It is for this reason that I, in order to satisfy my most principal duty, I will do my best to speak to you in some exhortations: since it is too important that you should come to know how this manifestation of conscience demands this among us: i.e., in accord with the traces and the norms of the early Fathers and Founders. Let us see today, *why*: why, and for what reasons there is ordered this manifestation and this rendering an account of one’s conscience, and this clarity that the subjects ought to have with their Superiors.

In the 1st Place: religious ought to proceed with this clarity of conscience with their Superiors, so that these latter might govern the subjects. The Superior has the strict

⁵² Both Fr. Bertoni [cf. **CF ## 47, 107, 111**] and St. Ignatius had rather sweeping legislation in this regard – greatly restricted by modern Church legislation.[cf. for example Can. 630, §§ 1-5].

obligation to rule us, to direct us: who is there who could deny this? The Superior is responsible before God and the Congregation for the progress and the salvation of each one of us. Consequently, if the Superior has the strict duty to do this, he also has the strict right of knowing our consciences, our interior – and we have the strict obligation of manifesting ourselves and of opening ourselves with all sincerity. If the Superior does not know us, nor do we manifest our consciences to him, he will not be able certainly to direct us in good and guide us in the way of the spirit. ***He that hides his sins, shall not prosper*** [cf. Pr 28:13]. And then the religious houses are like so many hospitals⁵³, and we are the patients: but if the sick man does not make known to the doctor his infirmity, how can he ever be cured of it? *What it does not know – says, St. Jerome – medicine does not cure.* And if our infirmities, or indispositions are many, it is needed – says Fr. Rodriguez – that we manifest all of them to him, that is very helpful to the one to whom we manifest it. The Chinese who are ill, do not speak when the doctor comes, to leave to him the expertise of knowing their malady. But, in our case, it cannot be this way: because the Lord, grants the gift of seeing the secrets of the heart to certain saints. When the Doctor knows fully the sick man and his complexion and his offending inner humors, then he can get to the root of the evil, and he is at a good point in order to cure it. The Superior is our doctor, and let us thank God that we have him always in the house, and so handy, that we can, whenever we want, consult him to be medicated and governed.

In the 2nd Place: it is so important that these sincere manifestations of conscience take place, because in this way the Superior will be able all the better to assist and direct our souls from various inconvenient situations and dangers. *It is not enough to make a good manifestation* – notes St. Ignatius – *it needs be thorough.* This is so that the Superior might have a comprehensive knowledge of the inclinations and temptations of the confreres, and to what defects and sins they, or have been, inclined the more, because with this information, the Superior might rule and direct better, not so much by commanding, or not permitting anything that might be above his abilities, nor by placing them in greater dangers and fatigue that they could reasonably support, or expose them to dangerous occasions for their souls. Or if, he would have to place them in occasions, or would have to permit some things, he might fore-arm them with such means as to be able to save them from every detriment, or prejudice.

In the 3rd Place: it is clear that this manifestation helps and aids the Superior greatly so that he might better order, and provide that which is better for the body of the entire Congregation, the good and honor of which, together with that of each one of us, he is obliged to take responsibility. And if we do not further this for him, we will expose to danger perhaps our honor and our soul and also the honor of the Congregation which depends on ours.

And then, my beloved Brothers, the sincere manifestation of ourselves is something that ought to interest very much each and every religious: do you know why? For the emptying out and security of our own consciences. Otherwise, you see, that will land on him all these dangers or disorders that would derive from one's taciturnity:

⁵³ In his *Spiritual Diary*, Fr. Bertoni thinks of the whole world as a large hospital – cf. **MP, March 6, 1809**

which if one had indeed manifested to the Superior his own weakness and his meager spiritual forces, he would not have found himself in those occasions or hazards – or, the Superior would have armed him in a manner that he might protect himself. You wish to do your work as a big-shot or strong man, by hiding from the Superior your inner weakness and wretchedness: al right, then, but remember that the fault of everything will fall on your own heads. The Superior can wash his hands of the entire matter before God, and can say with even great reasons than could Pilate: *I am innocent of his blood!* [cf. Mt 27:24. And he can say with the Apostle to the Ephesians: *I am clear from the blood of all men; For I have not spared to declare unto you all the counsel of God* [cf. Ac 20:27]. O Lord, I have done all that I could, I have exposed to him the rule, and recommended it to him so many time: he should have manifested his heart to me. If he is ruined, the fault is his own: *...Destruction is his own!* [cf. Ho 13:9].

