

CONSTITUTIONS
OF THE
DAUGHTERS OF MARY M~D JOSEPH

The Community Life of the Sisters

From the
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Explanations and Exhortations
by our Venerated Founder
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The Community Life of the Sisters

CHAPTER I

Daily Exercises

THE MORNING OFFERING

As faithful servants of God, as the devoted spouses of Jesus Christ, you should perform all your actions for the greater honour and glory of his Divine Majesty, and should implore the aid of his divine grace that each of them may be done with all the perfection which our Blessed Lord expects of you. As our bodies receive light through our eyes, so works receive life from the intention with which they are performed. Do not be satisfied with the daily morning offering of all your actions in general to God. For, although this offering suffices, in so far as it affects each of these actions by giving to it the intention implied in that offering, yet, because of the weakness, the tendency to evil inherent in our human nature, it is certain that self-love, vanity or some other of our inordinate passions may corrupt the purity of our first intention and diminish or even wholly destroy the merit of our works.

Prudence, therefore, will urge us to renew occasionally, during the day and especially before beginning any important work, the good intention which should animate, sanctify and make them fruitful for our salvation.

Your heart, even more than your mind, will suggest to you the intention with which you should perform all your works, an intention befitting your sublime destiny and suited to enable you to obtain the merits so abundantly attached to them.

Prayer

In prayer man enters into communion with God. Never under any circumstances whatever must you forget the injunction given you by the Holy Spirit to prepare your souls before prayer. You should bring to prayer holier, more perfect dispositions than those of ordinary Christians. Charged as you are with a special office, you should, in the name of Holy Church, send up each day to heaven a tribute of prayer and homage that, like sweet-smelling incense, will ascend to the throne of God and draw down upon souls the fruitful dew of grace.

Bring then to prayer these dispositions of reverence and of confidence that the holiness of our God and Saviour, and the tender sentiments of his adorable Heart for you demand.

THE MEDITATION

By frequent contact with persons of recognised prudence we unconsciously become like them; we acquire their tastes, their opinions and even their manners; what effect, then, will not our intimate communion with God in devout habitual prayer have upon us? Those whose lives are consecrated to the service of the Divine Master and to meditation on his divine law are raised even to the nature of the blessed spirits; they are associated with these in their sublime office; they participate in their knowledge, in their wisdom, in their super-natural love; they draw nearer to God himself. "Now," asks St. John Chrysostom, "where can we better acquire wisdom, zeal, justice and every virtue than in the consideration of the example and the lessons that our Divine Lord and his saints have left us?"

From these considerations we can deduce the great importance of this exercise of the spiritual life. Hence the meditation will be for the Daughters of Mary and Joseph as their daily bread. They will neglect no effort, no study, no prayer that will help them to become accustomed to this holy exercise and to find in it the treasures of grace which it contains in such abundance.

You will prepare yourselves the evening before for your morning meditation, ending the exercises of the day and your night prayers by carefully fixing the subject of the morrow's meditation, arranging it in your mind in such a manner that you may be able without mental effort to reflect on it while retiring to rest and on rising in the morning.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

*The Daughters of Mary and Joseph
assist daily at the Holy Sacrifice
of the Mass.*

The Council of Trent tells us that our Divine Saviour has instituted the sacred Mystery of the Blessed Eucharist for two ends: first, that it may be for us the food of our souls, and in virtue of its being a Sacrament, that it may preserve, strengthen and renew in us the life of grace; secondly, to give to the Church a perpetual Sacrifice to offer to God in thanksgiving for his benefits, in atonement for our sins, and to obtain the remedy for our weaknesses and divine assistance in all our general and particular necessities. “

The Sacrifice of the Mass, adds the Council of Trent, “is the same that was offered on the cross on Calvary — the same Victim, the same Sacrifice; the sole difference being in the manner of offering. On Calvary Jesus offered himself a bleeding victim; in the Mass he

offers himself as an unbloody victim. In the Mass he offers himself for us as an offering and a Victim, pleasing and agreeable to his heavenly Father."

What motives are these, my dear sisters, to foster within you the sentiments of gratitude which, each time that you have the happiness of assisting at this adorable Sacrifice, awaken and excite your devotion Always try to carry from it the fruits of salvation and the blessing of our God and our Saviour on all your actions of that day.

SILENCE

The Holy Spirit tells us that God leads the souls which are the objects of his special predilection into the silence of the wilderness, and that it is there that he speaks to his chosen friends. This fundamental truth sufficiently explains the praises which the saints have always bestowed on the religious silence and on those convents wherein it is strictly observed. Those monasteries wherein this stillness, this silence reigns, are figurative of heaven, where nothing disturbs the sweet peace of the elect. At the sign of the serene calm and the ordered regularity that reign in those happy abodes of the spouses of Jesus Christ, even strangers, struck by the contrast which they present to the tumult of the world, are often touched and edified by it and moved to good.

In order, my dear Sisters, that you may derive all the advantages resulting from so salutary an exercise, you will strive to practice interior as well as exterior silence; without the former the latter will not save you from the troubles which an unmortified imagination must necessarily cause and which leads to nothing less than the hardening of the heart, the grieving of the Spirit of God, and thus hindering your habitual union with your heavenly Spouse.

RECOLLECTION

*The Daughters of Mary and Joseph
strive to maintain interior and
exterior recollection; their
active life must not be for them
a cause of dissipation.*

Recollection is a virtue by which we quietly apply our minds to God and thus keep our senses, our imagination, our thoughts, and the affections of our hearts under the control of reason, and facilitate that continual detachment so indispensable to us for the constant fulfilment of our duties in conformity with the designs of Providence. It is obvious that interior and exterior silence are the great means to acquire recollection.

It is in the silence of this solitude of the mind and heart, my dear children, that the soul learns to know, purify, and detach herself from transitory things and to enjoy that peace of God which surpasses all human understanding. It is in recollection that the mind finds true light and the heart holy affections. It is there that Jesus Christ enters into communion with his spouses; that he harkens to the voice of their desires; that he establishes within them the throne of his mercy; that he makes them, in some sort, the dispensers of his gifts; that he adorns them; that he beautifies them and accepts from them the tokens, the proofs of a reciprocal love.

To preserve peaceful recollection, check all desire to see everything, to hear everything. Keep a tight rein on the inconstancy of the imagination which flutters from one object to another, filling your mind with a thousand useless ideas. Amid the multiplicity of your occupations and the cares of your office, take

care that your heart ever watches before God, and that from time to time it reminds you of his divine and infinitely gracious presence.

MORTIFICATION

*The sisters practice mortification
of the senses with generosity.*

Sin, my dear Sisters, must be punished, either by the person who has had the misfortune to commit it or by him against whom it has been committed; it must be expiated in this world by penance, or it will be punished in the next by the torments of Purgatory or of Hell. "Would you escape God's punishments? Then, inflict punishment on yourself," says St. Augustine. To be true Christians, to be worthy spouses of Jesus Christ, you must follow, you must imitate Jesus Christ. You must labour to follow his example; to be his living images. Consider then and act according to the example set before you by our Divine Saviour. Behold with what zeal, from his birth in a stable to his death on the cross of shame, he has practised penance and mortification, that the justice of his eternal Father might be satisfied for the sins of the world.

Let us walk in the footsteps of the Lamb of God who has gone before us bearing the weight of our sins; at every step we shall feel our courage sustained or revived in the struggle. Let us mortify the man of sin, that is to say, our sinful propensities, the inclinations of corrupt nature, the unruly passions that arise within us, rebelling against our duties, against the desires of the heavenly Spouse. The daily conflict will procure for us the advantage of victory, that is peace of soul, hope of reward, the supreme happiness of finding in ourselves the resemblance of Jesus Christ suffering.

CHARITY AND UNION

Listen, my dear children, and pay attention, for it is not the words of man that you are about to hear. God himself, Uncreated Wisdom, is going to speak to you.

"Thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments depends the whole law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40).

When our Divine Saviour was about to consummate his sacrifice and return to his Father, with great earnestness he enjoined on his disciples whom he was leaving behind on earth to love one another. He repeated this to them three times. It is the last will and testament of the best of Fathers, who was about to depart from the children whom he tenderly loved. "This is my commandment that you love one another, as I have loved you ... These things I command you, that you love one another You are my friends if you do the things that I command you" (John 15:12-15).

Finally, that there may be no doubt as to who are his disciples and that they may be known unmistakably, our Divine Saviour gives us this characteristic sign: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another" (John 13:35).

Trained in this divine school, the beloved disciple who had rested on the Sacred Heart of his divine Master knew nothing greater, nothing more indispensable than this reciprocal love.

"God is charity," says St. John, "and he that abides in charity abides in God and God in him ... Let us therefore love God; because God first hath loved us ... that he who loves God, love also his brother ...

he that hates his brother is in darkness. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer. He that loves his brother abides in the light; and there is no scandal in him" (Epistle of St. John).

It was in the heaven to which he had been ravished in ecstasy that St. Paul learned the excellence of this virtue of Charity. "If I speak," writes the great apostle, "with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal ... If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor and deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profits me nothing."

The apostle then gives us the special characteristics of Charity. "Charity," he says, "is patient, is kind; charity is not envious, or boastful or arrogant or rude. Is does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice in wrong doing but rejoices in the truth" (I Cor. 13.)

"Charity is patient, is kind," not from fear, nor from apathy, nor from cowardice. It is through wisdom; it is by raising our minds and hearts to God, by the recollection of his divine presence that our charity is made patient and kind even in the midst of those who possess neither patience nor kindness. The kindness, the benevolence which belong to charity, bears with insult, drives away all vengeful feelings, allays resentment, and by the tact and tenderness which animates all its acts, heals the secret wounds of those who complain about you and thus it leads back to God souls of whose salvation there seemed least hope. "Charity does not envy", charity rejoices at the gifts of virtue and of goodness with which God has endowed some; it blesses the pure, all holy source whence comes to us every good and perfect gift. Charity rejoices in the happiness of its neighbours, and the joy which it feels at the latter's success is to its own advantage, as it provides an antidote to the poison of jealousy which secretly and so easily

insinuates itself into the heart, corrupting the holiest, most generous soul.

"Charity deals not perversely", charity is not discouraged; does not grow weary when her generous efforts meet only with resistance. It acquires fresh strength in the Heart of God, who does not smite the sinner, but in his divine mercy awaits his repentance. Instead of growing angry, charity redoubles her entreaties and implores of God what the creature refuses her. It is ever mindful of the answer which Our Lord gave to his disciples when, being as yet imperfect, they asked that fire be sent down from heaven to punish the people who refused to listen to their preaching.

Turning to them and rebuking them, the Divine Master said, "You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save" (Luke 9:55-56). Lastly, "Charity is not ambitious, seeks not her own." Following the example of Jesus Christ, the soul that is filled with charity seeks not herself in anything. The fire of divine love uplifts her to heaven and transports the heart there where it dwells; it destroys all vice in its very roots and thus triumphs over it in advance by forbidding to any admittance in the future. Jesus Christ, your divine model, was scoffed at, outraged; they spat upon his adorable face. Did he, avenge himself for these insults? No. Did he show signs of anger? No. He bore these insults meekly in silence; he prayed his heavenly Father to forgive those who inflicted them.

St. Paul further exhorts us to bear with one another, to esteem and to love one another, bidding us observe that, as the human body is composed of different members which have not all the same functions, so likewise each member of the mystical Body of Christ has a grace, a special gift to turn to good, a special office to discharge. We have not all the same duties to fulfil towards one another, but let each one do God's will and make good use of the

talent entrusted to her.

"Let love be without dissimulation. Loving one another with the charity of brotherhood", says St. Paul. You must be sincere in your love for one another. You must not be hypocrites, feigning to love one another. You should be quick to anticipate one another in acts of reciprocal kindness. You must not be careless or slothful, but following the apostle's injunctions, be fervent and filled with zeal in the service of the Lord, in fulfilling those special duties allotted to each one of you.

"Charity", says St. John Chrysostom, "does not consist in words only, nor in an empty interchange of external civilities, but in acts of real kindness. You will manifest your charity to all your brethren by sharing in their sorrows, in their joys, in all that happens to them. It is by this last characteristic that charity is most especially distinguished. For, in the depths of every heart there lurks a secret feeling of jealousy that is opposed to charity."

