

**Exhortations
and
Admonitions**

by

Father Francis Jordan

Founder of the Salvatorians

Translated by Father Winfrid Herbst SDS

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*Audite, filii,
disciplinam patris.
(Proverbs 4:1)*

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Introduction

This new edition of the *Exhortations and Admonitions* of Father Francis Jordan is published by the Generalate of the Society of the Divine Savior in order to make the ideas and words of our Founder more widely available in the English language.

The edition prepared by Father Winfrid Herbst almost sixty years ago has served us well but unfortunately has been very hard to come by in recent years. With the growth in recent years in the number of members of the Society using the English language the publication of a new edition of *Exhortations and Admonitions* became essential.

The texts quoted from sacred scripture in this edition are taken from the *New Jerusalem Bible*. Apart from some obsolete words which have been updated the text remains faithful to the original translation by Father Winfrid Herbst.

I take this opportunity to thank Father Tom Novak and Father Joe Henn for their assistance in correcting and proof reading the text.

Father Alex McAllister, SDS
General Secretary

Rome, 31st January 1998

Foreword

Dear Confreres:

In the following pages we give extracts from the Chapters and addresses which our Venerable Father gave at various times in the Motherhouse and which we heard with our own ears. His Chapters and addresses were at the time taken down in shorthand by scholastics and then written out in longhand together with the date and occasion of delivery. So we have a splendid volume of these writings in the archives of the Motherhouse; and it is easy to understand that the wish was expressed with ever greater urgency that the contents of this volume be made accessible to all the members of the Society. Herewith we are complying with that wish. All the thoughts on the same subject were put together under their own chapter heading; and it is in this form that we are presenting the addresses. The Venerable Father often discoursed on various subjects in the same Chapter, in accordance with the concerns that just then occupied him. And he often repeated one and the same thought with ever greater emphasis. It was by no means his rhetoric, or his address as such which made a special impression when he spoke but rather, one may say, solely the spirit which animated the address. Everyone present felt and knew that the Venerable Father spoke from the depths of his heart, that he was utterly and intensely serious about the matter, and that before all others he himself practiced what he so earnestly recommended to us. One just naturally could not help thinking of these words of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "Now when I came to you, brothers, I did not come with any brilliance of oratory or wise argument to announce to you the mystery of God. I was resolved that the only knowledge I would have while I was with you was knowledge of Jesus, and of him as the crucified Christ. I came among you in weakness, in fear and great trembling and what I spoke and proclaimed was not meant to convince by philosophical argument, but to demonstrate the convincing

power of the Spirit, so that your faith should depend not on human wisdom but on the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

May these exhortations and admonitions of our Venerable Father continue to exert their influence—*defunctus adhuc loquitur*—and may they contribute to the preservation of his spirit in the Society; for it is upon this spirit that its progress, the success of its apostolate, indeed, its very existence depends.

Rome, Motherhouse, September 8, 1937.

P. Pancratius Pfeiffer,
Superior Generalis SDS

Preface

This book is a translation of *Worte und Ermahnungen unseres Ehrwuerdigen Vaters*. The translator was at a loss as to how to go about the translation of Father Jordan's addresses, since the original German was oftentimes rather peculiar and somewhat puzzling and there were broken sentences and disjointed thoughts. Yet he wished to give the addresses just as they were delivered—only in English.

In this predicament the translator sought the counsel of Father General in the last days of November, 1938, while the latter was on his official visitation at the Salvatorian Seminary, St. Nazianz, Wisconsin. It was agreed that a golden mean should be adopted in the translation: it was not to be too severely literal and yet was not to depart from the exact sense of the original.

The first chapter was thereupon translated. The English version was then read by the translator to the General while the latter listened and at the same time carefully scanned the original. When Chapter One had thus been submitted to careful scrutiny, Father General expressed himself highly gratified and with his own hand wrote at its end: *Praefatam versionem prorsus approbantes, optamus, ut et reliqua ven. nostri Fundatoris monita et dicta similiter reddantur. St. Nazianz, 6. XII. 1938. P. Pancratius Pfeiffer, Sup. Gen. SDS.* (Giving full approval of the above version, we desire that also the rest of our Venerable Founder's words and admonitions be similarly translated. St. Nazianz, Dec. 6, 1938. Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer, Superior General SDS.)

To Father Guericus Buerger SDS goes the credit of laboriously putting together the words of our Venerable Father as found under each chapter heading. He spent about three months at this task in the Motherhouse in Rome, where he had access to the archives of the Society of the Divine Savior. It was also he who wrote the explanatory remarks which appear in italic type

at the head of most of the chapters and occasionally in the body of certain chapters.

The reader will note well that paragraphs or a series of paragraphs are numbered in each chapter. This means that everything under one and the same number was taken from one and the same address. So when there are various numbers in one chapter it means that the thoughts of that chapter, all relating to the subject given in the chapter heading, were taken from that many different addresses. A little reflection on the labor involved in thus compiling the addresses of our Venerable Father will make us doubly grateful to Father Guericus.

In the original certain expressions in parentheses were inserted by the compiler to supply words missed by the stenographer or words no longer legible in the manuscripts. That has not been done in this translation. Such expressions have simply been absorbed into the English text.

Winfid Herbst SDS

Salvatorian Seminary,
Dedication Day,
June 13, 1939.

1

Living by Faith

The life of our Venerable Father was wholly built on faith. He believed with unshakable faith in Divine Providence and in the wise and loving dominion of God. And for that reason he willingly and humbly accepted whatsoever the providence of God sent him. It was this which gave him that unflinching strength in all his difficulties. Childlike faith in the heavenly Father was like sunshine diffused over the life of the Venerable Father.

1. A Religious should live by faith. Especially should the Religious not judge of circumstances, of persons, with the eyes of the world; indeed, not even with the eyes of reason, but in the light of faith, as the Divine Savior has taught, as the saints have done. That holds good in general but especially as regards the Superiors.

Look upon your Superiors as upon that which they really are: the representatives of God. Do not look upon them as mere men; they are your Superiors. For God's sake you should obey them as the representatives of God and in this you should recognize the will of God.

Therefore, in your Superiors you should not attend to whether they are younger or older, whether they are skilled or less skilled in governing, learned or less learned. It should suffice for you to know: he is appointed over me; he is the Superior. So it is the will of God for me to obey as long as what is commanded is not a sin.

If you live by faith and see in the Superiors the representatives of God, great peace will fill your soul. You will feel happy. And what is especially important: your faith will be enlivened.

How many men say: We believe everything that is to be believed. But they do not live by faith. How many men believe in the Most Blessed Sacrament. But they do not act according to

this faith; they do not pay that homage which is due to the Most Blessed Sacrament; their faith is dead.

Therefore, render punctual obedience to all Superiors. Show them the reverence that is due them as representatives of God, without taking into account their personal faults and characteristics.

We are all human. And if we judge only with the eyes of the flesh as regards Superiors and those who are placed over us we will find faults in them all. And that is one great evil and misfortune which can enter a Community, if we judge everything with the eyes of the flesh. The first result of this is one's own unhappiness.

Again, if one criticizes the Superiors and disturbs the relationship between Superiors and inferiors, how can an organization then prosper.

When a person is dissatisfied or no longer interiorly happy, he finds so many reasons for his attitude and thinks up so many things, that if one were to place a saint there as Superior he would still find grounds for objecting. Live by faith I beg of you! That will bring you blessings. That will bring peace to you and a benediction upon your work. That will make the Community virile and strong, that will make the Society great. It will then prosper.

The other way will result in discord and dissatisfaction. When inferiors and Superior deal with each other it will then be as when shop boys chase around on the street, because faith and reverence are lacking. I cannot condemn it strongly enough that when Religious are together one does not treat his confreres with the respect that is due them.

Live by faith and act by faith! That will make you happy and content and will enable the Society to do great things.

It is especially important that we be well grounded in faith, that we hold firmly to Holy Church, to everything that Christ

and the Church teach, and that we repel ev-erything which is contrary to this.

It is important that in prayer, in our action in our endeavors and labors, in our suffering we be thoroughly animated by this faith and thus make it an integral part of ourselves.

Let us remember well that we are called to live especially by faith and according to the principles of faith.

Be convinced that a preacher who lets himself be guided by the light of faith will accomplish more than one who relies more upon scholarly attainments and learning and philosophy. Become men of faith, firm and unshakable in the true faith, faithful members of Holy Church.

If you live by faith you will also look quite differently upon the happenings that occur. You will trust in God. You will simply do your duty and leave the rest to God.

I, accordingly, admonish you that in occurrences, come what will, even if it appears wholly unfavorable, you simply do your duty and cast all your cares upon the Lord. And you will soon experience that the Lord arranges ev-erything for the best. Trust in the Lord! Believe in Divine Providence!

When in old age you will look back upon many a sad happening and compare the sorrow with which you then received it with your final realization of how God directed everything for your best interests—O how you will then judge quite differently!

Live as men of faith! Do become thoroughly firm and strong in faith!

Pray that our Society may never believe erroneous doctrines, that teachings against Holy Church may never creep into our Society, that we may always hold fast to her teachings and let ourselves be guided by her.

O that we might be most firmly rooted in the faith! May the storms but strengthen us, as the storms strengthen the roots of

the tree! Would that we might ever be and ever remain firm and unshakable in the faith!