So it is that you can see that were it not for anything else other than for our own consolation and security, for the possibility of unloading our conscience, to remain without scruples, and so that the many dangers that we might have to run might not fall on our shoulders alone, for this motive alone we should render this account to the Superior. And also, though, thus to oblige even more greatly that the Lord come to help us and to place us in safety from the dangers and occasions...

What comfort is there not in being able to say: If now I find myself in this occasion, if I have to undertake this study, if I have to work so hard in this other matter, if I have to hear confessions, preach, and so in., I have nothing else that brings me such fear: rather, the Lord surely will assist me, because I have told all, I have manifested all my imperfections and miseries to the Superior, so I may be quiet!

In addition to this, it is a great relief to be able to open up our afflictions to an another, to let off steam from our hearts and to pour everything out – I will put it this way - into his lap! *A faithful friend... is medicine for life...and a strong defense... and he that finds one, has found a treasure* [cf. Si 6:14, ff.]. *Woe to the one who is alone!*⁵⁴ And further, one exercises humility by making this manifestation, and by this humility the Lord assists us. Mortification is exercised, obedience and so on⁵⁵.

For these reasons our Venerated Father Bertoni has ordered us and prescribed for us this Rule. And whoever enters into our Institute is obliged to observe it if he wants to be a true member of this Congregation. All the more so does this oblige those who have pronounced their vows: because such as these even more than others are committed to its Constitutions.

We ought also to imitate those good Fathers and Brothers who have preceded us. It was beautiful to see them kneeling before the bed of our Venerated Founder to accuse themselves, and opening up to him their hearts.

⁵⁴ The text given here is Qo 10:11 – which does not fully jibe with the Douay version in English. There is also noted Qo 4:10.

⁵⁵ Cf. Rodriguez, Part III, tr. VII, Chapters II-V.

Regarding the Venerated Berchmans⁵⁶ it was noted of him: that he was most sincere, most open, and was as most pure water with his Superiors and Spiritual Father.

My Brothers, this is such a substantial matter for our Institute, that without it, it certainly cannot be conserved. Some historians observe that in some religious communities, for all the time that this holy custom remained, of going to communicate all important matters to their Superiors and Spiritual Father, and that the confreres keep these well informed and manifesting their souls to them, they walked ahead with great fervor. On the contrary, experience shows us that the usual path for which one eventually gets lost, is this: when the members begin to be silent and hide from their Superior some passion or weakness of theirs: and so, the community goes on being infected and the wound becomes even more inflamed, and then little by little I becomes incurable, and it all ends quite badly. My most beloved Brothers, keep uppermost in your minds, that if you love your soul, if you love this, your Congregation, then, I beg you, and I urge you in the name of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and in the name of our Protectors Mary and Joseph, to decide to be exact observers of this Rule. May your heart be placed before your Superior, as a transparent crystal where everything can be seen: and do not have an regard, or fear, overcome every obstacle, and the Lord will bless you and you will draw much profit in the service of God, and you will be protected from so many traps that the Devil also in Religious Life unfortunately sets for the Servants of God.



⁵⁶ Beatified in 1865.

VIII.
EXHORTATION II

Examen of the Rule, word for word, and Responses to objections, *passim* - The ancient Spartans – The fear of losing honor, while the contrary is the truth - What will the Superior say?

We saw the other time the great importance of the sincere manifestation of our conscience to anyone who rules us in the place of God, and the reasons for this ordination. Let us stop a bit here today to examine ore in depth this Rule, and to dissolve those objections that might be brought up against its exact observance. What is meant, then, by what this Rule says:

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

Manifestation: this means to render an accounting of one's own conscience, of one's interior life: i.e., to open up oneself each and ever day – as Clement VIII expressed himself, in a Bull speaking to Novices – the internal movements of one's heart, to manifest one's own temptations, *especially by a daily opening up of all the internal motions of ones heart, and the manifestation of his temptations* [cf. Roman Collection of Papal Bull]. So, it is not enough to accuse oneself, or to make a manifestation of one's defects, or exterior failings, as would be the case were one to forget something, or if one took a needle from the tailor shop, or when one breaks silence, or passes a cutting remark: this is not really a *manifestation of conscience, of oneself*, rendering an account of one's deepest self. But, further there is asked here for a clear and sincere manifestation of the internal workings of one heart, and his temptations.