These, my dear sisters, are some of the general and unchangeable principles of charity. Let us draw from them some practical conclusions and apply them to ourselves. Our Divine Master has so closely united the two precepts of the love of God and the love of our neighbour that they form but one and the same commandment, to such an extent that to fulfil one and neglect the other would be to violate both. Jesus Christ commands us to love our neighbour as he himself has loved us. Now, how has he loved us and how does he still love us? There is not one among you who has to be taught this. Our Divine Saviour loves us in God; and, that we may be eternally happy, his love for us has urged him to offer himself for us, to shed his precious blood and to die in order to redeem and save us. Let us then, first of all, love God in our neighbour. In accordance with this principle our love must extend to all men, perfect and imperfect. It must be as unchangeable as God himself. We must love our neighbour even when he is full

of faults, even when we find such qualities as render him less amiable, less attractive.

Secondly, let us love our neighbour with a generous love, without any thought of self - interest, solely with a view to his welfare. Let us be ever ready to sacrifice ourselves in union with Jesus Christ. Thus neither the obstacles that we may meet nor the seeming uselessness of our own efforts, nor the indifference, nor even the ingratitude of our neighbour can dispense us from the obligations of loving him. "Love one another as I have loved you" - that is the commandment. Daughters of Mary and Joseph, let these be your sentiments, your guiding rule of conduct. Trained as you have been in the school of Our Lord and admitted to intimate union with your Divine Spouse, you will ask him, who is its very source, to grant you charity.

OBLIGATIONS OF CHARITY

1. Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself. Measure, therefore, the love that you owe your neighbour by the love which you have for yourself. Your love for yourself is sincere; your love for yourself is tender. Such is the love which you must have for your neighbour. In spite of your faults and imperfections, you still love yourself. Therefore do not put off loving your neighbour until he becomes perfect. The Holy Spirit tells us to consult our own hearts as to how we should treat our neighbour. And Jesus Christ says: "As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner." These are simple maxims, and do not require long commentaries.

Consult your own heart; how does it prompt you to act in matters that concern your own interest? Well, as you would do for yourself you must do to others. Here, in this matter, be your own judge. Do

unto others as you would that they should do unto you; do not act towards others as you would not wish them to act towards you.

II. The apostle St. James tells us that all disputes and quarrels have their source in our concupiscence - that is, our passions — which wage war in our hearts. Therefore, strike at the root of these passions which are the cause of the misfortunes which might befall the family of the kindest and most loving of parents.

It is in your hearts, children of Mary and Joseph, that you must fight against your passions. To acquire patience yourselves will be of far more advantage to you than if you corrected the faults of everyone else; you will find it easier to practice humility and to submit to others than to make everyone perfect in all things.

Instead of waiting until your Sisters have become angels, to live with them in union and affection, it will be wiser to begin this very day to practice the duties imposed by charity. You want all your pupils perfect, all your Sisters saints. A magnificent desire, my dear children! However, I advise you to begin, first of all, by employing your ardent and praiseworthy zeal in your own sanctification. The more perfect you are yourselves, the better fitted you will be to lead others to perfection.

III. "For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans... And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? Do not the heathens this?" You must nourish your body, you must do so every day without restricting your care to some of its members in particular. We are all members of one and the same body; charity requires that you give the same care to all without exception.

The child who is full of faults, lacking in all those qualities that please, will, as a sick and feeble member, attract your attention.

The person with whom you are least in accord will share in your friendship equally with her with whom you have most in common.

As members of the same family with Mary and Joseph at its head, and whose adopted children you are, still holier and stricter obligations are laid on you.

And what shall I say to you, spouses of Jesus Christ, about the great dignity to which you have been raised? What mutual respect, what veneration should you not have for one another! Will you, because of her imperfections, reject one whom Jesus loves as much as, and perhaps more than, he loves you?

IV. "Bear one another's burdens; and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ".

Charity does not require that you should be blind to what is wrong, but that we should bear for God, what we cannot correct; divine grace, reminding us of the reasons that we have for despising ourselves, prevents us from giving way to feelings of contempt, dislike and natural impatience. A child may be passionate, jealous, disdainful; a Sister may be too sensitive, show want of judgment, weakness, partiality. But are these reasons for treating them less kindly, for being less attentive to them? Let nothing shock or offend you; on the contrary, have compassion on the weaknesses and frailty of others; accept their shortcomings and their foibles; humble yourself ... it matters little as long as you comfort and help your neighbour. Bear one another's burdens; only then can you fulfil the law of Christ as St. Paul admonishes us.

MUTUAL ASSISTANCE IN OUR SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

St. Paul tells us that it is our duty to tell one another our faults in a spirit of meekness, and to reprove one another for them.

"He that hath the substance of this world", says St. John, "and shall

see his brother in need and shall shut up his bowels from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him?" Now, if those who refuse to assist a fellow creature in his corporal necessities have not charity, how can an enlightened soul, a religious brought up in the shadow of the tabernacle, flatter herself that she has this virtue if she shows the same want of feeling for the Spiritual needs of her sister, who is, like herself, the spouse of Jesus Christ? What should we say of a person who, on account of his moral weakness or some other cause, would allow the wells of his neighbourhood to be poisoned or the children of a certain family to be corrupted, without warning his neighbour or that family of the danger, and who would do nothing, when he had it in his power to prevent these crimes?

In the same way, if by any means whatsoever, the devil has happened to stir up scandal among you; if by insinuations, dissensions, or bad example, your advance in virtue has been hindered or made difficult or even endangered; the Constitutions, the customs or the superiors criticised and censured, could you be excused if you did not directly of yourself, or indirectly by means of your superiors, put a stop to the mischief? Such cowardice would be unworthy of christians, still more unworthy of religious, and above all, intolerable in the children of Mary and Joseph.

The Constitutions impose it as a duty on the conscience of each sister to render to another the service of making known to a superior in a position to put an end to the mischief, those faults which might come to her knowledge and which, if not checked, might be the cause of scandal and hinder the advancement of souls in the path of perfection. On the other hand, the Constitutions forbid the sisters to manifest disapproval of the charitable action of such of their sisters as may have rendered them the signal service of making known to the superiors such faults and dangers as we have here indicated.

MEANS OF ACQUIRING THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR

I Occasional serious reflection, a simple view of things in the light of common sense, and consideration of what it is that justice requires from us in this matter; such are the chief means of acquiring this love of our neighbour which is so strictly enjoined on us by the law of Christ. Nothing in this world is perfect in every respect. Would you refuse a certain article of food on the plea that it differed in taste from all others? Would you throw away bread because it does not taste like such or such a fruit? Would you abstain from meat because it has not the properties of every vegetable? Would you despise a learned man because there is some particular science with which he is unacquainted? Would you refuse your esteem, your friendship, to one of your sisters because she does not possess every gift of nature and of grace? Would you give up teaching a pupil because she needs instruction and help in more than one thing? All men belong to God, as their Creator and Redeemer. Who would venture to refuse respect to the masterpiece of God, the Creator? Who would not love the creatures whom Jesus Christ has loved even unto the shedding of his Precious Blood, even unto the death of the cross for them?

II. Jesus Christ has said: "This is My Body. This is My Blood", and you firmly believe that your God, your Saviour, is really present in the adorable Sacrament of the altar. You would be ready to seal with your blood this article of your faith. Now, it is the same God made man, who says to you whatsoever you shall do to the least of his brethren will be done unto him, and whatsoever you refuse them, it is him you refuse. "Amen, I say to you, that as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to me". Thus Jesus Christ takes the place of our neighbour. It is not only to this

child that you do good or evil when you treat her charitably or otherwise All that you do to your neighbour is done to Jesus Christ himself. Your coldness, your refusal of assistance, of an act of charity, affects not only your sisters in religion or whosoever the person may be; it is Jesus Christ himself who is the object of your ill-humour, your impatience, your want of charity. In serving your neighbour, you are serving Jesus Christ; it is your divine spouse who so gladly receives the tokens of love that you offer him in the person of your sister in religion, of a pupil, even of one who is a stranger to you. How precious a means this is, my dear children, of making some return for that love which our Divine Lord unceasingly pours out upon you.

III. Never let a feeling of coldness towards anyone, no matter who the person may be, take possession of you. Do violence to your feelings, and make some special demonstration of friendship to the person for whom you feel some aversion, or with whom some estrangement may have occurred. Never let any impression contrary to charity remain in your mind; the results of such may be a festering sore that would cause great suffering to your soul. Humble yourself; ask to be forgiven; do not spare yourself, no matter what it may cost you, rather than endanger charity, or the perfect union of hearts.

IV. Another indispensable means, without which all others would be of no use is prayer. Pray much for that supernatural love, so different from human affection. Strive to obtain from heaven that gift which will life your heart to God who reigns there. Grace will purify your love; it will enlighten it, and raise it as much above creatures as the Creator himself is above all created things. Jesus Christ, who is so desirous of the perfection of his spouses, will not refuse you, my dear Sisters, the most beautiful as well as the most precious of your prerogatives. Charity is the crown which especially belongs to you; it is the royal ornament by which you are

to be distinguished
among the elect; it is that shining light around your heads which is
to attract all eyes and by which all may read on your brow that you
are the beloved of the Lamb without blemish, who is
Himself immolated and consumed by the ardour of his love.

FRIENDSHIP

Love God in all whom you love; and all that you love, love in God.
Love nothing, save according to God, and your name shall be
written in heaven, because the name of charity will have been writ-
ten in your hearts.

Pray for the gift of charity. Fulfil the obligations imposed by charity,
and the God of charity will be your reward. You will be the
instrument of his mercy; your labours will be crowned with the
blessing of heaven. For those who know how to love are capable of
great things.

As a forest on fire is completely purified from all elements of
decay, so when charity sets a soul on fire, it consumes in it all that
might injure the seed of divine grace, it fertilises this seed and
causes it to germinate the most precious fruits in great abundance.
Where charity is present, all that is evil disappears; no more covet-
ousness, no more sallies of pride and of vanity which
Engender so many disorders. Everywhere we see only friends, sis-
ters, mothers. And who would dare to rebel against a mother, who
would find fault with a sister? We are not ashamed to render even
menial service to those whom we love; we even love them more
for having accepted these services from us; for them we spare
neither trouble nor expense. Where there is real friendship in Jesus
Christ, the words MINE and THINE are unknown; neither fear nor
jealousy nor distrust exists; there everything is in common for all;

there all is kindness; all is calm; everything breathes of peace. Charity knows nothing of those dangerous, even fateful illusions which profane the beautiful name of friendship and of reciprocal affection.

Thus, once the reign of charity is firmly established amongst you, my dear children, abundant blessings will be everywhere poured out on your Institute. The very root of evil will be destroyed; a most touching spectacle will be afforded to the world; all in it will breathe of happiness, and even in times of trial and privation, contentment and joy will reign among you. What sweet accord of sentiments and of dispositions! What generous forgetfulness of self! What mutual help! And all with the intention of pleasing God, of fulfilling his law! The charm of this happy union among you will not be broken by pride or jealousy or by dislike of anyone, or, in a word, by any of those miserable passions that disturbs and divides the world. You will live here on earth the life of the blessed in heaven. May God in his infinite mercy and through the merits of Jesus Christ, his divine Son, deign to grant us this priceless blessing. Amen.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

"Never, O Lord!" cries out St. Augustine, "will I turn away my eyes from Thee, for Yours are ever fixed on me." Do not be surprised at the ardent desire of this great saint to live always in the presence of God. "God is not far from us", says the apostle, "in him we live, we move and have our being". It is God who preserves us, who upholds us, who prevents us falling back into the nothingness whence he has taken us. It cannot then be difficult to find him in whom we live, and without whom we should cease to be. Accustom yourselves, my dear sisters, to find God everywhere. Train your understanding to acknowledge this truth, but still more by the tender

loving sentiments of your hearts you will recognise the presence of him whom the angels adore and in whom the saints find their eternal happiness in heaven. And truly you will find it easy to praise your God in expressions of the most ardent love when, away from creatures, you recall the immensity of his love for you. Of all earthly love, the strongest and most enduring is maternal love. "Can a mother forget her child, and even if she did forget yet will I not forget thee", says the Lord. God is not only a father filled with compassion for his children; he is not only a tender mother; he is still more. "His love", observes St. John Chrysostom, "surpasses the love of a father, of a mother, of a spouse as the light surpasses darkness". Now a heart penetrated with such truths, a heart in which Jesus Christ is pleased to dwell and that is warmed and enlightened by his divine love, what will this heart have to say to its beloved? Children who after a long absence, see their parents again; friends who meet their friends once more, what do they have to say? And you, children of God, friends and spouses of Jesus Christ, after having been with creatures, can it be that you have nothing to say to your Father, your only friend, the divine spouse of your soul. Your own needs, those of your sisters in religion, of your pupils, the needs of the whole church militant will come before you in those moments of intimate communion with God, who consoles us in all our tribulations; to whom all things are possible because to him belongs all power, but whose titles are All-Merciful, All-Compassionate, are those most pleasing to him and by which he prefers we should invoke him.