Your views should be fashioned according to faith and not according to men.

How different after all are the judgments of an unbeliever and those of a believing Christian! If you live by faith, then you will also judge differently. If in a Superior you see the representative of God, then you will obey gladly and joyfully. But if you do not live by faith, how hard it then is for you to obey a Superior!

Practice your faith! How many opportunities there are to practice it. And if you do so you will find what joy faith gives to you. How happy you will be in your work and how easy it will be for you. How easily you will excel in religious observance if everywhere and always you are penetrated by faith and live entirely by it. What reverence you will have for your confreres, for an immortal soul! What reverence for a person consecrated to God, for a priest!

You should be men of faith and should therefore also have great confidence. Hope springs from faith. If you wish to do great things for the glory of God and the salvation of souls then you must have great, unshaken faith and boundless confidence.

2

Confidence in God

One of the attractive features in the life of the Venerable Father is his confidence in God. He walked the way of life like a child led by the hand of his heavenly Father. His confidence in God never left him, not even in the most trifling circumstances. Countless times did he exhort his spiritual Sons to confidence in God. And he glowed with holy zeal when he spoke of confidence in God. Indeed, he left this spirit of confidence as a special heritage to his spiritual children.

1. I would like to leave you a special heritage, if I may so speak; and this heritage is great confidence in God.
2. He who trusts in the Lord will not give way, will not fall. He whose strength is in the Lord will not sink down.
3. Again and again I tell you, put all your trust in the Lord!
4. Live in the full conviction that unshaken confidence in God lays low the infernal enemy.

As regards this point, I beg of you that you note it down for your whole life; then you will have such surpassing strength that no power will be able to resist it.

5. If this confidence endures, the Society will be all powerful and neither the powers of hell nor those of the world will be able to overcome it.
6. If we wish to accomplish great things we must also have great confidence. Human frailty is so great that without the grace of God we can do nothing. If we are deprived of help from above, if we have little or no confidence, what miserable creatures we then are,—we who cannot even pronounce the name of Jesus without His grace (1 Cor. 12:3) and are still less able to accomplish great works for His glory!

Our Venerable Father also requires that we trust in God alone.

7. “It is better to take refuge in the Lord, than to rely on princes” (Ps. 118:9). Remember this well: If all men, all princes and great ones of the earth seem to be for us—do not count on them; for today they are for us, tomorrow against us. Let us trust in the Lord, and that in all circumstances. *In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in aeternum.* “In You O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded” (Ps. 31:2).

8. When you pray, put all your confidence in God. Do not trust in your labors, in your skill, in your learning. Our salvation comes from above.

9. In our age it is frequently the case that there is but little faith, since people estimate everything according to natural powers. I would like to read to you a passage that I have come across: “If a man orders his life only according to the measure of human prudence he can never count on extraordinary assistance. Never will one then accomplish great things.” Remember that well!

Just have confidence in the right sense of the word, it being taken for granted, of course, that you are good Religious. But then have confidence!

10. There is a very simple way of getting everything from the goodness of God: let us hope and trust that God will keep His promise and let us act according to this confidence!

St. Frances of the Five Wounds says: “My God, highest and unfailing truth, I hope as much as You are able. But You are able to do all things and so my hope knows no bounds.” There is another passage which says that we possess just as much as we hope.

But our Venerable Father's confidence was not pious sentimentality, not a mere matter of empty feeling. His confidence was built up on the solid-rock foundation of the word of God in Sacred Scripture.

11. O that we might, therefore, always keep before our minds those words of Sacred Scripture that refer to confidence, that touch upon confidence!

How often does this passage occur: *In te, Domine, speravi*. "In You, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded" (Ps. 30:2).

Our very confidence alone would determine God to come to our assistance, to save us, since it shows Him that we know His name and confide in Him. "Because he hoped in Me I will deliver him; I will protect him because he has known My name" (Ps. 91:14). Those are words of Sacred Scripture. We read them often, hear them often. Therefore, let us also take them to heart!

It is not given to everyone easily to make progress in this matter; but all must exert themselves to attain as much as possible.

12. You should be men of faith and, therefore, also have great confidence. Hope springs from faith. If you wish to do great things for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, then you need great, powerful faith and boundless confidence.

13. St. Justinian says: "Hope is rest in toil, refreshment in heat, consolation in sorrow." How easy it is to endure everything if one is filled with great confidence.

14. Be careful not to trust in yourself, nor in the help of man, but in God.

15. Above all do your duty! How can you have great confidence in God if you do not do your duty, if you neglect the duties of your vocation? How can you hope if you do not live up to your calling? Therefore, do your duty and cast all your cares upon the Lord; He will help you; He will save you! Fear nothing as long as you do your duty. Let the billows of perse-

cution from all sides roar above you, let come what will—trust in the Lord and walk the straight path. It is unworthy of an apostolic man and a member of our Society to walk a devious path.

3

Holiness

The Venerable Father took it very seriously with his striving after holiness. In his spiritual vision the Savior stood before him all great, all holy, inviting to imitation. The soul of our Venerable Father was filled with an intense desire to become like His great Model He wished to become holy. And he demanded of his spiritual sons that also they strive earnestly after holiness.

1. As you yourselves know, the first thing for us to strive after is sanctification of self. This you are to do by denying your own will, by mortifying your inclinations, by making your will conformable to the will of God inasmuch as in the rules and in the regulations of the Superiors you recognize the will of God. That is the first thing!

2. If you do not earnestly strive after perfection you will indeed drag yourselves along a little; but sooner or later, when the wind comes, a little shaking will show that the house is not built upon a rock but upon sand. And that will happen to each one of us who does not strive earnestly after perfection.

Seek with all your strength to attain perfection, and I will be satisfied. And I will not have to speak much to you. If I know that you strive after perfection, then, I might say, you may do whatever you wish!

And thereby it will be made manifest that the Society is on the right path.

3. Be convinced that I love you. It is my greatest joy when you all strive after perfection; for then you will be happy here below and in heaven above for all eternity. Oh, strive after perfection and you will be a spectacle to angels and to men!

4. I have no anxiety whatsoever as regards the Society if you strive after perfection.

5. Seek God, seek the good and the perfect; if you do that you will not have to worry about the rest.

Also the apostolate should grow out of the personal sanctity of the apostle. One's own interior spiritual life may not be neglected because of the apostolate.

6. As you know, the purpose of our Society is self-sanctification and the sanctification of the neighbor. But the sanctification of the neighbor, if it is to be well carried out, implies that before all and in the first place we sanctify ourselves. So let us not think that because we are called to the apostolate we are less bound to the spiritual life, to self-sanctification.

On the contrary, I say that just because of that, because we are called to the apostolate and must therefore expose ourselves to quite other dangers, just because of that we ourselves must be holy. Therefore, do not by any means get the false notion that because we are called to the apostolate we need less meditation, prayer, and mortification.

Just look at that great apostle whose feast we are going to celebrate tomorrow (St. Francis Xavier). Do you think he would have accomplished what he did if he had reduced his meditations and prayers to a minimum?

7. You must not imagine that through ordination to the priesthood you have already reached the heights. Rather be convinced that you have but one more reason for striving after holiness with new strength and energy, in order that you may become a man of character who is not like a reed shaken with the wind. You must not think, if you are priests, that you are no longer so strictly bound to observe the rule. It is just as priests that you should be exact. The world, which sees in you a Religious, is stricter in its judgment than you think. Forward, then, and that especially now! Strive after holiness! Now that you have entered into such intimate relationship with our dear Savior you must live more than ever as true Salvatorians.

8. In our work the first thing for a Salvatorian is to procure his own sanctification, his own salvation. We have entered the Society in order to become holy. That is our first and most important task.

Again, you have been called to the formation of saints. So if your first task is accomplished, also the second will be fulfilled. But if the first is not accomplished, then also the second will collapse.

9. As true Salvatorians you must in the first place be good, faithful Religious, who keep in view their own sanctification and look upon it as the most important thing to become holy for their future apostolic activity. If holiness is wanting, everything will collapse.

On April 20, 1894, our Venerable Father held an important Chapter on holiness. It is one of the most beautiful that he ever held. In it he spoke from the very depths of his soul, with great fervor and glowing enthusiasm. It now follows in its entirety.

10. Oh, how little attention is paid to the truth that we should become holy! In His great mercy the Divine Savior has called us to become images of Himself, to become as much like Him as possible to become holy. He has called us in order that already here, through holiness, our work may everywhere be accompanied by blessings, happiness, and salvation, and that we may one day enjoy the glory of the saints in heaven.

You are called to become holy. Your task, your obligation, the most sacred duty of your state of life, is to strive after holiness. O what a sublime and holy vocation! Everything is arranged with a view to making saints of you; and that is the greatest thing that you can have on earth and in heaven.

O that we might never forget this thought, this call, this admonition, this duty!

What does everything else help if we do not strive after holiness? One single saint will accomplish more than thousands and thousands of others. Yes; Divine Providence has showered

such graces upon a single saint and his work and has blessed him so, that he has influenced the history of entire nations.

Become holy! Again and again cry out to yourselves: I must become holy! And if I do not strive after holiness I am in danger of perishing.

It is my duty to strive without ceasing after holiness. Of what avail will all other work and activity be if we do not strive after holiness?

O how happy you are if you rightly understand this truth!