This manifestation of oneself is to be made to the Superiors : i.e., the local Superior where one dwells, and at the same time – from time to time – to the Superior General, or Provincial⁵⁷ of the Congregation. *Nevertheless it will be the duty of the members to make themselves known quite openly to the Superiors, so that this manifestation of conscience to be given will find its place at least once, or several times a year, at stated times, by recurring to them, and frequently going to them.*

Either in Sacramental Confession, our outside of it, whenever he sees fit. This means either under the seal of Confession, or outside of confession, as might better redound to our consolation. But precisely right here, it might pass through the mind of someone: since it is up to me to give an accounting of my conscience, either in confession, or outside of it, I will manifest my interior life to my Ordinary Confessor, and no more would be asked of me: in this way, I would have fulfilled this Rule. But, listen well: if the Rule is understood in this way, who is it that cannot say that it would be useless to make it, while just a little before, prior to this Rule, there is that other important one of

⁵⁷ Form the language here it is evident that Fr. Lenotti hoped for the day when the Congregation would be numerous enough to have individual Provinces. There are hints of a broad base of membership in the Founder's *quocumque euntes* [cf. **CF # 5**]; kindness to confreres of differing nationality [cf. **CF ## 193;245; 246** - respecting the customs of the different regions.

confessing every eight days? *Sacramental Confession will be made very eighth day!* [cf. **CF # 47**].

The Rule states: *The manifestation of one's Conscience is made to the Superior, either in Confession, or outside it:* it is understood that it will always be to the Superior, and that it might be done in confession, or outside of it, but always to the *Superiors*: otherwise the Rule would be an illusion, and it would make no difference between a religious, or a secular. The reason is that the manifestation of one's own conscience in going to confession, to one's own confessor, obliges also seculars, ladies, soldiers, everyone. A manifestation of this kind would only take place between the religious and the Confessor.

How often, then, to render this accounting to the Superior of one's own conscience in confession, or outside of it, lies within our good judgment. Furthermore, as Rodriguez and the spiritual masters points out – it is better that the Religious – having taken away something, if one would wish – would be to manifest one's conscience rather outside of Confession: the reason here is that this shows more confidence with one's Superior who is meant to be a loving father for us, and also the Superior might be able to help us the more. But, right here, someone might object: If I give an accounting of my conscience to the Superior outside of confession, he might then would be free to speak of it.

Let it be known, my dear Brothers, that this matter of the manifestation of one's conscience even outside of Confession, is something that passes only between the confreere and his Superior to whom he manifests himself. The Superior who receives the accounting of one's conscience remains a secret, as Fr. Lancisio and Fr. Rodriguez make clear. And a few years or so ago, while I was reading the Pontifical Collection of Papal Bulls in this matter, to get information concerning it, I found that the Roman Pontiff, in the Rules of the Basilian Fathers, or Monks, places a secret upon them.

The ancient Spartans on the door of the hall where they would hold heir meetings, had written: *What is said here, is not to leave here.* Thus, you see – as far as the manifestation of conscience is concerned – on the Superior's door should be written: *What is said here, will not leave from here.* Rather it all remains buried in his heart, with him speaking of it with anyone. Thus, therefore, from this aspect no one should have any fear toward anyone, nor any pretext not to be sincere and to bring up anything that one has given an account of his interior life to his Superior. The reason for this is that for the Superior this remains secret. Otherwise, there would be in this one more of the objects or pretexts which would serve our self love, or the devil, that we might not be fully sincere and open with one's own Director, and Superior.

One of the greater difficulties – and the greatest of all –that is usually brought forward by some as the reason for not manifesting themselves, and for not opening their own hearts to their Superior is – according to Rodriguez – this: If I say all that passes into my mind and into my heart to the Superior, I will remain too ashamed, I will lost my good name, my credit. From this moment on, he will not look favorably on me, nor will

he bear much love toward me. This is the great *Achilles' heel*, the most powerful spring in the hands of the demon, so that some either will not open up to their Superiors, or will not do so in any total manner.