CONVERSATION

Be silent regarding the advantages of position, fortune, etc., that you may have enjoyed in the world; at the same time, be careful to say nothing that might make an unfavourable impression on others about your family, or yourselves. In the former case, there is dan-

ger of vanity; in the latter, you may lessen the respect that is necessary to the Institute and to yourselves in order to carry out the designs of divine providence.

Be kind, prudent, cheerful, polite, charitable, ever remembering that you are in the presence of God, of his spouses, of his angels to whom he has given charge to watch over them.

Make it your pleasure to observe the gifts, the graces which God has bestowed on your sisters in religion; avoid any allusion whatsoever to the faults due to the weakness of human nature, which they may have; be, as it were, blind to their defects; honour in them Jesus Christ whose spouses they are.

Mortify the longing to know everything; to hear news of everybody; never try by underhand ways or cunning stratagems to find out secrets from the sisters who have held office, or who have lived in other houses; do not try to force admissions from them that might cause disunion and dissension or even injure the reputation of any individual, whether a sister in religion, a pupil, or a stranger.

In all circumstances, do everything in your power to preserve that union of hearts; that blessed peace which, if it were banished from the rest of the world, should still be found among the spouses of the Prince of Peace.

ZEAL FOR THE WELFARE OF YOUTH

The distinguishing characteristic of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph is to be zealous for souls and for the salvation of youth. They must, pray for their pupils, instruct them, and endeavour to edify them.

To appreciate fully the value of souls, recall to mind that for their salvation Jesus Christ has shed the last drop of his precious blood; that the saints in all ages have undertaken with unwearied zeal every kind of labour; that they have braved dangers, even death itself, to snatch them from everlasting ruin, to teach them to live for God here on earth in order to reign with him hereafter in heaven. Following the example of our divine Saviour and of the friends who were dearest to him, you have consecrated yourselves to this same work; like them you are the instruments of the mercy of the Lord, to train servants for the heavenly Father, disciples for Jesus Christ, to rear living temples of the Holy Spirit. Let no difficulty stop you in this sublime ministry. The remembrance of what Jesus Christ has done for you will teach you what you should do for him. "As long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren", says Our Lord, "you did it to me". If you succeed in your high vocation, you must acquire a knowledge of all its various duties. Be zealous, but let your zeal be enlightened and prudent; let it be generous and persevering. In recompense of your efforts, you shall one day "shine as stars for all eternity" and God himself will be your reward.

ORDER

Order, St. Augustine tells us, leads to God. Therefore, to observe order in all that you do, is to advance towards the end that you wish to attain; it is to please the Lord. God himself, infinitely great as he is, wills to be your model in this respect. Behold what admirable harmony reigns throughout this vast universe which is his work: days, nights, seasons, generations succeed one another in regular order; all is ordained, regulated with marvellous precision.

Following the example of the Creator, and that you may be enabled to accomplish the designs of divine providence in the sublime office to which he has deigned to call you, you will love that beautiful harmony, the value of which you fully realise and you will do all in your power to make it reign everywhere.

To this end, strive to acquire that order, that regularity, that exactitude, so calculated to edify your neighbour and to make the religious liked and respected. First of all, be neat and orderly in your own person, observing in every particular the regulations concerning your dress. Observe order, neatness in all that pertains to your special office, doing everything precisely at the prescribed hour and place. Take great care of all that is entrusted to you, whether for your own use or for general use. Be very careful to restore everything without delay to its own place. Forget your own likes and dislikes; be magnanimous and self-sacrificing, working all together, having at heart, each one of you, the general good of the house and of the Institute.

A careless person will try to excuse herself by alleging want of time; the fact of being hurriedly called elsewhere. Such excuses are mere inventions of self-love. Want of time, hurry! Is not more time lost looking here, there, everywhere, for things mislaid, and in rearranging all that has been thrown about pell-mell? But this is

not all. Want of order has disastrous results: the waste, the destruction of the things committed to your care, and which you are obliged by your holy vow of Poverty to preserve. All this leads to confusion, trouble, general disorganisation; it dries up charity by provoking grumbling and impatience; it gives disedification to your pupils and to others who are witnesses of your carelessness and want of order. May these considerations, and still more the desire of imitating your Divine Spouse, inspire you with a love of order and that generous devotedness which it supposes, and also keep you on your guard against the disorders that result from it.

For this object, join to your prayers, a firm intention to do everything according to the prescribed rules; to take proper care of everything confided to your charge, and to take the time necessary to fulfil your duties with order and regularity, no matter how much you may be disturbed by your work; not to yield to caprice or temper, but to listen to the voice of duty only; and to take counsel at the feet of the divine Counsellor who abides in your heart and who never grows weary of helping you, no matter how often you have recourse to him.

MEALS

In supplying our corporal necessities, in eating, drinking, etc., we should always have some supernatural end in view. For even those material acts can be turned to our spiritual profit. "Therefore, whether you eat or drink", says St. Paul, "or whatever else you do, do all for the glory of God". Take your meals to restore your bodily forces and to render you fit to accomplish the various duties imposed on you by holy obedience.

If we regard it as humiliating that human beings should be subject,

like animals, to this necessity of eating and drinking, we shall be careful to avoid all excesses in these matters. For it would be still more humiliating for human beings, for christians, to allow themselves to descend, by excessive indulgence even lower than the animals that never exceed in this way.

Thanks to the Divine Goodness, these gross failings are and we hope will ever remain far from the convents of those who are the children of Mary and the spouses of Jesus Christ.

But our zeal must not be limited to this; with us everything must correspond with our sublime vocation. The most ordinary things, the most material, should be sanctified so as to render them conformable to the dignity to which divine grace has elevated the sisters.

The diet of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph will be plain, frugal as becomes the spouses of Jesus Christ, who, for love of us, of his own free will, led a life of the most absolute destitution.

CARE OF HEALTH

The sisters are to have a
reasonable care of their health.

There are faults that border so closely on the moral virtues as to endanger them. Excessive care of one's health and want of precaution equally merit reproof. While condemning all extremes, at the same time your Constitutions impose it on you as a duty to observe prudence in all that concerns your bodily health. Man is not the arbiter in matters affecting his own life. God has prescribed to him various duties, and he owes to the mortal body, of which he has charge, a certain amount of care that he can neither refuse nor

neglect without culpability. Such is the law which the Creator has willed to establish. To this law all rational creatures should unhesitatingly conform. If such be the duty of all men, how much more strictly should it be fulfilled by you, my dear sisters, whom the Lord has placed in a position where you can acquire a clearer, more comprehensive knowledge of his divine will. Consecrated as you are to his service, could you have any other desire than to act in all things zealously and devotedly in accordance with the will of your Divine Master, your loving Spouse, for whom you wish to live and to die. Your body, like all things else in this world, is no longer your own, you have sacred duties towards that body which belongs specially to your Institute; if you were to neglect those duties you would fail in those obligations that the Lord imposes on you. Avoid excessive care, too much attention to your body; we do not pardon such even in people of the world who are slaves to their bodies of clay, of which they make idols. Treat your body as a partner in your labours that, although weak and requiring care, is ever ready to rebel if left to itself, or if you pamper it or yield to its caprices. Take, in all simplicity and through obedience, such precautionary measures as prudence dictates in certain circumstances; avoid any excess either in work or in mortification. Treat yourself as you would one of your sisters who had been confided to your care and for whom you were responsible to the Institute and to God. Take care of your health without indulging in fads and fancies, and solely with the intention of doing God's will; never for a moment act like those inconsiderate persons who are to be found sometimes even in the best regulated convents, who are capricious and~ give way to moods and pettishness. When you are ill, show that you are resigned to God's will in all that he ordains in your regard. Guard against murmuring, complaining, and anxiety, which, without affording you any relief, would only deprive you of some of the merit of your sufferings, and would scandalize the weak and add to the troubles and fatigue of those charged with the duty of nursing you.

CARE OF THE SICK

Invalid sisters should be the object of special tenderness. Those who are in good health should be glad to visit them frequently, to offer them Christian consolation and render them with the greatest devotedness, but with due discretion, all manner of assistance.

Nothing must be neglected to provide the necessary remedies for those sisters who are ill, but they on their part, must not forget that, to follow Jesus, they have embraced a life of poverty, and show always show their gratitude for all that is done for them.

OUR DECEASED SISTERS

Immediately after the death of a sister the superior sends notice of it to all the houses.

The sisters make the Stations of the Cross, recite the Office for the dead and offer up other prayers and good works for the soul of the deceased.

Every year, during the octave of All Souls and during the annual retreat, Holy Mass is offered up for the deceased members of the Institute.

RECREATION

Man's weakness will not permit of his continuous application to work; both mind and body have need of relaxation and recreation. You will yield the same willing obedience to what your Constitutions ordain on this point as to those which prescribe silence, recollection and other serious things of a higher order. With gratitude and simplicity avail yourself of this indulgence, this remedy, that the divine Mercy accords you.

Enjoy your recreation in a spirit of moderation and self—sacrifice, always ready to yield to the wishes of others; in this you will afford one another mutual assistance, and from this interchange of kindness there will result closer union among you and an increase of interior peace.

The Daughters of Mary and Joseph, in virtue of their vocation, will rejoice with a joy, the source of which is in the heart — a pure joy, a holy joy that no one can take from them, as Jesus Christ himself assures us. From this joy will flow that sweet serenity, that contentment, that meekness which, reflected in their countenances, will excite the admiration, the envy even of those worldly people, so-called happy, that Providence sometimes leads to our houses that they may learn how mistaken they are, how led astray by the wisdom of this world, and how wholly illusory their idea of happiness.

CHEERFULNESS,

MEEKNESS, POLITENESS

*Cheerfulness, meekness and politeness
are specially recommended to the
Daughters of Mary and Joseph. They
should show by their frank and
agreeable manner that they are
happy to belong to Jesus Christ.*

The Holy Spirit in the Sacred Scriptures represents to us in the most forcible manner the value of cheerfulness, showing us clearly that this precious quality is pleasing both to God and man and leads to the well-being of soul and body, while sadness, on the contrary impairs the mental powers, weakens bodily strength and vigour,

depresses the soul, and leaves us unable to exercise our judgment rightly. It injures all the good sentiments of the heart... How earnestly then, should we strive against yielding to sadness, so harmful in its effects on our character and judgment, and which caused the death of many. "My son", says Uncreated Wisdom, "do thy works in meekness, and thou shall be beloved above the glory of men" (Eccl. 3:1), while St. Paul exhorts us most earnestly to be cheerful at all times; "Rejoice in the Lord always", he says, "again, I say, rejoice". He tells us that the fruits of the Spirit are charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, magnanimity. Most ardently, therefore, should we desire these gifts of the Holy Spirit.

According to these precepts, your Constitutions, my dear sisters, impose it upon you as a special duty that you should ever strive to be cheerful, meek, even tempered, polite, magnanimous, kind, obliging, in accordance with God's law, that thus your serene countenance, the candid simplicity of your looks, the sweet peace of your whole exterior, revealing the peace that fills your soul, may console, cheer and encourage those who live with you, as also those you may meet.

You should always be grateful to God for having, through his divine grace, preserved your baptismal robe of innocence unspotted, or if you have stained it, for having purified it in the Blood of the Lamb slain for the salvation of men.

Gratitude also imposes it as a duty upon you, as upon all those privileged souls divine. Love has called to be the spouses of Jesus Christ, to rejoice always in your Divine Spouse. Similarly, this gratitude forbids that you should ever grow weary of singing in your heart a perpetual hymn of thanksgiving for all the blessings which you constantly receive. But, as Daughters of Mary and Joseph, you are under a very strict obligation to watch continuously over yourself in order to preserve that spirit of meekness and

kindly cheerfulness that manifests itself exteriorly, and this for the twofold reason that you are in a very special manner the children of Mary and that, in virtue of your vocation, you are called upon to teach the young committed to your care to love the yoke of Jesus Christ. Now, the Church proclaims that Mary is, beyond all others, pre-eminently meek, amiable, gracious, kind. You, dear sisters, as docile children, will vie with one another in striving to imitate the virtues of the best, the most perfect of mothers. And thus, at the same time, as a natural result of your amiability, cheerfulness, and meekness, will make an ineffaceable impression on the minds of your pupils and will enkindle in their young hearts the undying fires of an ardent love for religion and for the God of all goodness, whom you have taught to know and love.