Let this be your guiding principle: I must become like my divine Model. And do not regret the following of this principle, no matter what it may cost.

I must become holy. Let men despise me, let them think little of me, let them ridicule me—if only I am pleasing to God! If only I become holy, cost what it will!

Let us keep well in mind this sublime task, this duty which has become ours in a special manner, and how much our eternity depends upon the performance of this duty. Only let us have confidence. The Lord will gladly give us His grace. What happiness we shall enjoy for all eternity if we become holy! What good you will do for so many thousands and thousands of souls if you become holy!

To be sure it is not easy; but be convinced that if you strive after it, no matter what it may cost, you will attain it.

Of course it is difficult for him who just drags himself along, who now wills and now does not will, who is lukewarm and does not do his duty.

Those who really strive for it have already long experienced what it means.

All of us, without exception, should become holy. The Lord gladly gives us His grace. On the other hand, we must consider and be convinced that as a rule sanctity is not acquired all of a sudden but by long strife and struggle and that it is combined

with many a small slip into imperfections and sometimes even with venial sin. But it will never do to lose courage! I trust in the Lord. He will give me the strength; and I firmly hope that I shall become holy.

But if you wish to become holy you must become like the divine Model. You have already taken a great step in that direction. You have vowed poverty, chastity, and obedience. How near you already are, if you are all that your state of life demands!

But more than that! Each one of you must become a man of sorrows, of humiliation, of contempt, of ridicule, of suffering.

Seek to become holy on the right path, endeavor to become such as you must be. Not in idle spiritual fancies, but through suffering, through obedience, poverty, and exact religious observance.

Oh, do you think you will become a saint if you do not do your duty? If you break this rule, are careless, do not observe silence? Do you think you will become a saint that way?

Reflect upon what you are bound to do.

Of what use is everything else, many sufferings, labors, intentions and plans to convert all nations, if you do not become holy?

Therefore, become holy! Again and again I cry out to you: Become holy, no matter what the cost may be!

Make use of the means! You must walk the paths that lead to it. You are already standing on the right road through your state of life. You must walk the way that Jesus, our divine Model, walked, the way of exact religious observance the way of a holy Religious.

The Religious who is careless about his duties, where will he land? Do you think that he will have rest? That he will find peace and happiness? That he will be blessed in his apostolic

labors? Do you think that the Lord will lead an unfaithful servant to perfection?

Never is a lax man going to develop into a saint! On the contrary, he will go down little by little and finally plunge headlong.

I repeat once more that you should become holy, because it is my task to care for you and because I love you so and because I am ready to die for all.

It is, therefore, my most heartfelt wish, that you become holy. And if you have not yet begun, then begin this very day still!

Let storms come from within and from without if they will; and even if all hell and all mankind rise up against you, say to yourself: I must become holy, no matter what the cost may be!

4

Prayer

A striking characteristic in the life of our Venerable Father was his spirit of prayer. He was in truth a man of prayer. Of him it could be said that he prayed without ceasing. His whole interior life was built up on prayer. And it was on the foundation of prayer that he built his Society. Also his spiritual sons were to become men of prayer. Again and again he exhorted us to place all our trust in God through prayer. All the great good accomplished by our Venerable Father in his life was the fruit of his fervent, uninterrupted prayer. For us it was always something thrilling to see him in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. He then literally stormed heaven, wrestled with God.

1. We have a vocation which we cannot live up to without much prayer.

First of all our own sanctification demands it. If even in the world one stands in need of prayer, how much more do we stand in need of it, who have such a sublime vocation.

We need prayer especially in order that we may have sufficient light, in order that we, subject to obedience though we are, may not mistake darkness for light. Many a one thinks that he has already arrived at the goal and knows not that he is standing at the brink of an abyss into which he may plunge headlong.

You have many enemies, who are plotting your fall. How will you ward off all these attacks if you do not turn to Him who knows the enemies and is able to bring them to naught?

We are the salt of the earth, the light of the world. Therefore, we stand in need of prayer in order to carry out our apostolate, lest we become tinkling cymbals (1 Cor. 13:1). Of what avail will it be if we are not men of prayer? What will we accomplish? Nothing!

We experience ever more and more that prayer is necessary for the Society, for the religious family. We can ward off many a thing through prayer. Much can be accomplished if the religious family rises up and storms heaven.

2. We need prayer, but good prayer, not superficial prayer, which is displeasing to God. Prayer in humility, in self-knowledge, in the realization of the greatness and goodness of God and of our own misery.

Do not neglect to pray much!

Pray with all your might, with that exertion which a man employs when he takes a thing seriously.

3. But prayer alone does not help any either, if the heart is not pure. One then finds it repugnant to approach the sanctity of the Most Holy. See to it, therefore, that you are entirely pure.

Keep in mind this one maxim: Nowadays we need men of prayer.

Our Venerable Father sees in prayer a remedy for everything. To him it is the inexhaustible source of all good, of all graces, of all success.

4. If one were told that somebody had discovered something with the possession of which one could attain everything, how much would one seek to obtain that thing? How much would one give in order to enjoy this good fortune?—And we have this good fortune. God Himself has given it to us. It is prayer.

5. O if we but knew all that we can attain through prayer! God Himself will show us that on the day of judgment. Then He will ask us: Why did you not pray, since I promised to give you everything you would ask Me for? The Divine Savior solemnly assures us: “Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you” (John 16:23).

6. Prayer is the coin that is struck in heaven, with which one buys heaven.

In a striking way our Venerable Father considers prayer in the light of eternity.

7. Oh, how you will once see in the life to come what you were able to accomplish here below through prayer!

It would be terrible if throughout all eternity we had to bemoan our lack of zeal for prayer,—we who should have won heaven and should have gained golden crowns for so many, many souls!

8. And who is there that cannot pray! We can all pray. And even if we are sick, even if we have lost the power of speech, we can and we must pray! We must pray always and everywhere, without ceasing.

9. Become men of prayer! He who is not a man of prayer will accomplish nothing.

10. Be convinced of this: Prayer is absolutely necessary. You must pray much if you wish to accomplish much.

11. If you are not willing to pray always it is a sign that you are beginning to waver, that your heart is not well disposed.

12. If you have temptations, if you have difficulties, O then pray!

13. When you undertake anything and have prayed much beforehand it is a guarantee that it will succeed.

Our Venerable Father was of the firm conviction that good prayer is always heard. In this he did not rely upon his own worthiness but solely upon the word of God.

14. I would like to say this: When you begin to pray you go in for an audience with the most high Lord of heaven and earth. You then carry in your hand a note on which is written what the Lord has promised you: “Ask, and it will be given to

you” (Luke 11:9). And do you think that the Lord will not keep His word?

The Venerable Father also founded the Society on prayer alone.

15. In the first place pray that the will of God may be done in all things. Pray for yourself. Pray for the Society, that its mission may be carried on according to the will of God. I must say that what the Society does in its apostolate it will do only through prayer.

Before his departure for America in July 1896, the Venerable Father again spoke on prayer. It was his favorite topic. And before such a great undertaking his soul was filled with holy zeal for prayer.

16. Our Society, no matter how well things are going, no matter how many graces it is receiving from God, nevertheless needs still greater help in spiritual and material respects. So I would like to remind you of confident, humble prayer. O that you would all become men of prayer! O that you would all kneel down before the Lord of heaven and earth and beg of Him to come to our assistance and help us to carry out our mission for our own and our neighbor’s salvation!

Consider how prayer can do all things!

Think of Moses, how he raised his hands to heaven and obtained help. Think of how much danger, misfortune, and misery has been warded off through humble prayer.

Therefore, go, all of you, to the heavenly Father. There, full of confidence and with pure hearts, present your petitions to Him. Pray and beseech without intermission.

17. O if you would but learn to know the advantage of prayer! If you pray in the right way you will be transformed and made spiritual. The lower passions will then gradually be subdued and will disappear. And a different spirit will get the upper hand.

If you pray you will shake yourself loose from what is earthly and will draw near to God.

18. Pray for the needs of the Society. If all together you draw near to God we shall accomplish great things.

With childlike humility our Venerable Father also requests prayers for himself.

Next week I am going to set out on a journey. Recommend me to our dear Lord in prayer

The Venerable Father admonishes us to pray when dangers threaten.

20. I would also like to call attention to special dangers. The most terrifying clouds and storms are approaching, and hell is threatening. Therefore, I admonish you and beg of you and adjure you that you pray according to a special intention, in order to ward off these dangers.

21. Let it not be a cause of regret for you each day to renew the resolve: I must become a man of prayer! Pray, therefore, and pray again, and pray once more!

22. It is my wish that all the members of our Society become men of prayer. May every single one realize what it means to pray! How much one can do through prayer.

In the first place prayer is so necessary. From where do we receive our help anyhow? Of what use is it to work during the whole day, to sweat, to suffer, if blessing from above is wanting? We cannot even meritoriously pronounce the name of Jesus without help from above (1 Cor. 12:3).

And how are we to live up to the task we have set before ourselves, how are we to procure our own sanctification, how are we to save souls in the face of the great difficulties made by the enemy from within and from without? What will it help us to work and to accomplish if God does not give His blessing? Of what avail will it be to start undertakings that seem to give

promise of greatest hope if God does not help? Of what use is all that?