But, what if I should say to you that the opposite is true? Let us take one matter at a time. First, I assure you – and I prove it to you – that it is rather by manifesting oneself, and opening up oneself very boldly to the Superior, one comes to acquire even greater esteem and honor – while by not making such a bold declaration, one loses this. In fact, there is nothing with which one would lose more the good reputation and good opinion towards one's Superior, as by hiding oneself, and thinking too much about oneself: since this give him the occasion of being considered a hollow, two-faced person. This is what will make one suspect before him. It might be thought of such a person: 'This man is all closed in, is sneaky: and what do I know that if he is hiding this matter, that there are not also other matters that he keeps hidden? I do not know what to think of him, what he does on his own, what he has in his heart.' Which do you want? This alone is the most sorrowful and worst opinion that could be had concerning one. Precisely where one makes known his whole soul to his Superior, he declares to him his temptations, his tendencies and his defects, he is candid and simple of heart, the Superior not only does not lose a good opinion concerning him, but on the contrary gets a better opinion of him, because he thinks of him as humble and mortified, as sincere and very open. And that candid nature, that simplicity makes him loved the more, and leads him to a higher opinion of his confrere.

I know that there are certain religious who work themselves into great apprehension in saying: Who knows what the Superior will say! What surprise will he not experience in hearing about such a terrible temptation, a matter that is so extraordinary and particular to me! This will be something he has never heard before: what corrections will he not mete out to me!

Fr. Rodriguez explains that a temptation of this sort is really that of Novices, to whom - since they do not yet have knowledge of these matters - everything seems new and unheard of before. But I am able to tell you that the Superior to whom the manifestation will have heard such things a million times, without any exaggeration [sic!]. ***There is nothing new under the sun.*** [cf. Qo 1:10]. This type of worry is something that makes us Confessors smile – as when sometimes someone or other comes to go to confession and begins saying: 'Father, I have a sin, but I do not have the courage to say it, since you will never before heard such a confession.' And the Confessor responds; 'Please go ahead...' And then they ask: 'Father, has Your reverence every heard anything like it?' And the truth is these would be matters we will have heard a thousand times. Therefore, for any such reason as described here do not fail to bring out anything on our mind, temptation, or failure of any kind. And what kinds of corrections would you expect to hear? The Superior knows that we are all made up of lowly clay that easily breaks. The Superior, from the knowledge that he has of himself, knows rather well the weakness and fragility of the confrere, because we are all of the same flour. He knows well that if the Lord did not hold onto him from head to toe, he, too, would be worse than all...

The Superior does not have a heart of stone, or bronze. He is actually a father, and on hearing that one sincerely makes known to him his miseries, no matter how wretched and shameful these may seem to be, all the more is he moved as a father. What do you expect? That humility and frankness with which one accuses himself of his faults, and makes known his interior life, that desire for his own spiritual profit and of being medicated and healed, naturally moves whoever the Superior may be and he becomes more tender toward his confrere, and with a truly paternal affection, he commits himself totally toward him in everything.

And this is precisely so that the Superior, for the opening up of our consciences and our miseries, rather than losing affection for us, the exact opposite happens. I assure you that there is no more efficacious means to be loved and esteemed by the Superior, and to win over more of his love, than occurs in manifesting to him, and making known to him, one's own heart, without holding anything back in secret.

It could not be otherwise, and might even be established in a philosophical manner. Since the old saying is true: *if you wish to be loved, then love!* Love precisely is shown by communicating everything in one's heart to a friend: since, between friends nothing is ever held hidden. And so, one of the principal matters in which one can show that he loves his Superior much is in making known to him all of one's interior life, and all of one's secrets, both great and small. When, therefore, the Superior sees that one does make known to him his own interior life, and that there does not remain anything within that he does not reveal, then the Superior realizes that this confrere truly loves him, and considers him his father, and standing in the place of God, since the confrere is willing to confide his whole soul in honor of this, and places all things in his Superior's hands. This obliges the Superior to love his confrere more and to have a greater care for him.

However, if the Superior sees that his confrere really is not fully declaring himself, but is rather proceeding with great reserve and with circumlocutions, this is sufficient reason for the Superior not to form all that good of an idea of his confrere, and might come to love him less. The reason is that in this, the Superior concludes that the confrere really does not love him, nor does he esteem him, nor consider him really as his father, because he does not trust him, nor does he find the spirit to make all known to his Superior, and this naturally brings about a certain aversion. How do you expect that the Superior should love you as his sons, if you do not love him as a father, entrusting yourselves to him, and treating with him with clarity and sincerity?