True politeness has charity as its basis. The spirit of your Constitutions imposes the practice of this politeness on you as a duty. Hence, when dealing with those under your care, as also with your equals and with your superiors, you will, each one separately and individually, comply with all that the rules of good breeding and christian politeness prescribe to you. Love of your neighbour will guide you and enable you to bear from supernatural motives the inconvenience, the constraint, resulting from customs often unimportant in themselves, but which people brought up according to the rules of politeness by no means regard with indifference.

Possessing within yourselves, through the effects of divine grace, a keen sense of propriety and that docility of mind and character which constitutes true politeness, neither great effort nor study will be needed on your part to succeed in pleasing and edifying your neighbour, by your manner and your sentiments. Moreover, there is no doubt but that politeness gives ease and distinction of manner, and that it is a powerful aid in maintaining those bonds of charity which Jesus Christ so strongly enjoins upon his disciples.

The houses of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph should be places of peace, of meekness and of charity; they should be, as it were, figures of that land of benediction won by the Lamb of God, who will lead his elect as the shepherd leads his flock to the green pastures, and where streams of milk and honey will flow - those natural symbols of meekness and of christian charity.

But, just as the cheerfulness which your Constitutions impose on you as a duty does not allow any of those extremes that are condemned alike by good breeding and Christian charity, similarly, the meekness and politeness which they so unceasingly enjoin upon you, must not, by any means, be confined to those outward forms, those ceremonies, that the world itself initiates but without any supernatural motive. With you, these must be qualities acquired or cultivated by the exercise of evangelical patience, and sanctified by charity; their source must be in the depths of the heart where Jesus, the author of grace, abides and acts as conqueror, master and spouse.

COMMUNION WITH YOUR DIVINE SPOUSE

You need, my dear sisters, from time to time to renew, purify and strengthen your zeal, your intentions, by intimate communion with your Divine Spouse. Recollection, real silence, the fixing of the mind, the thoughts on Jesus Christ dwelling in your heart - these supply the fuel for that sacred fire, and nothing on earth can justify the risk of allowing it to wane, for then it might die out altogether.

The active life is of service to our neighbour but it is so only with the aid of the contemplative life, which is, moreover, necessary to ourselves. "Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little", says Our Lord to his apostles when they had returned to him from their apostolic labours among the people. It was the rest of external soli-

tude that the most perfect of masters here recommended to his disciples. He thus teaches us also to withdraw frequently from our external occupations, even the holiest, to turn to him, to commune with him in the silence of our soul, that, without injury to ourselves, we may be of real service to our neighbour. For never, when we speak of God, are our words so impressive as after we have been listening to him speaking himself, and when we are filled with his spirit. Without Jesus we labour in vain. "We have laboured all night", said the apostle, "and have caught nothing." But when at his command they had cast their net, success at once attended their efforts.

To make us understand still more clearly how indispensable it is for us that we should labour with him, our Divine Lord says to us: "I am the Vine; you the branches ... The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me" (John 15).

Not without reason does St. Bernard declare that if recollection is the source of good deeds, dissipation of mind destroys all virtues, all merits.

To avoid these deplorable consequences, have recourse frequently to your divine Spouse. He is so near you; he commands your efforts to please him; he encourages you; his divine hands are ever raised to bless you, to bestow on you fresh favours.

PRUDENCE

"We have been created, O Lord, for thee alone, and our hearts are ever restless until they find rest in thee" (St. Augustine).

Convinced of this truth that nothing can satisfy the boundless

desire, the immense capacity of the heart, you have been wise enough to retreat before the danger, and to put that heart of which God is jealous, and which he alone can satisfy, in a safe place. Realising how dangerous is the world, and distrustful of your own weakness, simple as a dove, you have sought safety in flight, and wise as the serpent, you have remained in the desert where, using the things of this world as if you used them not, living in the flesh but not according to the flesh, you have preserved in your soul the spirit of holy hatred of the world. Indifferent to all that happens in it, because your desire is to ignore everything that does not bring you nearer to the one sole object of your love, you have remained hidden with Jesus Christ in God. You are dead to the world, and having already risen again in spirit your conversation is in heaven only.

Continue, my dear sisters, to dwell in this desert; make it your final abiding place on earth. Settle yourself therein irrevocably. Seated at the sacred feet of your beloved, unceasingly occupied with his interests, do not go down into Egypt, except when called upon to do so for the glory of your divine spouse. This earth and those that dwell there- on have within them a germ of contagion capable of corrupting the heart. Avoid, therefore meeting them; fly this accursed earth. Divine grace will sustain you if you have recourse to it, and if you merit it. But if you expose yourself to the danger, if rashness, not duty, leads you into it, then you have no claim whatever to the assistance of grace. If you act imprudently, you will never more be without anxiety, and continual remorse will be your punishment.

VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

The admirable charity which urged our Divine Lord to remain with us in the Sacrament of his love is a wonder which the angels behold in ecstasy and which the saints will adore throughout eternity. Who would have dared to think that God, the second person of the adorable Trinity, the Redeemer of the world, would deign to dwell among the children of men? The indifference, the ingratitude shown him, the contempt of his favours, could not deter him from carrying out the marvellous design of his incomprehensible love. He wishes to console those in sorrow, those who are his friends; he longed to feed his children, to assist the poor, the miserable; and to strengthen the weak; he desired to sanctify his spouses by the closest, most intimate union with them in which he will reveal to them the secrets of his love such are the loving designs of his Sacred Heart. The malice of the Jews, the pride of heretics, the awful treachery of Judas who will betray him, the desertion of his friends, of those who, after having been fed at his sacred table, will forsake him; all the sacrileges that will be committed against the adorable Sacrament of the Altar - he sees, he knows all, but nothing can chill his love or lessen his ardent desire to remain among us, hidden in the tabernacle, until "Time shall be no longer". "My delights", says our loving God, "are to be with the children of men".

"As long as there is misery to be relieved, suffering to be alleviated, sins to be forgiven, I shall remain on earth, I shall remain as on a throne of love and mercy, to which every human being may approach to implore my help, my grace.

Throughout every hour of the day and of the night, at every moment, I shall be there, to welcome, to give audience to the weary, the sinner, to the innocent and to the guilty, ready to pardon the greatest criminal who, repenting, seeks me, willing to forgive and to forget all his sins". "Come unto me, all you that labour and are heavy burdened and I will refresh you". Come and try; come and

learn from our experience how great is the goodness, the mercy of God.

My dear children, Jesus Christ calls you, invites you to visit him in the Sacrament of his love. You, beyond all others, should be assiduous in your attendance at his earthly court. There before the tabernacle, offer him the homage of your adoration. He loves you with a love of predilection; your hearts belong to him alone. This thought should increase your confidence, your love; it should render more ardent your desire to visit as often as you can your Divine Spouse, your hidden God, strength of the weak. He gives himself to you as the food of your souls and by his divine grace preserves therein the lily of virginal purity in its resplendent beauty.

You will not rest satisfied with paying your Divine Spouse one visit during the day, but will pay him numberless visits in spirit. The saints, those who are wise, who labour diligently in the vineyard of the Lord, all these have constantly sought before the Blessed Sacrament the courage, the light, the wisdom, the grace of which saints are made.

Thursday in each week will be specially consecrated to honouring the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on certain days for a longer or shorter length of time, Benediction at stated times, your daily visit during which you will make a spiritual communion - all will help to excite in you those sentiments for Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist that he so ardently desires and expects from you; all will help you to draw from this divine source the immense spiritual treasures prepared for you. It is, then, to thy sanctuary, o divine Jesus, that our sisters will go, to pour forth their love, their joy, their gratitude to thee, our hidden God and King. There, before thy tabernacle wherein thou dwell night and day, their hearts will be more and more in-

flamed with ardent love for thee. There they will find thee, O divine Lover of our souls, ever ready to receive them with a heart overflowing with love and tenderness. There they will ask of thee, before all else, that they may love thee more and more, and that they may have the happiness of being the faithful servants, serving thee with pure hearts, enjoying the sweetness of divine love.

Spiritual reading, which should tend to the soul's advancement in the way of perfection, is supernatural food, not a mental recreation that should be sought for in this exercise. It is not study nor a means to acquire knowledge of many truths, rather it is a question here of letting these truths penetrate so deeply into the heart as to become, as it were, part of its very life. Therefore, do not read much at a time; reflect on what you have read; then read it again; in this way you will at last assimilate the truths that you have thus meditated upon so often.

THE DIVINE OFFICE

Among vocal prayers the Divine Office holds undoubtedly the first place. In the recitation of the Divine Office the Church's intention is (1) to honour and to celebrate the joy of the Church triumphant; (2) to help the Church militant and the Church suffering; (3) to obtain fresh graces for one-self. It is in the name of the Church and as her representatives before Almighty God that you, should fulfil this duty. Therefore every day, joyfully render this tribute to the Lord through the mediation of the Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God.

In order to accomplish this duty in a manner pleasing to God, and to obtain from it all the spiritual advantages that the Church hopes for it, strive to acquire the habit of placing yourself, before Office begins, in the presence of God, representing yourself sometimes as

being in the company of the angels and saints who are making heaven resound with their canticles of love and praise to God, the thrice holy To excite these sentiments more easily, call to mind the needs of the Church, of the just, of sinners, of those persons confided to your care. Imitate the example given to you by Jesus Christ in his prayer to his heavenly Father, and that of the saints who here on earth followed in the foot-steps of their Divine Master.

In obedience to your Constitutions, unite your intention with that of all the members of your congregation. You must strive diligently to excite these interior dispositions, so that you may be preserved from routine, which is so fatal to exercises of piety. Routine causes us to lose all the fruits of piety, and it is more dangerous in as much as it blinds the soul to the uselessness of her actions by lulling her into a sense of false security, because she has fulfilled the external part of her duty.

When to the foregoing means of preparation you add the remembrance of God's presence and that interior recollection, the habit of which is strongly inculcated in your Constitutions, you have no uneasiness about the distractions which you may have; these are only the effects of human weakness and you have every reason to think that you have not voluntarily yielded to them.

THE ANGELUS

Man can never comprehend the benefit of his redemption. His mind could never conceive its depths; his heart has not ardour enough to love the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation of the divine Word as it should be loved. For us, all was at an end; our ruin was certain, irreparable. Unhappy descendants of a sinful father, all the children of Adam were condemned to drag out a miserable existence here on earth while actual suffering awaited them in the

life to come Moved by this deplorable destiny, “Behold, I come”, said the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. “O Eternal Justice, let the punishment fall on me, but spare mankind.”

As worthy Daughters of Mary and Joseph, you will make it a sweet duty to adore every day of your lives the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God To this end you will say with great devotion the Angelus, or according to the season, the Regina Coeli; you will thus render living homage to the Immaculate Mother of Jesus. Her submission: Ecce ancilla Domini will teach you her humble generosity, her unhesitating obedience as soon as the will of God was made known to her. The power of those words Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum will enable you to triumph over all the obstacles that the devil, the world, or your own weakness, can oppose to the accomplishment of your duties according to the will of God These great lessons will guide you in all your actions here on earth

THE PARTICULAR EXANEN

In every human being there is always one passion, easily discerned, which surpasses all the others in strength, which if not restrained will in the end, overcome us by its violence. Hence, it is for each one the most dangerous of all the passions. Usually this predominant passion corresponds most to our particular temperament and is the cause of nearly all the faults which we commit. We can understand how necessary it is for us to know our predominant passion, to study it and all its characteristics, so that we may combat it with the weapons best suited to this special kind of warfare. Hence, the necessity for you to have recourse to your superiors for advice and instruction; hence also the importance of the particular examen in order to watch and to conquer this interior enemy, and to acquire the opposite virtue to this ruling passion, or any other

virtue of which you may specially feel the want.

1. In the morning, you will make a firm resolution that you will, until the mid-day examen, devote all your care, all the forces of your soul to combating this particular failing or to acquiring the virtue that you specially desire.
2. At midday you will examine your conscience carefully and you will then renew your good resolution this time resolving to continue to fight the enemy till night.
3. In all your prayer, your good works, you will make the eradication of this predominant fault or the acquisition of the virtue you most need your particular intention. In certain circumstances you might adopt the practice recommended to the novices, namely: to keep an account of the number of faults you have committed during a certain length of time. This practice will help to make you keep a stricter watch over your actions, and to humble yourself before God, seeing how often you relapsed into the same faults.
4. For the faults you have committed, you will impose on yourself some penance; you will renew your good resolutions, and implore the aid of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Joseph, of your angel guardian and holy patrons in this daily struggle, that thus you may in the end triumph over your enemies for the greater glory of God and your own spiritual welfare.