Let us, therefore, know full well that of ourselves we can do nothing. *Deus est, qui incrementum dat.* “But God gave the growth” (1 Cor. 3:6).

Let us not be so presumptuous as to think that we did it. No! For our help comes from above! Of this we must ever be fully convinced; and we must take care not to put our trust in men. All our trust in God alone!

Of ourselves we can do nothing; and we have so many needs for ourselves, for the Society, for the work we have set before ourselves to do. Therefore, become men of prayer. Pray much, as much as you possibly can.

Imitate our divine Master, who prayed so much, of whom Sacred Scripture says: *Et erat pernoctans in oratione Dei.* “And He spent the whole night in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12). We know how He prayed on the Mount of Olives before He began His passion. So imitate the Savior by being men of prayer. Pray much, with great humility, with great confidence. Thereby you honor God.

Our times need men of prayer. Of what avail is all toil, struggle, speaking and writing, if God does not help? The time that is spent in prayer is not lost. In our days there is not enough prayer by any means. There is indeed much prayer; but there must be much more prayer if things are to be bettered.

23. Everyone can pray. He does not have to be learned for that. How many a humble and perhaps despised and little esteemed Religious probably accomplishes more than ten or twenty others.

24. But with prayer I would like to have you combine mortification, penance; as much as possible. I would like to have you unite prayer and penitential practices. Pray and do penance! Do penance and pray! In the measure in which you are

men of penance and prayer you will, I hope, also accomplish things.

25. You may be sure of this, that if you relax in prayer you will go backwards. And I may say that little by little you will no longer know what you are doing. So it is in prayer that you are to get the fire of charity and increase it upon the earth. There you are to strengthen yourselves. There you are to rest in the apostolate when you are all absorbed in your work in the world.

So pray *instante*, *instantius*, *instantissime*! Pray *sine intermissione*! Pray ceaselessly, urgently, perseveringly! Pray without ceasing!

Especially when starting new establishments the Venerable Father considered it of utmost importance that many prayers be said. He was absolutely convinced that prayer furnished a solid foundation for every new establishment. In the Holy Year of 1900 a number of new houses were started. He recommended these especially to the prayers of the members.

26. In these days before the sacred season of Lent, when the world bows to wicked lust, to sin—how often God is offended in these days!—Holy Church assembles Catholics in the churches in order that they may there make reparation. During these days also we will pray in a spirit of penance and with all humility in order to some extent make reparation to divine holiness for the sins committed.

During these days we will also pray for the Society, first of all in general, but then also for the new foundations, regarding which it is so necessary that the darts of the wicked enemy be warded off and made harmless and that a firm foundation be laid. This means to pray and to expect help from above!

Oh, there is a reason for this rule: “The members shall have the greatest trust and confidence in our God and Savior Jesus Christ and in the holy Patrons of our Society, because our help comes from on high” (92).

“If God does not build a house, in vain do its builders labor” (Ps. 126:1). What shall we do if God is not for us? We may be active, labor, toil, rush about—if God is not for us, what shall we then accomplish?

If already every individual person has so many adversaries, especially the wicked enemy, how many more adversaries and attacks will the whole Society have, especially every new establishment! Who can help here except God Himself!

The dangers are many; the enemies are numerous. This being so, it is necessary that you pray much, that you call down the protection of God and help from above, and that for the Society in general and for the new establishments in particular.

As the wicked enemy sought to destroy the divine Babe of Bethlehem shortly after His birth, so he would also like to do with the new foundations.

What will we accomplish if all men are for us and if God is not for us? *Maledictus homo, qui confidit in homine*. “Accursed be anyone who trusts in human beings” (Jer. 17:5). Put your whole confidence in God! If you have God on your side, then let all hell rise up to assail you. It will recoil.

Prayer is the most powerful weapon. Therefore, make use of it especially during these three days, in which we are so near to our dear Lord through prayer in particular. Through prayer we will offer reparation to the dear Savior for the many sins that are now being committed.

In addition to all this, prayer has another special effect. It will exert a salutary influence on each single one. The more you pray for the Society and its undertakings, the more it will also help you.

5

The Good Intention

In the spiritual life everything depends upon our performing our good works with a right intention. That was a special characteristic in the life of our Venerable Father. His was a heart of gold and one that beat only for God and for God's glory. Whatever he did, he did entirely for God. Any less good intention was repugnant to him.

1. In a very special way I recommend to you that you do your work with a good intention, that you do everything for the glory of God. "Whatever you say or do, let it be in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). How great is the difference between one who does everything with a good intention and one who does not do it with a good intention! The one receives nothing, the other heaps up treasures for eternity.

And what is most important of all, he who lives and labors with a good intention has the advantage of easily attaining to confidence in God. And he who trusts in God shall not perish.

Oh, do not fail to realize fully how precious time is! Use it well by means of the good intention. It is just this good intention that will at last bring you such an exceedingly rich reward on the day of judgment. On that day how different you will find the judgment of God from that of men. It may be that he who because of his labors was praised and extolled and magnified by the world will, if he had not a good intention, have to hear that he has already received his reward (Matt. 6:2). And another, who worked unknown and despised by the world but who did his tasks with a good intention and performed everything for the glory of God, will reap a rich reward.

Let us work, suffer, and endure everything for the glory of God! Beware of letting yourselves be actuated by a bad intention. To many a one it will happen in his life that, despite the fact that he does this or that with a good intention, suspicion, persecution, calumny, and all imaginable things will fall to his

lot. Oh, how he will then feel himself urged to take refuge to God! Behold, Lord, I have labored for Thee!

Therefore, a good intention and confidence! Remember that as long as you live, so that never one single action may be lost, not to speak of more than one. Sanctify ev-erything through the good intention!

6

The Avoidance of Sin

NOLO PECCARE! "I will not sin!" That was a favorite expression of our Venerable Father's and it always came from the very depths of his soul. With this determination of the will he arrived at marvelous purity of soul. The Venerable Father hated and abominated sin with all his heart. His soul was wholly intent upon God and that which is good.

1. When the *Piccola Casa* in Turin again found itself in great need, when Providence seemed to withdraw itself, Blessed Cottolengo would become uneasy, not because the creditors were extremely insistent, not because of the great want as such, but because he feared that some evil might have been done as a result of which the hand of Providence was drawn back.

This is not always the case. The good Lord also sometimes permits an Institute or a person to suffer great want without there really being any fault at the bottom of it, as we see in the case of the Holy Family, which was in great need, though they were the holiest persons.

And yet for every single one of us this is a good sermon, a serious admonition; for we are all dependent upon Divine Providence. So we must make an examen, each one for himself, in order to see whether it is his fault, whether it could be his fault, that the good God withdraws Himself.

All of us may be more or less at fault, and so each one must strive to better himself. We may have sinned; but let us not persevere in sin; let us rather at once repair the evil we have done!

We should also be very observant, each one of us, so that we do nothing that is contrary to poverty.

I say that we must expect our help from above. But we will not be able to expect it with confidence if we do not make an effort to keep ourselves free from sin and to do the will of God.

2. See to it that the state of your soul is such that you can approach God with confidence. See to it first of all that you are in the state of sanctifying grace and that you avoid all evil. And when you have committed sin, make the matter good at once. Strive to be zealous in the practice of virtue and to be exact in the observance of the holy rule. That is a powerful means, one that is feared by hell.

7

Laxity

It was a cause of great concern to our Venerable Father when he observed that members of the Society had lost fervor of spirit and had become lax in religious observance. He then complained about this in a way that showed how it pained his fatherly heart.

1. Hold community life in high esteem. I see that especially in our Society religious observance is very necessary. I must bitterly deplore the fact that through lax members so many a one has become lukewarm. Lax members in a religious house are a real calamity. Therefore, keep the holy rule with great exactness, lest you fall into laxity. If you grow slack in the performance of your duty you will begin to get lax and thus you will become a poison, a plague for the whole Society.

Oh, let those who cooperate with the grace of God in the Holy Spirit, those who are wholly fervent, be on their guard against the lax! One who is lax will injure them more than one who is given to transgressions.

2. Next week will be a time of grace for you, the time of the holy retreat. Therefore, may you already now, through prayer and recollection, prepare yourselves well for those important days. Those days are of utmost importance for you, no matter whether you have gone backward in goodness and are already on the road to laxity, or whether you are fervent in the service of God.

In the first case the retreat is so important. Laxity is something terrible, because it is so hard to arise from it. Yes; the Holy Spirit says: "But since you are neither hot nor cold, but only lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16). Truly a terrible saying! And it will rarely happen that one who has succumbed to laxity will arise again and start anew. The truth will no longer make the same impression upon him. One who commits a serious fault arises much more easily than does one

who is lax. It is easier to convert a great evildoer than one who is lukewarm. It is a terrible thing to be lukewarm. Therefore, if you fear that you are on the way to laxity use these days to avoid the same.

In the second case it is so important that, as good, fervent Religious, you do not relax in your efforts. Oh, I would call out to you: *Sanctus sanctificetur adhuc*. "Let those who are holy continue to be holy" (Rev. 22:11).

Do not relax in striving after perfection, even if severe sufferings, trials, and sorrows should come, no matter what may come upon you. Do not give in! Perhaps the good God has destined you to accomplish great things for His glory. Harken to the call of grace! Make use of these days now in order to bring this about! Follow the inspirations of God! Become more holy!