'But precisely [the objection might go] in my manifesting my interior life entirely to the Superior, he will no longer have any trust in me.' Listen: just suppose that there is a father who has two sons. One of these is so sincere and open – almost I would say – like water! He does not hide anything from his father, none of the dangers he undergoes. He speaks to his father of his victories as well as his defeats in school. And when he goes to make his confession, he very simply opens himself up to his father – with which companions he usually associates, if they are honest or not. And should he receive some book, he shows this to his father – if the servant has insulted him in some way, if he is undergoing some affliction, or sadness that is still with him, he hides nothing. He is all

candid and sincere. What a beautiful thing this is! The other son, though, just imagine that he is quiet reserved and secretive. If he has something that bothers him, he never says anything. If he takes part in any conversation, he makes sure that his father will not know of it. The father never knows with whom his son goes, what companions he has, what books he reads, and he is duplicitous in their relationship. He will go to Church, but even there seeks to hide everything. Just tell me now: in which of these two sons can the father and should he trust? Should it be the one who is candid, simple of heart – or the silent one, the one who remain mute? It might even be that the gloomy and quiet one is more devout, might even be better than the other: but which of the two would you have more trust in? Certainly, at least as far as I am concerned, that openness of the former assures me the more, and of him I would live in tranquility because I would know all about him, and I could remedy his difficulties and guide him and save him. But of the latter, who is more duplicitous and secretive, no matter how good he may be, I do not know what he is thinking and what he does, and I cannot live secure regarding his conduct ... Thus it is of the two servants, and he master of the house... and so on.

And the same happens with the Superior of Religious. The Superior with a confrere who opens up his heart to him, makes known to him his interior life, and so on, he is able to trust in because he knows that if his confrere has something on his mind, or is in some danger, he will say it to him forthrightly: he is not afraid of him, but lives in tranquility. But, with another confrere who seeks by every deception to keep himself hide, to say the least that he can, what do you think? The Superior could not rely on him, he cannot be at ease regarding his conduct, because he just does not know what he thinks, or does.

And so – to conclude – the manifestation of conscience is a Rule which rather than bring u difficulties, ought to result as one of the most gentle, one of the easiest to observe. And there is no other way to acquire the esteem and the love of the Superior than being candid and sincere with him. Nor is there anything else that would so much detach the Superior from his confrere than being with him closed, and most cautious in manifesting oneself.

In brief, do you grasp what I have just said to you? That in order to convince oneself of all this, it would be necessary that each Religious should for at least a week serve as Father Master of the Novices – and I am sure that you would be firmly persuaded of all this by your experience.



IX.
EXHORTATION III

Fr. Lenotti as Superior General – The little booklet transcribed from the Founder and its content – Fr. Acquaviva – St. Francis de Sales – Director and Confessor - Review, and words of Clement VIII.

The grave and delicate office which the Lord's Providence has imposed on my weak shoulders, and the most strict obligation of conscience that I feel urging me ever more for the account that I will have to make one day, and the increase which out of goodness that the Lord is bestowing on our Institute, and therefore, the interest that all of you might be well trained and prepared – moves me ever more to seek in the fulfillment of my duties and yours, and on the practical application of our rules.

But, in a very marked way the serious importance that experience and study make me ever more convinced to think of the sincere manifestation of one's heart and conscience, and especially the very unfortunate consequences that from the lack and relaxation of this Rule would bring to your souls and to the entire Congregation, it is this that makes me very much more convinced of this matter, that is not yet totally presented.

In fact, I have only thus far exposed to you how pressing is the observance of this Rule, and that there should not be for you an excuse, or difficulty that would hold you back from placing our hearts precisely in the hands of one who governs us in the name of God, but I have not yet laid out in any real detail what are the matters that all should make known and manifest.

Now, in order to present this, just who is the one to whom we should the more recur, if not to the man whom our Founder has indicated for us? Here, then, is the instruction on rendering an account of one's conscience, which it seems he himself had written in his own hand. [Here is presented the little booklet transcribed by him].