NIGHT PRAYER

Having during the day experienced the protection of the Lord, you will regard it as a duty to thank him. The fresh graces that you have received, the privilege of labouring in the service of so generous a master, the help so liberally given to you by the best of friends, the

special proofs of love shown to you by the most tender of spouses — such are the motives that should urge you to prostrate yourself before the giver of all good things and, in those dispositions that faith demands, to pour out to him the expression of your love and gratitude.

In your general examen, you will review your thoughts, your words and your actions of the day, in order to discover the faults that you may have committed in your duty to God, your neighbour or yourself. It will facilitate this examen and help you to make it with greater care, if sometimes you imagine to yourself that, in the company of your Angel Guardian, you are going to render an account of your day at the tribunal of God.

Having examined your conscience with as much care as if you were going to render an account to your supreme judge, or were preparing for confession, excite yourself to contrition and say the CONFITEOR in a spirit of true repentance, relying with confidence on the merits of your divine redeemer.

Sleep is a natural image of death. One day, wrapped in a shroud, you will lie in your coffin as on your bed. Meanwhile, the Lord has willed that you should require nightly rest and sleep.. He has made this a remedy by means of which your bodily forces are: refreshed and invigorated and you are enabled to labour in his service for such time as he has appointed to you. Such are the designs of God in giving you this restorative, and in making use of it, such are the ends which you should have in view.

Try to fall asleep quickly; do not voluntarily let your mind dwell on anything, except on the subject of your meditation for the morning, provided always that this does not cause mental effort. Compose yourself to sleep. Thus you will observe the precept of the apostle that whether you watch or sleep you should live with the Lord; in this way, you will have reason to hope that after having lived for

God amid the mists and darkness of this transitory life, you will one day awake in the bright light of eternity, the dazzling splendour Of which will be for ever undimmed, and where no shadow, no cloud will ever come to disturb the serene peace of the elect or to lessen their happiness.

CHAPTER II

WEEKLY EXERCISES

DEVOTION TO THE HOLY TRINITY

Every day our sisters make it their duty to render profound homage to the most Holy Trinity.

In order, my dear sisters, to preserve, or to revive within you, sentiments of faith, of confidence, of love for this sacred mystery, recall to mind sometimes that it is in the name of the Holy Trinity that you have been regenerated and adopted as children of the church, that it is in this adorable name that you have been received as the spouses of Jesus Christ; that it is in this name that you form and train children for your divine spouse; that it is in this omnipotent name that you pray to God for yourselves and for the holy Church. Finally, remember that in the last conflict which will determine your fate for all eternity, your courage will be stimulated in the name of the Father who created you, your hope will be renewed in the name of the Son who has redeemed you, and that the fire of divine love will be kindled within you in the name of the Holy Spirit who has sanctified you.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The sisters have constant recourse to the Holy Spirit. The lights and all other graces of the Holy Spirit are more particularly needed by the Daughters of Mary and Joseph. For, apart from their own perfection, they must guide in the way of salvation, instruct and train the pupils whom God has confided to them.

Our sisters will constantly study the impulses of their soul, so as to be always ready to follow those which the Holy Spirit excites therein and to repress those which nature may sometimes arouse. They will acquire the habit of turning to the Holy Spirit in their doubts, in moments of weakness, of fear, or in other spiritual needs which they may have

In our Institute we should prepare ourselves with the greatest care and by means of special exercises for the feast of Pentecost.

THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS Your Divine Saviour and Spouse, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ, as God, has loved us before we ever existed — even before the world was created. His love for us never had a beginning. While as God and Man, he lived here on earth in labour, ignominy, in suffering, he had us in mind and he has never ceased for a moment to think of us, to love us, he was our model, our guide, our surety. Seated now at the right hand of his Father, he watches over us, directs and defends us, he gives us unceasing proofs of his love and he will be one day our crown and reward. Thou hast given us O Lord, our natural being in the creation; thou has given us, by regeneration, our super- natural being. At the price of his own life, dear sisters, Jesus Christ has purchased you. You were lost; he has redeemed you from the hardest slavery. You were disfigured by an awful leprosy; he has washed you in his pre-

cious blood. He has restored you to your heavenly Father whom, to your misfortune, you had abandoned. Nor is this all, he has addressed to you those words at which the angels themselves were astonished: "Leave the vanities of the world", he said, "come to me, and I will be yours. I will no longer call you servants, I will call you my friends; you shall be my spouses." These are your words, O Jesus; they are worthy of your incomprehensible love. For you, my sisters, how consoling are those words. God does not use them when speaking of the angelic spirits; he calls them his messengers. You are the spouses of God. Your sole occupation is to love your divine spouse. Separated from the rest of men, you have your being, you live, you act but for God alone. You have no other interests save the interests of God's glory. Happy, a thousand times happy, the souls thus favoured. What shall we do O Sovereign Goodness, O Beauty ever ancient and ever new! What shall we do in response to so much love! We will love thee Lord, we will love our holy state; we will zealously fulfil all its duties; we will implore from thy mercy all that we do not find in ourselves. Our heart is yours; we desire that nothing therein may offend thy divine eyes. Purify it ever more and more, and make us worthy of thee. Reign therein alone as absolute master. Since thy goodness for us is immense, we desire, we beg of thee that our love may know no bounds.

Although every moment of your existence is for Jesus, and there could not be one that is not his only, since your heart must beat for your tender, generous spouse alone, you will specially honour his adorable name and you will consecrate to Jesus Christ the month of January in every year.

THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGELS

The angels are blessed spirits appointed to serve and exercise their ministry for those destined to be the heirs of salvation God has given his angels charge over us. Admirable proof of his love for us. It is not to nations and kingdoms alone that his providence has appointed angels to watch over them and to exercise his mercy. Every one, each of our houses, every member of this family has received from this Father full of solicitude for his children, a heavenly spirit to watch over her night and day, to help her, to defend her against the enemy of her salvation.

"My angel is with you", says the Lord. There is no place, no time, my dear sisters, in which he is not with you, he is with you as your guardian, your protector, your witness; he is there as a faithful, zealous friend; he varies and modifies his warnings according to your needs. "Arise", said the angels whom God had sent to Lot to save him from the dread fate of guilty Sodom "get you out of this place ... lest thou also perish in the wickedness of this city." Lot however hesitated to obey, and these devoted guardians took him by the hand and led him away from the doomed city.

It is perhaps to the zealous care of your guardian angel that you are indebted for having so often escaped the snares into which your imprudence, your rashness, your corrupt nature would have caused you to fall In acknowledgement of the goodness of the Lord who has given you into the care of his angels, in your turn watch with the utmost solicitude over the souls that his providence has confided to your charge As you are the visible guardian angels of your children, associate yourselves with those heavenly spirits in warding off the assaults of the enemy who prowls unceasingly around men to surprise them and make them fall into sin. Let your care continually around those souls and follow them even in the time of vacation, when they are more exposed to danger. It is at

that time, above all, that you should specially implore for them the help of those powerful protectors.

Unite your prayers and care to that of the angels, invisible in this life of conflict and misery; you will afterwards have the happiness of singing with them the praises of God in the abode of everlasting rest.

OUR PATRON ST. JOSEPH

*St. Joseph is the Patron of our Institute.
On Wednesdays the sisters pay him special honour
and consecrate themselves to him.
They consecrate the month of March to this their protector.
On March 19th, the feast of St. Joseph,
they offer him solemn homage.*

St. Joseph, the spouse of Mary Immaculate, the foster-father of Jesus, is the special Patron of the institute. *

(*Our sisters owe to St Joseph, in some way, their existence, by the help and protection which he accorded their venerated Founder It is therefore fitting that we should have for this glorious patriarch sentiments of lively gratitude and filial love.)

Well brought up children hasten gladly every morning to gather round a beloved father to testify to him the feelings which fill their hearts. You, also dear sisters, the children of St. Joseph, will make it your sweet duty to offer each day to your good and tender father the tribute of your filial love and reverence.

But in order to give greater scope to your proofs of love, confidence, and gratitude to this great saint, to renew and strengthen your pious sentiments for him, in order to draw down

more abundant blessings on yourselves and your pupils through his intercession, you will consecrate all Wednesdays in the year to his honour.

Every year you will devote the month of March to the honour of the glorious patriarch St. Joseph. On the 19th, feast of this patron, you will make a solemn consecration to him of yourselves, your pupils and your houses. St. Joseph, who is the model of the most sublime virtues, will teach you, before all, the love of Jesus and Mary; he will show you, in his tender care of Jesus, the zeal, the holy charity that you owe to your pupils. We know that in these dear children, who are confided to our care, we really find Jesus. He himself told us this positively when he said: ‘Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it to me’

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

*Every Friday, the sisters consecrate themselves
to the Sacred Heart of Jesus On the first Friday
of the month they receive Holy Communion
and, with some solemnity, make an Act of Reparation
to this divine heart. The feast of the Sacred Heart
is kept with solemnity.*

It was the infinite mercy, incomprehensible love that urged the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity to come upon earth, to take upon himself our human nature, to immolate himself upon the altar of the cross that we might be reconciled with God, to institute the sacrament of the Eucharist and thus to remain with us until the end of time.

To return these admirable dispositions of divine love and to urge us

to make reparation as far as possible, for the indifferences of men to their Redeemer and for the insults offered to his Sacred Heart in the sacrament of his love, the Church has established the devotion to the Sacred Heart. She invites us to enter into her views and to testify to Jesus Christ our sorrow, our profound affliction at the forgetfulness, the indifference with which men repay his generosity, his tender love.

Filled as I am myself, dear sisters, with gratitude for the infinite goodness of God to us, and with a just desire to testify to the adorable Heart of my Divine Master my gratitude and the love with which he inspires me, I have vowed and consecrated to Him your Institute and myself with all that I may possess. Yes, O best of Masters, I have offered to thee and I offer to thee again the pious family that thou hast confided to my care, I consecrate to thee those souls so dear to thee; receive them all with kindness; strengthen them; enkindle in them the fire of thy divine love. Fill with zeal and light those who govern, and grant prompt, unquestioning obedience to those who are subject to them; so that, having served thee in perfect unity of sentiment, we may all together be admitted to praise thee in heaven and to sing thy praises during all eternity.

I am convinced, my dear children, that every time you read this, you will ratify in your heart the arrangement laid down by me, whom the heavenly Father has been pleased to make use of to guide you in his way, and to lead you to the reward which he destines for you and which is God himself.

MARY, YOUR BLESSED MOTHER

*The most Holy Virgin is the sovereign of the institute
of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph.*

*The sisters honour her continually. Every Saturday
they consecrate themselves to the Mother of God;
they celebrate the month of Mary.*

On the feast of the Assumption there is a solemn consecration

The most holy virgin is the queen and the mother of this devout family that she protects in union with her holy spouse, St. Joseph.

The signal favour of belonging to Mary and of being in a special manner her children, no doubt, my dear sisters, excites in you sentiments worthy of your vocation and inclines you, without any effort, always to honour in a special way the august Mother whom you have in heaven. But your filial tenderness, in order to excite greater ardour in your hearts, will consecrate to her also Saturday in each week. Every year you will consecrate the month of May to Mary. On the 15th of August you will solemnly consecrate all that you are, all that you have or may have to the glorious Queen of heaven, reigning over the angels an& saints. You will prepare with most particular care to celebrate this great feast of your august Mother.

The remembrance of the goodness and the tender care lavished on us by the Blessed Virgin moves us, re—animates us and gives fresh force to our souls; our hearts are filled with an unction that renders everything easy. Draw profit from this day that the Church and your Constitutions consecrate to the Mother of God to revive your courage, to purify your zeal, that you may labour with greater success at the work of your own sanctification and that of the children confided to your care. On those days, renew your promise of unbounded devotedness to Mary's interests. Thank her for the

wondrous favour that she has granted you in admitting you into her family; in placing you far from the dangers of the world, sheltered in a sacred home where she reigns as queen and on which she unceasingly pours forth~ the most abundant graces.

Implore of her by that tenderness which you have often experienced to preserve among you union of hearts, submission of minds, and a sincere attachment to your Constitutions. Deign, O most Blessed Mother, ever and always to rule and to watch over this flock that thou hast chosen; deign I implore thee, to defend it always from the attacks of the wolf and in the end to lead to the heavenly Shepherd, the sheep and the lambs, the mothers and the children.

The devotions of the month of May will be solemnly observed in our Institute.