Of a truth, it is so important for the whole Society that you be true, saintly religious men. It is in this that you are to recognize your happiness, it is in this that you are to see the welfare of your soul. By this means the glory of God will be mightily promoted. Rejoice, therefore, that the good God again invites you to these days of grace. Enter into the holy retreat with willing hearts.

Especially would I like to advise you that in these holy exercises you make the resolution of always punctually performing your spiritual exercises and that you then take it with you and keep it. Also that you do not omit them when sometimes they have to be postponed out of necessity. If you faithfully keep this resolution you will always have a firm foundation of perfection and sanctity. But if you omit these spiritual exercises you are already on the way to laxity.

Therefore, may the fruit of the coming retreat consist in this, that you diligently foster the holy exercises of meditation, spiritual reading, in a word, the spirit of prayer. Then this retreat will be a time of grace, of blessing; then it will remain fruitful.

8

The Spirit of Worldliness

Our Venerable Father disliked nothing more than to see the spirit of the world creep into a religious house. For him the religious life was a complete break with the spirit of the world. In the religious state he beheld the perfect dedication to God. Either-or! In this matter our Venerable Father could not endure any half-heartedness. He wanted his spiritual sons to be entirely that which they professed to be.

1. One of the greatest dangers threatening a Religious is the spirit of worldliness. This spirit has already torn away many a member from the religious state, has already brought about the fall of many a one in the religious life. The Divine Savior says to His disciples: *Ego elegi vos de mundo*. "Because my choice of you has drawn you out of the world" (John 15:19). They are to be in the world but not of the world. "I have chosen you" (John 15:16). That holds good for you and more immediately for those who make their holy profession of vows. *Ego elegi vos de mundo*. You give up the world. You give up the spirit of the world. The Savior says: *Ego elegi vos*. When you are ordained to the priesthood: *Ego elegi vos de mundo*.

O that you would realize this great danger of the spirit of worldliness! And that all the more since this spirit also creeps in among the good.

That holds good in the first place as regards the Superiors, namely, that they should indeed be in the world but not of the world. Especially is it true of younger Superiors in new establishments that in all their activity and methods of education and attitudes they should be in the world but not of the world. *In mundo estis, sed non de mundo—therefore*, in apposition to the world.

"If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you do not belong to the world, because my

choice of you has drawn you out of the world, that is why the world hates you” (John 15:19).

Furthermore, that holds good very especially in the priesthood, whenever the priests get out into the world and lend assistance for longer periods of time in the care of souls. If for a long time they come into touch with the world, little by little, by drops, as it were, the spirit of the world instills itself into them and influences their habits and ways of thinking; and how difficult it is to get this spirit out again!

Here things proceed in a similar way as with laxity. As a matter of fact, the spirit of worldliness and laxity are two of a kind.

Furthermore, the danger of being infected by worldliness is greater in Catholic cities than in cities where there is a marked contrast. So I think that Berlin is less dangerous in this regard than a large city in Austria,—the contrast influences one. One recognizes the dangers from afar. But where the contrast is not so marked, where certain ways of looking at things have become rooted in the body of the faithful, one easily enters into the same spirit in word and action and then it is all over with one’s religious vocation.

Furthermore, the danger is present for those who devote themselves to literary activity, as experience shows, and as various German bishops have already complained to me. The danger lies in this that some find it necessary to read writings, papers, and books that are imbued with the spirit of the times. And so, little by little, the writers are infected with the spirit of worldliness.

So the dangers that surround you are of different kinds. And the less these dangers are recognized, the greater they are. It is easier to convert one who has committed a serious fault than to drive out the spirit of worldliness.

One who has laid aside the spirit of the world finds true happiness, peace, and joy; whereas one who has become imbued

with the spirit of the world has practically no more feeling for spiritual things.

Follow those of whom the dear Savior says that they are not of this world. If you keep yourselves separated from the world, you are strong. I think that you will hardly accomplish much or do great things if you are infected with the spirit of worldliness. That mighty confidence in God will then be wanting in you. That inner strength which perseveres against all assaults will then be lacking.

But if you are grounded in God, if you are separated from the world, you will not fall headlong so long as God does not fall. On the other hand, however, if you are infected with the spirit of worldliness, then you will plunge headlong with the world.

Therefore, pray, meditate, be watchful, lest the spirit of the world at any time take possession of you; and if ever you should be infected with that spirit then see to it that through constant prayer and spiritual exercises you shake it off again as soon as possible.

Be sure to read St. John (1 John 4:1-6) and think of your sublime calling. Remember how much is demanded of you for the salvation of souls. Pray, meditate, be on your guard, lest the spirit of worldliness, this destructive poison, spread and make havoc in the Society.

2. It is a point of prime importance that you avoid false principles. I am not exactly speaking of such as are sin but rather of liberalizing principles in the Order. In striving after perfection you yourselves will readily recognize them. These principles will manifest themselves not only in those who are not really striving after perfection in a permanent way but will also exert their deceptive influence upon the good.

These false principles prepare the way for the collapse of discipline, of religious observance. As a result, they lead to dissatisfaction and to a lessening of the grace of vocation. Worse still is a certain love-making with the world, a certain spirit of

accommodating oneself to certain principles of the world. That is the road on which one becomes neither cold nor hot.

Therefore, have positive, firm, and decisive principles in the spirit of the Order! Principles of spiritual men, of ascetics! Adopt these principles if you do not wish to draw near to the world! As wide as the world is, it is cold. And if you draw near to the world, your vocation, your striving after perfection, will become cold also. The result will be even as Sacred Scripture says: “But since you are neither hot nor cold, but only lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:16).

3. I would also like to call attention to rationalism in a religious house. It seems to me, and I am very much afraid, that also among us there are traces of the spirit of the rationalism of the world. What I mean is that little by little, if not in everything then at least in very many things, one goes too much according to reason alone. A great danger is present where such an epidemic shows itself. The result of it is criticism of every Superior. Everything is belittled. No regulation is good any more. Everything must stand before the judgment seat of reason.

Considered from a moral point of view, the consequences are tremendous; for one thinks that by acting thus one does not commit even a venial sin. Trust in Divine Providence is annihilated.

In practice a rationalist will hardly be a good Catholic. So, too, a religious man who no longer acknowledges Providence and who criticizes will leave. The result will be the loss of the greatest gift after sanctifying grace—of one’s holy vocation.

That is the best proof that rationalism is an evil. Keep this point well in mind. Live more by faith; and trust in Divine Providence.

9

The Holy Spirit

Our Venerable Father had a profound devotion to the Holy Spirit. From the Holy Spirit he drew all light and all strength. In fervent prayer he begged for himself and for his spiritual sons the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Without Him he would not undertake anything. Again and again he urged us to have recourse to the Holy Spirit.

1. Since it is our purpose and our duty to follow the Apostles as closely as possible, it is also our special task and duty to fervently venerate the Holy Spirit, especially now in preparation for the holy feast of Pentecost. If, like the Apostles, we wish to exercise the apostolic office we need the Holy Spirit. What shall we accomplish if we are not enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit?

In these days I would like to call your attention to one grace that you should ask for in ardent prayer. I mean charity, brotherly love, that you may observe this precept of St. John: "Little children, love one another" (1 John 3:11).

We are called to the apostolate; we are called to preach the word of God; and, as St. Gregory says, we are not qualified to assume the office of a preacher of the Gospel if we have not charity. With what great power an apostle labors when he is animated with a spirit of charity! And, on the other hand, how much harm a preacher does when he is not filled with love! And no matter how much he may thunder, he cannot inflame others if he himself is not on fire.

As a special resolution in honor of the Holy Spirit let it be your firm purpose especially to avoid everything that disturbs and injures brotherly love. Avoid everything that could in any way disturb that ideal spirit of brotherly love which should exist among the brethren.

Do not imitate the beetles but rather the bees, who take out of the flowers only what is best. In my dealings with saintly men I

have found that as regards the neighbor they not only do not touch upon what is bad but likewise always bring out only what is good. Do the same and you will see what love and unity prevail where such a course of action is followed.

2. At the end of the octave of Pentecost I would earnestly recommend to you once more the veneration of the Holy Spirit, since that veneration is bound up with the great purpose of our Society. Shall we be able to labor as apostolic men if we have not the assistance of the Holy Spirit?

We should especially call upon the Holy Spirit in order that, like the Apostles, we may always be of one mind and one heart in the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit dwell in our hearts, may He ever keep us all in unity. That is so important. If even in worldly undertakings union of effort and endeavor is so important, how much more is it necessary for us, who do battle with countless enemies from within and from without.

What are we going to do if we have not light from above in order to recognize the enemies, if we have not the strength to resist them? What can a small army do against so many enemies if its own ranks are not firm and united? Pray, therefore, pray daily to the Holy Spirit, that He may help us, that we may always be of one heart and one mind.

You must never forget with what enemies we have to engage in combat. Never forget that a little army goes into battle against the world, against hell, against adversaries, against enemies that are terrible, and that we stand in need of special enlightenment. But if we are united in the Holy Spirit we will not have to fear anyone.

3. Beg of the Holy Spirit that you may become men of prayer, that you may observe the precept of the Divine Savior: *Oportet semper orate*. "Pray continually and never lose heart" (Luke 18:1). For us it is necessary and always will be necessary to pray, to storm heaven, to remain one in prayer, until we have obtained help from above.