What do you think of this? Before setting down to read this above noted writing, I wanted to go slowly in receiving the manifestation of others' consciences, out of fear that I might be too demanding: but, once I had read this document, I see that I have been excessively indulgent. You have seen how he has said that the confrere, after having said that, that in order to provide a full consciousness of himself will have judged what he should say, just ask the Superior that he might ask you some questions, or help you to bring out further matters, if perchance there might still be something which he might judge – for the greater glory of God and the better understanding of his confreres – he would want to know. And then, one should make known if he lives content with his vocation – and then about obedience, poverty and chastity, and then move on to the passions, or sins, toward which one might feel the more inclined. And then the confrere should make known whether he has any persistent convictions harbored against the Constitutions, Rules, or orders of the Superiors, or has disputed against any of these. And then to make known what idea he has concerning the Institute, and the like, and whether he has any real conviction for spiritual matters – and then what fruit does he gain from Holy Communion and Sacramental Confession, the examen of conscience, especially the Particular Examen. Then he should bring up whatever might be of help to know since his

last manifestation of conscience, whether he has drawn greater or lesser fruit from his life, and so on, and then how he observes the rules. Then he should speak about his mortifications and penances and other exercises that he makes, and so on. And then he should speak of his companions, and how from their conversations he is helped in the Lord, and if he is more familiar with one than with others. And then, he should make known whether he experiences any aversion toward anyone, and whether he has experienced some disgust from anyone of the Superiors or other Officials, or from any person at all, and how he finds his relationship toward his Superiors. And then he should manifest whether he has undergone any temptation, that others might have known of, especially regarding his vocation.

Do you want to hear even more? Just read from Fr. Lancisio and what he says about Fr. Acquaviva – the most famous General of the Company of Jesus after St. Ignatius – and what he wrote to Fr. Otto Eisenreich, in these words: *The quest for perfection demands this, that one render a manifestation of his conscience even of those cases of reservation into which one might fall, even though this is still hidden, because he should never hide anything.* For my part, I tell you the truth, I was amazed to read this. Therefore, if even a Religious, by some disgrace, might have committed a reserved sin the quest for perfection demands that in the rendering of his account of his conscience should manifest this to the Superior, even though the sin might already have been confessed and had already been absolved: and note well the reason behind this: **that he hide nothing:** this is precisely that St. Ignatius states: *The members should conceal nothing of their external or internal life* ⁵⁸.

But do you wish that our wonder come to a halt regarding such a demand? Just listen to what St. Francis de Sales teaches: a famous Master of the Spirit states this: having constantly present before you the distinction that St. Francis de Sales makes between the Director and the Confessor: to the Spiritual Director, one would make known all there is to know about his soul, whereas to the Confessor, only that which is sinful. Further, the saint would want that there not even be an atom of our spirit that is not manifest to the Director.

But, to what purpose is it that we keep adding reasons, and calling upon authorities to convince you of the importance of this Rule and to animate ourselves to practice it entirely? O, my most beloved brothers and sons, if we are truly lovers of our own spiritual progress, and if we really that presses upon us the well-being of our Congregation, we will find no difficulty in this, nor will we have any reserve about opening up our hearts to the Superior, without keeping hidden anything from him. Let us go forward with simplicity, and we will also proceed with confidence: **He that walks sincerely, walks confidently** [cf. Pr 10:9].

Let us review this, then. You have seen the relevance and the motives for this holy ordination which impacts so profoundly our spiritual well-being. We have already seen how this accounting of oneself ought to be about both **external matters, as well as**

⁵⁸ Fr. Stofella has suggested the Jesuit Constitutions, Part VI, c. 1, n. 2, which would be **CSJ n. 551**

those interior, and it should be made to the Superior: ...*This manifestation of one's own conscience is to be made to the Superior, either in Sacramental Confession, our outside it...* [cf. CF # 47]. We have clearly understood how the one who receives this accounting of our hearts is dealing with a most secret of secrets, and that everything that we can make known to him remains buried in his breast. We have understood that there is no more efficacious means to acquire the esteem and love of the Superior as much as opening up to him without reserve and with all confidence – and that with this manifestation we come to practice many virtues at the same time, and we commit the Lord to assist us.

Now, then, it is up to you to give all your resources to the observance of this, and with filial confidence to have recourse to him who ought to direct you in the spiritual life. All the more, you see, in this House of Formation and of Study, where the Master of Novices is also the Prefect of Spiritual Matters for the Novices and also for the Students. And even more also, that since almost all of you are dedicated to study, and this might also contribute to the distraction regarding spiritual matters, as Fr. Lancisio points out, it is necessary that more often you should be in the room of the one who is supposed to direct you, in order to maintain within yourselves something of your fervor.

In summary, I will conclude this matter by repeating to you the words of the Supreme Pontiff, Clement VIII, who recommends to the Master of Novices that he make every effort to help the Novices in the restraining their passions, *especially by the daily practice of opening themselves up regarding the internal motions of their heart, and the daily manifestation of their temptations...*



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