STUDY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

To make God known and loved, to explain to your pupils the duties of religion and to accustom them to fulfil them faithfully - in a word, to form zealous servants for Jesus Christ, fervent christians for the Church, saints for heaven; such is the end and aim of your society of your daily labours. Hence, dear sisters, the necessity for you to know well the doctrine of the Church, to understand thoroughly what we must believe and practice in order to correspond with the designs of God and afterwards to attain eternal happiness. Far from urging you to devote yourself, for this end, to higher studies unsuited to your sex, we even forbid you those studies in which curiosity and vanity would be the only motive. Be children yourselves in your docility and your simple faith, ever ready to admit what the Church and the authority of your appointed Pastors teach you. In the same way, be content to teach your pupils the practical truths and to point out to them the surest way of attaining the fulfilment of the duties which God imposes on

each state in particular.

- (1) If you are charged with the Catechism class, learn the easiest and best method of teaching it successfully;
- (2) Acquire the knowledge necessary to explain with fruit the Christian Doctrine to pupils according to their age, their class and what the particular circumstances require.

THE REUNION OF THE COMMUNITY

After the holy Gospel, the Canons of the Church and the writings of the Fathers of the Church, your Constitutions, my dear sisters, are your real code of morals and of doctrine; they form the convention existing between you and your divine spouse, Jesus; in them you have the contract which contains your obligations and your privileges and laws, they are as the book, the understanding of which is of the greatest importance to you, for it contains the elements of your temporal and eternal happiness.

Therefore, it is obvious that the prosperity of your Institute and of each one of its houses, and the happiness of the members of your pious family will always essentially depend on the respect, the affection which you will have for the Constitutions; for on this will necessarily depend the more or less strict observance of what they prescribe. But to obtain these various and precious results, to have for your Constitutions that veneration which is due to them, my dear sisters, to draw from this source, so fruitful in blessings, all the treasures that it contains, it is indispensable that you should know them in all their details, that you should comprehend their meaning, that you should grasp their spirit on all points. To this end, the Superior every week, at the Chapter, will read the Constitutions to you, and to this reading will add explanations having reference to the articles.

The Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph will obtain for your superior and for yourselves the requisite dispositions to enable her to break this bread for you in the real sense, and to dispose you to accept it and to derive benefit from it conformably to the designs of divine providence.

"Learn of me", says the Divine Master, "because I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest to your souls." To whom could Jesus Christ address those words more fitly than to his friends, his spouses? He knows, my dear sisters, how ardently you desire to please him and to cultivate in yourselves those qualities dear to him beyond all others. Now to acquire humility, we must exercise ourselves in humiliation, and in the chapter you have the happiness of doing this. To acquire meekness, trample on those sentiments of your own worth, your own merit; scorn that love of yourself so delicately sensitive, so full of pretensions, so incapable of generosity which is the true meekness so praised by Jesus Christ. Humble yourselves generously and meekness will become, as it were, a second nature to you. Be meek, be humble; divine grace will be the reward of your efforts, and you will enjoy peace of soul. Taught in the school of Jesus Christ, all the saints following in the footsteps of their Divine Master have practised meekness and humility.

"Be humble in the sight of the Lord", says the apostle St. James, "and he will exalt you"; and St. Peter says to us: "And all of you must cloth yourself in humility in your dealings with one another, for God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Say often then, my dear sisters, to yourselves: "Let me despise myself that thus I may become truly humble".

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

God has given us in the Sacrament of Penance a very easy means of satisfying his divine justice and of purifying our souls in the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ whose merits are applied to us in this Sacrament. But that they may ever receive fresh benefits from it, we must guard against prejudices and the sad effects of routine.

1. You should approach the tribunal of Penance with sentiments of lively faith, remembering that the confessor holds the place of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and that it is this Divine Saviour whom you must behold in his minister. Be on your guard therefore, against any too human feelings whether for or against the confessor, but have recourse to his ministry solely for the needs of your soul, setting forth simply and briefly the state of your conscience, confining yourself strictly to that alone; all that is superfluous injures the soul's advancement and is likely to cause other troubles, the chief of which is that it disturbs the heart. In fact, your Divine Spouse would reign alone as Master and Friend in your heart; he does not tolerate any sharing of your affection nor any singularity in your behaviour; he would have all in you submissive to the Rule, and desires that you should walk with simplicity in the path that he has traced out for you himself without seeking or following any other. By making use of these considerations, you could, on the day appointed for confessions, take as the subject of your meditation the preparation for the Sacrament of Penance, compare the week just ended with those that went before to see, if without deceiving yourself, you are striving seriously to correct your faults and to acquire the virtues of your holy state.
2. Finally, examine your conscience carefully but without anxiety; fear disturbs the mind, dries up the heart, and takes away that liberty, that peace of soul which is of such benefit in everything and particularly in the reception of the Sacraments. After a short ex-

amen, excite yourself to sentiments of loving contrition, making use, for this end of such motives as you know are best suited, under the circumstances, to produce that impression. Sorrow for having sinned will naturally lead you to make resolutions and to aim at the means to be adopted to avoid committing the same faults again. Having thus early in the morning remotely prepared yourself, you will require less time for your immediate preparation for confession.

3. Then follows your confession which you should make with simplicity, in as few words as will serve for an exposition of your faults, avoiding useless details, with contrition, with exactitude, confining yourself wholly to your own soul and to your confession. "Believe me", said a religious very well versed in the interior life and the government of convents, Mother Mary of St. Joseph, a Carmelite, "that after you have, by a sincere short confession, satisfied your conscience, you will find a thousand times more profit in conversing with God than with your confessor". St. Francis of Sales even imposes it as an obligation on superiors to see that the holy liberty ordained by the Rules for the greater purity, consolation and peace of souls, be not converted into disturbance of the heart, anxiety of mind, singularity and food for presumption or of a foolish partiality for persons.

4. Having thus made your confession, concentrate your whole attention on what your confessor says to you. To occupy yourself in going over your examen or with any other thoughts, is to run the risk of not hearing the advice given to you by the minister of Jesus Christ or of relapsing into that state of uneasiness of mind which, now that you have received absolution of your sins, should give place to a redoubled peace and calm, according to the designs of God.

5. The sisters must on no account talk to one another about the

confessors or the decisions which they may have given in cases of conscience. Cases, identically the same are rarely met with, and it would be imprudent to try to apply the decisions given in one particular case to another.

6. It must be borne in mind that confessors have no power to dispense from the Constitutions not even from any of our usual exercises. The superiors alone are invested with powers of that nature.

HOLY COMMUNION

"Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened", says Jesus Christ, "and I will refresh you" (Matt. 11: 28).

Your bodies require daily nourishment; your souls also require frequent supernatural sustenance. "It is I Myself who will strengthen them; the bread that I will give them is indeed My flesh, and My blood shall be their drink. This food contains all that is truly delicious; he who takes it dwells in Me and I in him. Taste and see that the Lord is sweet".

Oh! My Lord and my God, thou dost descend upon our altars; thou dost dwell thereon and yet this does not suffice for thy love, thou wilt give us thy body, thy soul, thy Divinity, and to encourage us thou dost press us, thou dost command us to approach. Jesus Christ gives himself really to you, dear sisters, in the Sacrament of his love. He is the sustenance of your weakness, a remedy for your miseries, a light for your understanding, unction for your heart. He will abide in you and wills that you abide in him. But his abiding in you will not be without fruit. It will produce in you fruits of mercy; your soul, acquiring in its turn new fruitfulness, will produce fruits of salvation that shall remain for all eternity. "Ask and you shall

receive, Amen, Amen, I say to you”, adds this generous friend, “if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you”. When Jesus Christ, my dear sisters, has come into you, what will you ask from him? - only this, his Love.

We can conceive nothing more precious, nothing more holy, than to be able to respond to that love which urges thee, O Lord, to give thyself to us with such incomprehensible generosity. O most tender of Spouses, our hearts can have no desire more worthy of thee nor more worthy of ourselves than to love thee alone wholly and undividedly.

This is what, before all, you will ask for in Holy Communion. And what could you in reality value more than the grace of returning the love with which God loves you? Next to the grace of loving Jesus Christ with your whole heart, ask that all the members of the institute may also love him ardently. Ask of Providence the grace to light this fire in many hearts, and that to this end he may grant you docile pupils, whose generous hearts, as yet free from all profane love, may in some degree compensate our Divine Saviour for the indifference of so many christians, who by the profanation of their hearts and the blindness of their minds have become, as it were, idolaters. You will implore the heavenly angels, your Blessed Mother and her holy Spouse to tell the Lord that you wish to love him all your life until death, that thus you may love him during all eternity.

CHAPTER III

MONTHLY EXERCISES

THE PATRON AND THE PARTICULAR VIRTUE FOR EACH MONTH

"Let him who is just become more so, and he who is holy, let him purify himself more". Such is what the Holy Spirit enjoins upon us. True virtue, in reality, knows no bounds; it is not limited by time; the just man never thinks that he has reached the end, he never says "It is enough", his hunger and thirst after justice are never appeased, so that if he were to live for ever he would strive unceasingly to become better.

"No it is not for a year, like a hireling, but for all eternity that he has bound him- self to the service of God", says St. Bernard, and elsewhere the saint adds that "not to advance in the path of virtue is to regress."

These my dear sisters, are principles that you can understand, for in your own hearts you find their confirmation. The love which you have for your Divine Spouse must not be limited by time or circumstances. Your solicitude on this point should be alarmed at the least laxity, you should reproach yourselves bitterly the moment that you deliberately cease your efforts and dare to say: "I have worked enough for my Beloved". No, O Lord, so unworthy a sentiment will never be found in the hearts of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph; their motto will ever be: "To work for Thee, O Lord, or to die that we may rest in Thee." They will not suffer the children of the world to surpass them in zeal and generosity. If the courage of these latter is stimulated, if they are to endure fatigue and brave danger for some small reward, a little praise, or some

one of the baubles that people regard as badges of honour, thy spouses will fix their eyes on the crucifix; and that sight, more powerful than all that earth can offer will revive their courage, and with the help of divine grace, they will overcome their own weakness as well as the enemy's forces.

Let a spirit of noble emulation, my dear sisters, ever reign among you in all that concerns your spiritual advancement, your growth in holiness, to make your souls, already so dear to Jesus Christ, more and more pleasing to him, and thus render yourselves ever more worthy of your vocation and of the reward that will be yours in the possession of your divine Spouse.

To this end, the superior of each house, will every month, name some saint to be honoured and invoked as Patron or Patroness during the following month, and will indicate some special virtue to be practised. Bless the Lord for the favours which he has accorded to the saint chosen; have recourse to the power which he or she has with God that, under his or her auspices you may obtain all those good things for which you are striving in common, and that you may labour with success for the happiness of your pupils.

Be penetrated with a sense of the advantages which the acquisition of the special virtue recommended to you will procure for you, and during the month seek the opportunity of practising it.

Among the Romans, as St. Paul observes, those who intended to compete for the prize in the races prepared themselves carefully for the struggle, enduring severe privation and undertaking rude, laborious exercises; yet only one of the competitors could hope to be the first to reach the goal and to obtain the prize You, dear sisters, have not only the hope, but the certainty of obtaining the prize in the spiritual arena, your crowns will be in proportion to the goodwill with which you have striven and the efforts you have made.

THE DAY OF RETREAT

It is a holy and salutary practice to withdraw for one day every month from our ordinary occupations and to occupy ourselves solely with the one great affair - that of our eternal salvation. This practice possesses very remarkable advantages: it is an efficacious means of acquiring more and more the knowledge of oneself, so necessary above all, to religious souls; to prevent delusion, laxity, and to ensure progress in the path of perfection.

The sisters will prepare themselves for this day of retreat the evening before; they will retire to recollect themselves and to implore fervently the guidance of the Holy Spirit. On the next morning, from the time of rising, they will keep their minds particularly recollected. Committing with simplicity the duties appointed to them to the care of Providence, they will occupy themselves solely with their Divine Spouse and their own souls.

The principal exercises of the retreat consist of an examen, two meditations, and spiritual reading; these are followed by good resolutions to be put into practice at once. The day of retreat ends with an act of reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the SUBTUUM.

CHAPTER IV

ANNUAL EXERCISES THE ANNUAL RETREAT

Besides their monthly retreat the sisters make one, of from five to eight days, every year.