Oh, how much can be obtained by one single person who always prays, who is insistent in his prayers! Such insistence is pleasing to God.

Let us accustom ourselves to pray much. How many moments, how much time, we can really give to prayer, be it as we go from place to place or at other times; everywhere, and in the midst of our occupations, we can pray. Let us get the habit of sending ejaculatory prayers to heaven above. *Domine, adjuva nos!*

This continual prayer has the special advantage of preserving us from many temptations. Our spirit is then raised to heaven above; there we seek help, from there help comes. In this way our spirit will be drawn away from earthly things. *Sursum corda!* Just try it and you will soon experience what strength you possess. And even if sometimes human nature is in danger of succumbing, that strength will nevertheless be in the interior man. The Lord will not forsake you; on the contrary, He will support you in order that you may fight the good fight and come out victorious at the end. And even if the billows roll over one and he is in danger of sinking into the depths of the sea, he will always come to the top again.

Venerate the Holy Spirit and if possible daily recite the *Veni, Creator Spiritus*; then you will see what great things you can accomplish.

Pray to the Holy Spirit that you may know how great is the grace of your holy vocation, that you may receive more light regarding the end and the purposes of the Society.

4. We feel ourselves especially urged to follow the holy Apostles in the practice of the virtues. So we try to imitate them in their expectation of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as also we, persevering with one mind, prepare ourselves for receiving that same Holy Spirit.

O how necessary is the Holy Spirit! How much there is to be remedied in the world! How much among Catholics! O how necessary it is that the Holy Spirit be poured out upon them!

Therefore, cry out: *Veni, Sancte Spiritus; veni, pater pauperum; veni, consolator!* Call upon the Holy Spirit, that He may come, that God may pour Him out upon the Society. How very much the Society really needs the Holy Spirit, that He may enlighten, guide, and govern it! O how very much we stand in need of the gifts of the Holy Spirit!

This being so, how are we especially to pray? First of all you are to double your prayers; and on the most holy feast of Pentecost itself and during the whole octave you are to pray with deepest devotion the hymn *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*.

Furthermore, during this time we should enter into the spirit of the Divine Office and not only recite the same but also penetrate its meaning; and that we should also do, as far as possible, in Holy Mass. *Veni, Sancte Spiritus, et emitte coelitus lucis tuae radium*. Come, Holy Spirit! Yes; come down, O Holy Spirit, upon the Society, come down upon me! *Et emitte coelitus lucis tuae radium; veni, lumen cordium*. Thou Giver of gifts, Thou Light of hearts! O how greatly we stand in need of light in order to see clearly, in order to understand fully. *Veni, lumen cordium!* What is man if he is not enlightened by the Holy Spirit! How easily he can fall! *Veni, consolator!* Who does not need consolation? *Dulcis hospes animae, dulce refrigerium*. Who does not need: *in labore requies, in aestu temperies, in fletu solatium?* *O lux beatissima, reple cordis intima tuorum fidelium*. *Veni, lux*—O may that light come down upon the Society! May it come down! *Sine tuo numine nihil est in homine, nihil est innocium. Lava quod est sordidum, riga quod est aridum, sana quod est saucium*. Yes; enlighten what is dark! Heal what is wounded! Who can say that he has no wounds? *Veni, Sancte Spiritus! Flecte quod est rigidum, fove quod est frigidum, rege quod est devium*. Yes; warm what has grown cold! Direct what has gone astray! How absolutely we need the Holy Spirit! Therefore: *Da salutis exitum, da perenne gaudium*. May He govern our hearts! May He rule over every single one of us!

O that you would call upon the Holy Spirit and that you would make such invocations serve as your ejaculatory prayers! *Veni, Sancte Spiritus! O lux beatissima; veni, consolator optime! Veni, pater pauperum!* May you often cry out in temptation: *Veni, Sancte Spiritus; veni, lumen cordium!* Therefore, prepare yourselves! Call down the Holy Spirit upon the Church, upon the Society, upon yourselves! May He preserve in you purity of heart. See to it that you be temples of the Holy Spirit. Pray that He enlighten you in dangers. O how fortunate, O how happy, O how joyful you will be if you are all filled with the Holy Spirit.

What joy, what peace, what bliss, what unity will be yours! *Veni, Sancte Spiritus, reple tuorum corda fidelium et tui amoris ignem in eis accende!*

N. B. These last words were spoken by our Venerable Father with great emphasis and deep feeling.

10

The Spirit of Penance

Our Venerable Father was a man of penance. He had a very special preference for those ordinary practices of penance that can be performed without attracting attention. He was firmly convinced that it is necessary to do penance in order to make reparation to the Divine Majesty for the sins of the world. And in this spirit of penance he accepted all fatiguing labors, hardships, and sufferings. He looked especially upon incessant toil as a holy penance demanded by God.

1. The Savior says: "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). And in another passage He says: "Unless you repent you will all perish" (Luke 13:3). O how easily we forget that even in the religious life we must do penance! O how sweet is penance! How sanctifying, how satisfying! What peace of heart a true spirit of penance gives!

Oh, I say to you that if you are dissatisfied, if you feel unhappy, then seek to acquire a true spirit of penance and you shall see what a heavenly balm it will be for your heart, with what sweet peace your soul will be filled.

As a matter of fact our Venerable Father considered sanctity quite out of the question without penance.

2. Do you think that you can become holy without penance, without mortification? You cannot. Therefore, I would like to exhort you most earnestly that each one in his own position be animated by a true spirit of penance.

3. The Lord does not demand that you perform extraordinary works of penance, that you injure your bodily health. But how many other practices you can take upon yourselves! You have opportunities enough to suffer. Accept everything in a spirit of penance. Often say: "It was good for me that I had to suffer" (Ps. 119:71).

4. Of what avail will be to you all your good resolutions, all your bold attempts at holiness, if you are not convinced of this truth and if you do not walk the way of profound humility and of penance? You will make many a start and then give up again. Therefore, become men of penance in very truth.

5. As the great saints did, so do you also live in the spirit of suffering and of the cross. There is no other way to heaven. "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer before entering into his glory?" (Luke 24:26) Why should we seek the joys of this world, since it is our manifest duty to walk the way of penance and the cross? We shall have no rest and shall find no peace if we depart from this spirit.

But if you are grounded in the spirit of humility and of the cross, and if in this spirit you live, then I may say that you are clad in armor that will protect you against the enemies of your salvation.

Our Venerable Father then calls attention to that one great means which may never be neglected, not even when one is imbued with the spirit of penance.

6. To the spirit of penance belongs also the spirit of prayer. Without penance and prayer you will never become holy.

Without the spirit of prayer your interior life will be as dry and desolate as a desert.

Become men of penance, of humility, of contrition, of prayer; then you will also have the spirit of perseverance.

7. This spirit of prayer and penance will be for you the touchstone by which to test your qualities in regard to how you are, where you are, what you are, what you have to do.

8. Not that those days ought to please you in which you enjoy apparent happiness, in which you experience spiritual sweetness, joy, and peace, in which everything goes the way you would like to have it, but rather the days of suffering and the cross; for these latter are the days that are for your spiritual welfare.

One time when our Venerable Father spoke of various matters that we ought to keep in mind in the interests of the Society, he also touched upon penance.

9. Another point that I would like to recommend to you is that each one practice some mortification, some penance, in the spirit of the Society. I would not want penances that could injure the body, that would be to your detriment, but penances that are for your own spiritual welfare and that are pleasing to God.

How much you can do through self-denial and mortification in reparation for your own sins and for your confreres! That would be beneficial for you and would have a salutary influence upon others.

No matter how much we strive after holiness, we shall nevertheless always have faults. Therefore, do penance. *Poenitentiam agite!* (Matt. 4:17) Reflect upon the words of the Divine Savior: “Unless you repent you will all perish” (Luke 13:3).

Therefore, penance! Penance and yet again penance! Let each one select what he thinks will be for his own good and pleasing to God.

Our Venerable Father placed the greatest value upon that penance and mortification which everyday life as such brings with itself. He did not reject the great works of penance. But he gave preference to those things which every day come of themselves.

10. During this holy season of Lent make it a point especially to cultivate the spirit of mortification. Try to carry out the Savior’s injunction as contained in these words of His: “If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross every day and follow me” (Luke 9:23).

And as for us, who are called in a very special way to follow the Savior, let us practice mortification!

Let us practice it especially through punctual obedience to our Superiors.

Let us practice mortification through the exact observance of the rules and constitutions. Let us practice mortification through self-denial, through humiliations, through practices of penance such as are customary in our Society.

Furthermore, let us practice mortification by giving up something lawful that we like, for the love of God.

Again, we may also practice mortification by doing greater works of penance, with the permission of the confessor and of the Superiors. Among these greater works of penance is the hair-shirt, the use of which is of course not to be advised to anyone who has not first consulted his confessor or spiritual director; for it may happen that through its use harm may be done not only to the body but also to the soul.

However, no one should think that such practices are forbidden in our Society. Indeed, the opposite is the case. He who feels himself urged thereto by the spirit of God, he should do so.

Furthermore, let us practice mortification through the patient endurance of disagreeable occurrences, of sicknesses, sufferings, humiliations, calumnies, and whatever else may come our way.