Our poor human nature has such a strong tendency to laxity, our weakness is so great, the assaults of the flesh against the spirit so frequent, the wiles of the enemy so crafty, our presumption at times so incomprehensible, our thoughtlessness, imprudence, inconsistency so deplorable, that it is difficult even for religious not to lose by degrees their first fervour. Although remote from the world and its scandals, in a solitude where evangelical perfection is the rule, where one has only to follow the greater number to walk in the way of God, where one sees nothing but those things which influence for good, where no false maxim could exist for long, finally, where all that you hear, as well as all that you see should edify you, yet you are not wholly safe.[~] For notwithstanding all these precious aids, you have within you those evil inclinations that are inherent in all the children of Adam, and against which you must struggle continually. Zealous application to the most sacred by no means guarantee us from that subtle self—love which can pervert the most holy things. Routine on the other hand, may enter into the most holy exercises and render them less efficacious, less capable of maintaining the soul in piety. These reflections prove how useful it is for us to return from time to time from our ordinary occupations, in order to examine, in the absolute silence of the retreat, the state of our souls, to discover the losses we may have sustained and to restore our exhausted strength.

Laying aside to a certain degree all other cares, in order to occupy

yourself for some time with God and with your salvation, you will discover, by the most profound meditation on the Gospel and on your Constitutions, by comparing your sentiments with those of your Divine Spouse, your conduct in detail with your sacred obligations, you will discover, I say, all that is wanting in you, and you will render prompt justice to the specious pretexts with which you might excuse your laxity. In this perfect solitude, the truth, less obscured by passions which trouble the most peaceful mind and heart, will be revealed to you in a clearer light, and your soul better prepared, will be more deeply impressed by the vision of itself in that clearer light of truth, and will more promptly respond to the inspirations of divine grace.

Your Constitutions, my dear sisters, provide you with the surest means of securing salvation and even perfection, and furnish you in this retreat with one more means to that end; they impose it on you as a duty to consider it as one of the most precious means and to which they enjoin you to be most faithful.

Independently of their monthly retreat, the sisters will make one every year from five to eight days' duration. During this time they will follow the exercises of St. Ignatius.

In the hope, my dear sisters, of causing you to draw forth, without fail, the graces contained in this treasury of divine Mercy for the sanctification of your souls, I pray you, I implore you, for the love of Jesus Christ, Our Lord and your Divine Spouse, to weigh well the following reflections and to act according to them every time that you have the happiness of making a retreat.

1. Always bring to it a firm resolution, a sincere desire to profit by it, for your spiritual advancement; the determination to listen to the voice of God and to make the sacrifices for him that he asks of you.

2. To preserve interior recollection carefully, avoid all thoughts which are not centred on the retreat, regarding yourself as if you were alone in the world.
3. No matter what dislike, repugnance or dryness you may feel, follow all the exercises courageously and perseveringly.
4. Examine with simplicity what you ought to be, and what you are; in what manner you should fulfil your obligations, and how you have fulfilled them. Enter into details and examine yourself with regard to your various duties, as a religious, a teacher, etc.
Scrutinise your actions, see with what intention, in what manner, at what time you have performed them, consider carefully the obligations imposed on you by your vows, apply them to your conduct, entering into the smallest detail and sincerely endeavouring to discover if you are not deluding yourself on any point.
5. Next, occupy yourself with the means to correct what you find reprehensible in your behaviour, to prevent fresh falls and to lead to your improvement. Such should be the end arid aim of your retreat. To confine yourself to hearing, to understanding the truths, to see the necessity for correcting yourself, even to make wise resolutions to be more pious, more humble, more zealous, more detached, would not be of much use to you; you must examine into the details of your duties, your virtues, your faults; you must specify and decide what you intend to do in order to fulfil this duty, to acquire that virtue, to correct that fault; you must, in a word, put your hand to the work and make a beginning before you have finished your retreat, according to the words of David: "I have said and I have begun."

FEASTS OF THE CHURCH

*In the Institute preparation is made
with great devotion for
the feasts of the Church.*

We cannot have any surer guide in piety than Holy Church. Now, in following the sentiments with which she inspires her children according to the different mysteries she celebrates during the course of the year, we have the certainty of offering to God a worship pleasing to him. By joining afterwards to the general practices of the Church those which are special to your Constitutions, you will spend, dear sisters, the time of your sojourn on earth holily and even happily. Therefore, with the help of grace and conformably to your customs, following in all things the prescriptions of your Constitutions, excite within yourself the sentiments befitting the mysteries of religion and the different situations in which you find yourself. The reading of works which treat of the feasts celebrated by the Church will be an excellent means of preparing for these and of making profitable use of the religious solemnities.

The sisters will prepare with particular fervour for the festivals of Easter, Pentecost, the Ascension, Corpus Christi, the Assumption, All Saints and Christmas.

CHAPTER V

SUPERIORS, NOVICES, POSTULANTS

The Superiors

The superior general and the local
superiors must watch
over the exact observance
of the Constitutions.

No matter what you may do to attain to the perfection to which you are called you will never arrive at it so quickly or so surely as by following the path of sincere and humble obedience to the guides whom God has appointed to lead and direct you. Such are the means pointed out and employed by the saints in all ages.

The superior general and the respective superiors will have boundless patience with their spiritual daughters and sisters in religion in all their difficulties. With the help of divine grace they will protect them from harm and will unceasingly devote their best efforts to them.

In order that they may more strictly observe the Constitutions in the fulfilment of the offices or occupations confided to them, the sisters will hold spiritual converse with their superiors. They will ask advice that they may faithfully discharge all these duties, and, if there is necessity for it, they will ask a penance for the faults that they may have committed in fulfilling them.

Take care not to look upon your superiors as mere human beings; do not place your confidence in them because of their great knowledge or of any other perfections that you may find in them, but solely because it is God who has committed you to their care, and

who speaks to you by their mouth, exciting in their hearts such a sentiment and on their lips such and such words of which he knows your soul has need. Always speak to them frankly, truthfully, and in all simplicity. Let your confidence in your superiors be mingled with respect, and let one assist the other in procuring for you all the benefits that God wills you should receive through the medium of his representatives. Bless Divine Providence for having given you in your superiors the true means of perfection; refrain from seeking any other. You would run the risk of going astray and of leaving the straight path that leads to God.

The superiors like mothers, are urged to treat their children with loving care. But they are also guardians of a trust that God has given them; they cannot always yield to their maternal affection, nor can they permit what would relax the bonds of discipline or connive at anything that would be an obstacle in the path of perfection for the souls that are in their care. Jesus Christ, on the day of Judgment, would reproach and accuse them for having done so. Let those under them be careful not to expose their superiors to such deplorable consequences.

Belonging, as they do, to the Institute, and not to any house in particular, the Daughters of Mary and Joseph should embrace in their esteem and affection all their houses and all their sisters.

To have a particular affection for one to the prejudice of another would be very unjust. All will conscientiously abstain from making comparisons between what is done in our different houses, whether with regard to the management, to the table, the clothes, the work, etc. Those who change houses must not question or make any reflection on these matters.

The life of an ordinary christian is a life of conflict, of subjection, of dependence; that of a religious, of the spouse of a crucified God, cannot be a life of satisfaction, of natural choice, or of independence. Submissive to all that God asks of them through the

medium of their superiors, the Daughters of Mary and Joseph must be ever ready, at all times following the example of their august Patrons, to leave one house for another, to accept, to give up, or to resume an office, even if the order seems inconvenient and contrary to their natural inclinations, just as that order must have seemed, which caused the Son of God, his Blessed Mother, and his Foster father to fly to Egypt in the middle of the night. Our sisters will obey cheerfully, without delay, happy like Mary and Joseph to preserve in their hearts the loving Jesus, that treasure, confided to them, and who should be dearer to them than their own particular likings, even than their very life. Convinced, as they should be, that they cannot have peace nor do any good if they depart from the order of Providence, they will always sacrifice their own plans and their own inclinations to the arrangements of their superiors, that thus they may be able to say under all circumstances with their Master, their Divine Spouse: "My food is to do the will of him that sent me that I may perfect his work" (John 4:34)

Novices and Postulants

The choice of subjects for continuing the family of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph being a matter of utmost importance, the sisters possessing votes are bound to implore the light of the Holy Spirit so that they may admit as subjects only those who will be useful to the Institute, and may reject such as would be hurtful to it, and this without listening to the appeals either of affection or of dislike. In case of doubt, they may consult the superior general or the mistress of novices, without however, manifesting the direction of their vote. The postulants and novices endeavour to purify themselves from their past faults and to rid themselves of the spirit of the world; they must practise the religious virtues, especially humility, obedience and true charity. After two years of generous efforts they are allowed to take the three simple vows of Poverty, Obedience and Chastity,

for the term of five years.

During their novitiate the novices will try to destroy the effects of original sin within them and to efface the stains of those personal faults with which they have sullied their baptismal robe. In the calm of solitude, in the silence of the passions, and far from the contagion of the principles and example of the world, the novices will carefully review the prerogatives conferred on them in Baptism, by which they became temples of his Spirit, members of Jesus Christ, and heirs to his kingdom. They will count the graces which they have received from the Eternal Father since that happy hour. They will examine whether they have been that fertile ground which produces a hundredfold or that barren ground which, although abundantly watered by the rain from heaven, has produced little fruit or only weeds and thorns. In the former case they will praise the heavenly Father that they have corresponded to his designs, that as his faithful servants, they have constantly done the works confided to them. In the latter case, they will learn to wash away by their tears and to expiate by the practice of mortification the infidelities and ingratitude of which they have the misfortune to be guilty. Hence those humiliations, and penitential exercises to make reparation for their offences against their Creator. Hence that noble ardour which inspires them to walk in the footsteps of the saints, following Jesus Christ in the way of evangelical perfection. Hence those continual injunctions to go on without growing weary, until that moment when a death precious in the sight of the Lord will crown a holy life, a life spent in the service of Mary and Joseph, in the intimate love of the Divine Spouse, Jesus Christ.

You will be told continually, because it is of importance that you should engrave it deeply on your mind and still more deeply in your heart, that it has been given to you to understand the wonders of divine love; that the Lord has chosen you to be his for ever. Among

so many persons who lead holy lives he has given you the preference, he has willed that you should be one of the family of his Blessed Mother. He has destined you for great things; you should be the princesses of his court. He has prepared you to be his privileged friends, his spouses. "Come", he says, "My beloved, come you, the chosen of my heart, listen to the inspirations of my love. Forget your people and your father's house. Listen: I will adorn you with heavenly beauty that will make you pleasing in my sight. Come, for I have chosen you".

You have understood these invitations. This is why you have renounced all human affection, given up all earthly joys, to forget even yourselves to follow Jesus Christ and to attach yourself to this Divine Spouse by irrevocable bonds. It is at this price that you will obtain the heavenly favours destined for you. On your fidelity to the sacred contract which God makes with you will depend your happiness in the blessed company into which you will be admitted near to your Divine Spouse in the kingdom of his Father.

Having in all things satisfied the requirements of Holy Church and of the Institute during their novitiate, the novices will then be permitted to make temporary vows for a term of five years.

The exercises preceding the perpetual vows will also last for ten days.

During the whole time of probation, the postulants are under the direction of the mistress of novices, who will carefully examine their dispositions before they are admitted to the novitiate.

It is the duty of all the members of the Institute to pray to God to grant us good postulants and to assist with his divine grace those who are received.

The Second Novitiate

At the close of the fourth year of their temporary vows, the sisters will duly inform the superior general that the time for their second novitiate has arrived and they will humbly ask of her the favour of being allowed to prepare for the taking of their perpetual vows. At the end of the fifth year, having passed through a year's novitiate spent in a different house from that of the first novitiate, they will make their final profession. Although the trials and the exercises of the novitiate, and the abundance of spiritual favours that Jesus Christ pours out with a kind of prodigality on the great day of the profession should suffice to purify the heart and to adorn it with the most sublime virtues, it is certain that the repetition of the probation of the novitiate, of those means of sanctification which are the most powerful we possess, will undoubtedly be useful to the greater number of our sisters.

Jesus Christ is a faithful and ever constant Spouse; never could his spouses know bitterness in their communion with him. But he is a jealous Spouse, and the least sharing of the heart grieves him and he makes this felt by his beloved whose happiness is overcast by clouds. Now surprise, routine, our weakness, and above all, the malice of our enemy may injure the delicacy of our sentiments and render us less faithful.

To avoid the danger of laxity, our sisters must watch and pray. Independently of the monthly and annual retreats, their Constitutions will furnish them, in a second novitiate and all its exercises of perfection with a very powerful means of protection against this evil.

It would be very necessary or at least very useful, if during the second novitiate the sisters were exempted from all distracting charges and occupations so as to be able to devote themselves to prayer, meditation and the exercises of penance and humility. They

might, however, study or even give some lessons.