11

The Rule and Religious Observance

The holy rule and regular observance in the whole religious life were of deepest concern to our Venerable Father. He himself loved the constitutions and strictly observed them with holy zeal. In this he was always a shining example. He was firmly convinced that a religious can be happy only in the faithful observance of the constitutions. So, too, he repeatedly emphasized that the faithful observance of the rule would lead to true holiness. Indeed, he was firmly convinced that the Society will endure only if we hold faithfully to the constitutions.

1. What must I do in order to be a good Religious? What must I do in order to be a good son, a true child of the Society? What must I do to be happy?

To this I reply as follows. Observe these two points: First: Faithfully keep the holy rule. (Formerly this was the general designation of the constitutions.) Second: Do all you possibly can for the Society. Help along. If you observe these two points you may rest assured that you will be happy and that you will do great things.

If you faithfully and conscientiously observe the holy rule, how much you will then accomplish! And no matter wherever you may be sent, you will everywhere build up the Society, you will help along everywhere.

Keep the holy rule religiously and show your reverence for the same through its faithful observance. Make sacrifices for God, for the interests of your own soul, for the interests of the Society, for the interests of other souls.

Through the exact observance of the holy rule the Society will become great and will bring forth those fruits that are expected of it.

If you are good children of the Society you will build up. If you are not you will tear down. Therefore, be observant eve-

rywhere and always, for the love of God and of the Society. Oh, what peace, what joy that will procure for the members, for the Superiors, for heaven! What confidence will be placed in you by the Superiors, by the members, by Holy Church! Through religious observance you will merit the confidence of all.

And now we come to the second point. Labor with all your strength for the Society. Love the Society; for she is your mother. She has brought you up and trained you. You must love her and be grateful to her. If you sincerely love the Society, then every sacrifice, no matter how great it may be, will appear small. And as far as lies in your power you will then labor to promote the welfare and the progress of the same. It will all be for the good of your mother, who is destined to lead you to heaven.

Everyone should labor according to his strength. In general his love for the Society will be the measure of his effort. One who loves the Society will make use of every opportunity to work for it and to promote its progress to the best of his ability.

Those are the two points that I ask you above all to write into your hearts. Observe them and I have the assured hope that, no matter wherever you may be sent, no matter to which nation you belong, no matter in which part of the world you work, you will bring forth much, much fruit. You will build up everywhere

Once more! If you are observant and work for the Society, then there will no longer be any one-sided, exclusive nationality among you. You will all be brothers. And then you will be great men and apostles before God and man. Be true, active sons of the Society, your own mother!

2. If you study the history of religious orders of the present or of the past you will find that the observance of the holy rule is a *conditio sine qua non*. In my last journey I arrived at the conviction that those cloisters in which religious observance is not maintained die out. Now, if we wish to live up to what God

expects and demands of us, if we wish the Society to accomplish its purpose, then we must be observant and keep each and every rule faithfully and conscientiously.

It does not depend upon what kind of a rule you have. It suffices that it be good. The principal thing is that you keep the rule as given.

This remark was aimed at critics of the rule.

It is the business of a Religious to deny his own will and to subordinate it to the will of his Superior. That is the object of the rules.

Again and again the thought comes to me: If you would keep all the rules, of what advantage that would be for the glory of God, for the good of souls, and for the Church!

If you seek for the source of so many disorders and of so much dissatisfaction you will find that it is a lack of religious observance.

Keep the holy rule! You will see what joy that will bring you! You will see how generously God will support us. Many a need comes through our own fault, because we do not wish to live as poor, humble Religious.

The more perfect our religious observance, the greater will be the blessing from above, the greater the firmness in our vocation, the greater the goodwill of the people.

So if you wish to live up to your vocation, keep the holy rule. According to this law book will I live; and in order to do so I will renounce my own will.

3. Study the seventeenth chapter of the first book of the *Imitation of Christ*; it will give you the key to religious observance.

4. Keep the holy rule and you will then find whether it be from God or not. I insist upon the principle: Keep the holy rule. And I do not exclude my own poor self!

5. Unity and charity are disturbed if you fail in religious observance, if each one goes more or less according to his own understanding, according to his own ideas, and does not endeavor to do the will of the Superior, so that it must be said: Each one seeks his own.

6. Once the rule is no longer observed, we no longer labor with united strength. The good Religious, the one who is observant, is great before God and esteemed by men. On the other hand, the bad Religious, the one who disregards the rule and thus disturbs the peace and unity of the spiritual family, is not capable of anything great.

7. No matter how well a person may be able to speak, no matter what great things he may do, if he does not keep his rule, do not trust him. For there may be many other reasons that impel him to this or that.

8. Of one who is truly observant there is reason to hope that he can be usefully employed. One can have confidence in such a man. On the other hand, where there is no observance nothing is to be expected.

9. Let everyone who undertakes to go forth as an apostolic laborer possess learning and holiness. If you have these the good God will see to it that you get the necessary support. He will send us the necessary means. And then it will be seen how true it is what a great man has thus beautifully said: "If your people make it a point to strive after holiness through religious observance, support and assistance from above will not be wanting to you." But in saying this it is also said: If they are not observant, then they will not experience the help of God.

10. Do not think that, if you must associate with others within and without the house, you will increase your authority by breaking rules out of false consideration.

11. Let each one of you personify the rule in himself, so to speak, incorporate it in himself, so that everyone who sees you

immediately knows that you belong here. Be members of the Society of the Divine Savior in the true sense of the word.

12. Make it a point always to study the holy rule, your book of laws, to meditate on it, to make it a part of your lives, in order that you may accurately observe the same, as far as human frailty permits. The holy rule is your leader, your guiding star, the mother to whom you should cling lovingly and who protects you, warns you, and instructs you how you are to regulate your life. Yes; the rule is the mother of the Order!

Ordinary Christians pass judgment on the Religious in accordance with the way in which he observes the holy rule, particularly in accordance with the way in which he keeps the vows of poverty and obedience. Hence it is so important that one learns these laws and excels in their exact observance.

13. Without self-conquest it is impossible to become holy and blessed. The rule is a continual directive to self-denial. And it does not depend upon whether this or that rule is such or such but upon whether it leads to salvation.

With paternal care our Venerable Father warns the members against throwing themselves into all kinds of work to the neglect of the holy rule.

14. In our days there is so much work to be done and the laborers are so few. But one must not imagine that he is going to save souls if he neglects the spiritual exercises, if he disregards the holy rule; one must not forget that he is above all bound to work out his own sanctification and salvation.

15. See to it that you do not seek work in order to escape the rule. Do you think that the good God does not perceive this intention?

16. Bear in mind that the blessing of God will come down upon you more abundantly if you are observant than if at every occasion you look for the scourge.

17. A Religious is a Religious in so far as he keeps his rules. If he approaches the secular state he will become an abortive thing.

Our Venerable Father aptly says that the greatest praise that can be bestowed upon a Religious is to say that he is observant.

18. What is the greatest praise that can be bestowed upon a Religious? Is it perhaps learning, is it when one tells him that he is learned, that he has extensive knowledge? Or is it perhaps usefulness, that is to say, that he is fit for everything, that he has the ability to hold any office, to fill any position? Or is it piety? Those are certainly splendid qualities. And yet when one can say of a Religious that he is learned, that he is capable, that he is pious, this is not the greatest praise.

19. The greatest praise that one can bestow upon a Religious is when one can say that he is observant, that with all his strength he strives to be a truly observant Religious. Let him try it! And he will soon recognize and enjoy the fruits.

Our Venerable Father once wrote upon a slip of paper:

A regular, firm, and strict discipline makes an Order strong and indestructible.

20. If in a community all the members, that is to say, the Superiors, the prefects, everyone who has an office or who is the head of some department or has some position of trust, and every subordinate,—if all these observe the prescribed rules with exactness, there will prevail in that community a harmony, an order, such as is found in an organism.

The whole community taken together forms an organism or, I might say, a machine. And if every little wheel, if everyone in the organism does his part well, then all will go smoothly, and there will be a harmony, a regularity, such as one finds in a clockwork. And this order and harmony engender in a community that greatest good which can fall to its lot, namely, peace.

What a sublime happiness peace is! How easy it is to work then! How smoothly things then go! With what facility the objectives of the whole community are then attained!

Religious observance in the community tends to mutual edification. How beautiful and inspiring it is when one supports the other through good example! When one edifies the others through his observance of religious discipline!

To sum up, observance begets order and harmony; order and harmony beget peace and unity. And where there is good order and peace, where there is religious observance, there is also edification and mutual support. And it is a joy and a delight to be in such a community.

Punctuality is a part of religious observance. The good, observant Religious will not rest content with merely doing his duty. He also sees to it that everything is done punctually, exactly, and at the right time. He keeps in mind the whole order of the house as such. Our Venerable Father gives some important guiding principles regarding this.

21. The more the Society grows and spreads, the more important does punctual obedience become. Today I would especially have you take to heart the matter of punctuality as regards time. First of all, let each one be punctual in the observance of the order of the day, let him do his daily duties with exactness, and to this end let him arise in the morning at the appointed time.

A second point of no little importance is this, that every one, be he the Superior or the incumbent of some other position, punctually submit his letters or reports at the prescribed time. Keep this well in mind and as long as you live see to it that you are punctual in this matter. How exasperating it can be and what harm it can cause when even a single one is not punctual and through this lack of punctuality holds up everything.