CHAPTER VI

THE HOLY VOWS

*The Daughters of Mary and Joseph
take the simple vows of Poverty,
Obedience, and Chastity.*

The Church, that sacred depository of the graces and the doctrine of Jesus Christ, pours out in profusion her gifts and favours on those generous souls that consecrate themselves to his service by the vows of Poverty, Obedience and Chastity. She teaches us by the mouth of her Doctors that the merit of these vows is so great that it is capable of satisfying divine justice for the punishment due to our sins. St. Jerome, St. Cyprian and St. Bernard call the profession a second Baptism, which according to the teaching of the theologians, can purify the soul from every stain of sin, so that if a religious were to die at that moment she would go straight to heaven, just like those who die immediately after Baptism. St. Cyprian calls the virgins consecrated to the Lord "the sweet-smelling flowers of the Church, the masterpieces of grace, the ornaments of nature, the image of God in which is reflected the holiness of Jesus Christ, and the most illustrious portion of his flock". "They begin", adds the saintly Bishop, "by being on earth what we shall one day be in heaven; we speak to them rather with~ a father's tenderness than with the authority of a superior "

FORMULA OF THE VOWS

"My God, my Creator, my Redeemer, though I am nought but weakness and have offended thee by my sins, yet trusting in your infinite mercy, I venture to appear, here in thy sacred presence and before your altar; before Mary and her Blessed Spouse. I, N... vow and promise to thy Divine Majesty ("for five years", or, "for all my life" as the case may be) Poverty, Obedience, Chastity, according to the Constitutions of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, which I accept and embrace in all their points.~ In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE VOW OF POVERTY

Our Divine Legislator, our Model, our Master, our heavenly Spouse, Jesus Christ, extols this holy voluntary poverty in his teaching and by his example. "Blessed" he says, "are the poor in spirit." It was with this eulogium of religious poverty that our Divine Saviour began his beautiful "Sermon on the Mount" on the eight Beatitudes. It is also the first lesson which he gave by being born in a stable where a poor manger served him as a cradle; and it was the last that he gave us when dying on the cross, destitute of everything earthly. During his mortal life, he tells us that he had not where to lay his head; and he exhorted those who wished to follow him to sell all that they possessed and give everything to the poor. In accordance with these lessons and these examples, the Daughters of Mary and Joseph will make a vow in the presence of God to divest themselves of all personal property.

Our sisters bind themselves:

1. To be satisfied with the food, clothes, the house, and with every-

thing provided for their use, such as it will please Divine Providence to grant them through the medium of their superiors.

2. To give nothing, to lend nothing, to destroy nothing, to appropriate nothing of what belongs to the community, not even a little picture, without permission.
3. To ask nothing, to borrow nothing, to receive nothing, to use nothing, not even a sheet of paper, without permission.
4. Not to retain anything whatsoever, nor to have anything locked up or hidden without the clear, precise authorisation of their superior.
5. Not to have a bird or an animal for their amusement.
6. The sisters endeavour to acquire such detachment from everything earthly and even from those things, the use of which is permitted them, that they will give these up the moment the superior wishes it, and that they will despise these same things as unworthy to have any place in their affection. They will confine themselves strictly to what is necessary in such a manner that their lives will far rather manifest privations than any abundance of the things of this world.
7. Lastly, in spite of the appearances to the contrary to which the decorum due to their state obliges them to submit, they must, in all that concerns the spirit of poverty, be second to no other religious institute, not even the most austere. They will try to be generous whenever they have any special opportunity of practising holy poverty.

Such is the way in which the Daughters of Mary and Joseph will understand and practise the spirit of poverty. It is by this absolute re-

nunciation of earthly things that they will procure for themselves, even in this life, the sweetness of heavenly richness, peace of heart, God's love and his constant protection. They will already experience the truth of those words: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:3).

THE VOW OF CHASTITY

By this vow, happy children of a Virgin Mother, of a virgin Father, the Daughters of Mary and Joseph will bind themselves to keep their hearts, their bodies, and their minds pure and chaste for their Virgin Spouse.

1. For the faithful observance of Chastity they must accustom themselves to control their imagination and to mortify themselves by never allowing their minds to dwell on idle, useless things.
2. They will watch carefully over the affections of their hearts, so that they may ever belong wholly to their Divine Spouse, and they may never have too human an attachment to anything earthly.
3. They will mortify their curiosity, their eager desire to see everything, to hear everything. They will pray and keep watch over their senses, and at their meals they will observe a prudent moderation.
4. They should be circumspect and modest in their walk, their movements, their bearing, that thus their presence may inspire respect for the religious state.
5. Their modesty should be neither forced nor affected, but should seem to be the attribute of a soul that seeks only God, her own salvation and her neighbour's edification.
6. Finally they will be prudent without being anxious; filled with

confidence, but yet humble. They will never let their thoughts dwell on anything that might disturb them; they will keep themselves so closely united to their Divine Spouse that they will not fear the attacks of the enemy, protected as they are by the shield of Jesus himself.

"Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God" (Matt 5:8).

THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE

Jesus Christ was obedient unto death, even death of the cross "My food", says this generous Saviour, "is to do the Will of him that sent me". Therefore he listens with respect to the voice of his Father; he makes it the rule of his judgments and his affections. He conforms all his desires to it. He performs all it prescribes to him. Such should be the obedience of his spouses. But as this obedience, so sublime, so meritorious, which, thanks to Mary and her holy Spouse, we have the consolation of seeing practised in this Institute with such perfection as leaves little to be desired, is to be one of the strongest supports of our pious family, it is important to point out here three dangerous illusions which the enemy, jealous of our happiness, may someday try to make use of to shake the edifice which God's grace has raised for you.

The first of these delusions is that which would cause you to believe that disobedience consisted solely in resisting the will of your superiors. St. Paul refutes this error when he says to you: "Obey in all things ... not serving to the eye as pleasing to men. Whatever you do, do it to the Lord and not to men". The second illusion would be to persuade yourself that you are obedient, and that you live in the practice of this virtue when you are engaged in some employment that you have procured for yourself by your importunity or in some other way. Here is what St. Bernard teaches on this point: "Whoever strives, either openly or in some roundabout man-

ner, to induce his superior to grant him what he wants, deceives himself, if he thinks that he can then fulfil the duties of obedience; for”, adds the saint, “it is not he who is obeying them, it is the superior who submits, in thus yielding to the will and caprice of his subject.” The third illusion is that which, under the pretext of following their attraction or inspiration, would lead some people to exercises, apparently opposed to nature and pleasing to God, but which are contrary to the Constitutions and to the decisions of the superiors, such as night work, excessive mental or physical labour. To be forearmed against this snare we have but to remember that God has declared he will not accept these practices because they are corrupted by the very spirit which has prompted them.

1. Our sisters, by their vow of obedience, bind themselves to renounce their own will, their own particular opinions and to respect and approve of all the orders coming from the superiors whom God has placed over them. They will interiorly submit their knowledge and their opinions to those of their superiors and they will carry out promptly, simply, exactly and with good grace the orders given to them.
2. They will not be influenced by personal affection, by the narrow views of human wisdom, nor by corporal or spiritual gifts, in the obedience which they owe to their superiors. They will recognise in them God himself who pays them the honour of judging, refusing, ordering through the medium of their superiors.
3. They will always be ready at all times to go from one house to another, to accept, to give up, or to resume an office, convinced that if they deviate from obedience they cannot be at rest or do any good.
4. Under certain circumstances they may respectfully state their opinions to their superiors, but they will maintain a holy indifference.

ence as to what the superior may decide. A desire to examine into and discuss whether certain orders are good or bad is tantamount to a desire to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. True wisdom consists in obeying with simplicity and in regarding nothing as being good or useful save what is prescribed by the Law of God, the Constitutions and the orders of their superiors.

5. The Daughters of Mary and Joseph will try to acquire all the qualifications and virtues that constitute a good educator, but they will leave it to the superiors to dispose as they will of all their talents and of the education they may have, their only desire being to obey blindly and to correspond in all things with the designs of God in regard to those functions which are entrusted to them.

6. They will not content themselves with obeying merely in important matters or at the express order of the superiors; but they will study to obey even in the least things, the slightest manifestations of the will of the superior or of anyone else who may be delegated to take her place. It is of extreme importance that they do not consider the person whom they obey, but him for whom they obey.

7. Lastly, the sisters will try to practise obedience perfectly, so that it may be possible to say of them that they think, breathe, act, work and rest, only through obedience. Thus every thought, every word, and even the smallest act will acquire the merit of obedience. Happy bondage which gives the freedom of the children of God!

If your Constitutions impose perfect obedience in all circumstances on you as a duty, it is because on it, my dear sisters, greatly depends the success of your Institute. It is indeed sweet charity and humble obedience which will form its everlasting foundations. The enchanting music produced by a well-trained orchestra is the effect of the exactitude, the perfect unison of the instruments, the performers watching and responding to the slightest gesture of

their leader which they obey with such marvellous promptitude as to suggest to the listener that the whole orchestra consists of but one man.

Thus should the Daughters of Mary and Joseph work together in perfect harmony and unison, with but one mind, one will—the mind and will of their superior.

OBLIGATION TO OBSERVE THE CONSTITUTIONS

You, my dear children, bless the Lord you who are his servants, who live in his house as the friends of his predilection and are his spouses and are admitted to the closest intimacy with him at all hours, enjoying the sweetness of his Divine Presence and the treasures of his Divine Love. Forget, then, your people and your father's house, detach yourself ever more and more from all that is not God; free yourself from all self-seeking, that thus your heart may belong unreservedly to him, who has done you the honour of choosing you in preference to so many others Show that you are no longer of this world, and that you know how to appreciate the singular prerogative of belonging to the court of the king of glory.

Your convent will be for you that fortress which the love of your Divine Spouse has raised to protect you from the assaults of the enemy. Your Constitutions are that wall, that rampart, with which he has surrounded you for your defence. Enjoy in peace the blessing of the Lord; try to understand ever more and more the marvels of that divine charity, and lift up your eyes to the heavenly Jerusalem; that sight will revive your strength, and will increase your courage so that you may at last win that crown offered to you by Jesus Christ, and which Mary and Joseph invite you to ornament by your continual efforts until the happy moment which will consum-

mate your happiness and unite you for ever to the Beloved of your soul. "Come", Jesus Christ will say to you, "come, my friends, take possession of the throne that I have prepared for you. You have left all things to follow me; you have, in the person of your pupils, instructed me; in helping the weak and the imperfect, you have helped me; receive from me this crown and enjoy for all eternity the delights of my triumphant love. It is I, myself, your God, who am your reward. Intone now the canticle of praise and thanksgiving; unite your voice to the choir of virgins, to that of the angels, and bless me for all eternity!"

And you, in a transport of joy in which nothing here on earth can give you an idea, will say: "Yes, Lord, eternally, eternally, we will praise thee, we will thank thee, for ever in a never-ending eternity!"

Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo (PS lxxxiii)

ATTACHMENT TO THE CONSTITUTIONS

Being quite convinced that their path is clearly marked out by the Constitutions and that in following any other they would only go astray or to use St. Augustine's words, would swerve from the right path, the Daughters of Mary and Joseph will always follow on all points this compass which their Divine Spouse has placed in their hands. They will guard it from injury, and will follow its guidance, no matter what be their own views or opinion, and however much outsiders may condemn it. In this matter they will follow conscientiously the advice of St. Francis of Sales, who says: "Religious should be most attentive in labouring to improve themselves, according to their Institute, by a continual observance of their Rule. They will compare with it all the inspirations they may have, whether in their reading, lectures, prayers, or elsewhere, never

adopting anything which would be contrary to the spirit of the Institute; however good it may seem to be, and might be in reality, it would not be good for them.

All should try to improve according to their vocation, and moreover, the principles of all virtues and perfections are comprised in their Rules and Constitutions. Let superiors, therefore, carefully guard against the introduction of any novelties, and let them suppress all pretensions to do more or less than what is prescribed in the Rules themselves." "This advice is of such importance", adds the saint, "that if it were neglected, the spirit of your Congregation would decay; whilst, on the contrary, if it is followed exactly, it will enrich heaven with souls pleasing to God".

Let the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, then, walk courageously in the path traced out for them by their Constitutions; let them behave humbly, meekly, patiently, bearing with one another mutually in charity, and let them do all that is possible "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace". They form one body; it is the same spirit that rules them; they have all the same hope of obtaining the reward attached to their vocation (St. Paul to the Ephesians)

May the peace of Jesus Christ, that sweet and powerful peace that surpasses all good, enlighten their minds and guide their affections.
Amen.