Furthermore, see to it that you observe due order in the fulfillment of the duties of office, also as regards your religious

priestly duties, also as regards Holy Mass. One disorder leads to another.

Again, you should be punctual in the performance of those special tasks that are given you by the Superiors. See to it that you do those duties punctually and at the appointed time.

If you do everything punctually there will be beautiful harmony. And everything will then go well in the organism. On the other hand, if this regularity and punctuality are wanting, how many annoyances arise, how much harm and what evil consequences result! Where there is punctuality there is peace, concord, singleness of purpose, and all this adds luster to the whole Society. Through punctuality one merits the respect of others.

Still, I would like to caution you that this is not to be misunderstood. *Omne nimium vertitur in vitium*. If you are punctual you will also see in the here and now just what is the will of God. There are also exceptions in the matter of punctuality. It may also happen that it is one's duty to postpone something.

Furthermore, you are not to judge and not to criticize those who are not punctual. Punctuality does not consist in the exterior but in the firm will to do everything at the right time. One may be more punctual even if exteriorly he does not appear to be so punctual. Judge not! In the sight of God there can be exceptions. It can happen that one is in duty bound to make exceptions.

Accustom yourselves early, and especially you who are younger and who still find it easy, to a determined and prompt mode of action. If you are careless when you are young, then the older you get the worse things will go.

Accustom yourselves to do everything at precisely the appointed time.

Faithful religious observance is a sound and sensible foundation for the interior life, especially for good prayer.

22. Because of the sameness of everyday practices many a one will experience a sort of aversion in prayer, instead of joy. That may be a temptation. But it may also be due to the fact that one does not pray in the right manner. But for the most part this trouble arises from the fact that one no longer takes it seriously with his rules and no longer has that keen relish for spiritual things. This has its effect upon prayer.

23. Exact religious observance and good prayer go hand in hand. Where there is good prayer there is observance. Where there is observance there is good prayer.

12

Consequences of a Lack of Religious Observance

1. Striving after perfection, the religious life, and the performance of vocational duties are in great danger nowadays. If insistence is not brought to bear upon the strict observance of the holy rule, if many are dispensed, and if the exercises in common are simply not adhered to, the Society will go to pieces. The judgment of God will overtake it.

2. The more the fire of love that should burn brightly in one's heart dies out, the more one will become the salt that has lost its savor and that is good for nothing. One may think that he is doing much good, whereas he is no longer doing any good at all.

3. With regard to discipline it is the same as with regard to human life. If one does not constantly take nourishment dissolution will gradually set in. So it will also be in the spiritual life. If one neglects the spiritual exercises spiritual death will set in.

4. How terrible is this cry uttered by St. Francis Xavier: "Woe to you through whose fault souls without number fail to attain salvation and fall forever into hell!"—And if I do not fill the position that I ought to fill or do not properly attend to its duties, am I not then also to blame for the souls that are lost?

In a Chapter held on April 7, 1899, our Venerable Father aptly sums up in the following points the evils arising from a lack of religious observance.

5. I. First of all, the neglect of religious observance puts an end to peace of heart. It makes us unhappy. Once a Religious is no longer truly observant he will no longer be happy either.

II. A further disadvantage lies in this, that the good confreres are saddened by those who are not observant. The members who no longer strive to walk the way of perfection are more or

less the cause of a breach which results in disturbing that peace, contentment, and joy which should prevail among the brethren.

III. Another evil which results from carelessness in religious observance is the fact that it causes displeasure to the Superiors. Instead of being a source of joy and consolation to the Superior, the subject causes him trouble and worry. The Superior is thus forced to have recourse to reprimands and punishment. And so between the Superior and the subordinate, in place of the cordial relationship that should exist, there will gradually come to be a split that will develop into an ever widening gulf.

IV. A fourth disadvantage, a fourth evil arising from carelessness in religious observance, is to be found in the fact that God is no longer well pleased with such a one. Our dear Lord will withdraw His consolations from such a one; He will withhold His graces. Little by little such a Religious will go backward. When he no longer finds his joy in God he will seek it in other things. St. Augustine says: "Man must have some joy, *aut in summis, aut in infimis*: he will seek his pleasure either in the highest or in the lowest. At some point he must have joy."

V. A final evil is this, that the Religious who no longer rightly keeps his rule falls into serious sins, as St. Bernard observes. *Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet*. "One who makes light of small matters will gradually sink" (Eccl. 19:1). The careless Religious will become lax. He will get disgusted. He will no longer find any pleasure in the spiritual life. He will always commit more faults. When the grace of God withdraws itself he will gradually fall into serious sins. Because of this he will be unhappy in his vocation. He will be at odds with his confreres, at odds with his Superiors. He is no longer in good standing with God. And what misfortune can overtake him when he thus makes the sweet yoke of the religious life bothersome for himself! What misfortune when he then leaves the secure haven of the religious life and commits himself to the open sea, to the scandal of the Order and of his confreres! And

it is doubtful whether he will save his soul at all; for he has taken the first step backward; and who knows where he will end.

6. And the worst of it is that little by little he will become blind to the truth and will finally and without any scruple throw up everything.

7. It is easier to convert a man of the world, a great sinner, than a Religious who has fallen a victim to delusion. And the greatest delusion is the neglect of the rules. Therefore, examine yourselves as to whether you observe the rules. And if you do not observe them, then pray that the good God may give you the grace to see, to avoid this delusion.

8. Take the holy rule seriously. Give heed lest you become advocates and representatives of the devil. I mean that you are to be careful lest anyone of you call those scrupulous who keep the rule faithfully. Let those who thus try to silence their conscience remember well what a responsibility they have.

9. I cannot sufficiently impress upon you that you keep the holy rules and that you do not easily allow yourselves to be dispensed from them.

13

Vocation

Our Venerable Father had a very exalted conception of vocation. He looked upon the religious vocation as a great gift of divine love. He lived entirely for his holy vocation and simply could not understand how anyone could be unfaithful to his calling. To one of his spiritual sons he once said: "It almost tears a piece of my heart away when anyone gives up his vocation."

1. The vocation which we have received from our dear Lord, the vocation to the religious life, to the holy priesthood, is so exalted that we cannot comprehend it.
2. The greater the vocation, the more binding the obligation; for it is certain that the salvation of the world depends upon the priests.
3. "If one blind person leads another, both will fall into a pit" (Matt. 15:14). Oh, how easily it can come to pass that such a one leads those souls whom he wished to save with himself into perdition! From the priests comes salvation, from the priests perdition.
4. You know what the Savior says to the priests: "You are salt for the earth... You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:13,14).
5. Strive to become holy. Only then will you realize that your dignity is divine. Then you will see how sublime is the honor that God has conferred upon you.
6. If you could fully understand your vocation you would gladly die for it a thousand times, yes, a thousand times. And how many, how very many would live up to the vocation quite differently from the way we do, had they received from the good God a command to join the Society.

Let us not be found wanting as far as we are concerned. Let us meditate on the purpose, on the rules, of the Society, and on

those things which concern each one in particular; and let us study them.

Our vocation is like a sun that dispels the darkness of the night in temptations, difficulties, and sufferings.

Our Venerable Father gives some very practical suggestions as to how to preserve the grace of vocation.

7. Tomorrow we are going to celebrate the feast of St. Matthias. This feast both reminds and admonishes us that we should carefully preserve the grace of our holy vocation. Take Judas and Matthias; these two Apostles serve as striking examples. Judas, called by the Divine Savior Himself, becomes unfaithful to his vocation. His place is taken by another, by Matthias. May this feast serve to make us zealous, to encourage us, to do our very best for the preservation of our vocation. You know, of course, how great a grace the religious vocation is. You also know that it can be lost. I would like to adduce a few points that will help you keep this grace of vocation intact.

First of all let it be your constant endeavor to co-operate with grace. Oh, do not resist grace; do not resist interior inspirations, but listen to them. So many a grace comes, be it through the Superiors or through one's equals. Give heed to those graces!

Secondly, conscientious observance will help you to preserve your religious vocation. Keep the rules! Many a rule is for you a safeguard against walking devious ways that can lead you into perdition.

Thirdly, for the preservation of one's vocation it is also of importance that one constantly foster a cheerful, happy disposition. You know the injunction of the psalmist: *Servite Domino in laetitia*. "Serve the Lord with gladness" (Ps. 100:2). Try to be as cheerful as possible. O how beautiful is joy in the Lord! So be cheerful always! I prefer one who sometimes commits a fault through his impetuosity to one who serves God with a gloomy disposition.

By means of a cheerful disposition you will more easily overcome many a temptation. You will win the victory more easily. Do not underestimate that in your future apostolate and in your work of saving souls. Joy is an important means of saving souls.

Yet another means for the preservation of the grace of one's vocation is to labor zealously for the Society, for its growth and development. By doing this you will be securely chained to the Society.

I know of one striking example in the Society. I once asked a certain person who was not at all favorably disposed towards the Society to work for it. He agreed to do so. And when the work was finished he had the grace of a religious vocation.

One enemy of vocation is laxity. Therefore, avoid the same in the spiritual life. Oh, may laxity never find its way into our midst!

St. Bernard gives a further means for preserving one's vocation: *Orationi plus fide, quam industriae et labori*. "Rely more upon prayer than upon your diligence and your work." What a beautiful saying! We so often pray: *Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum*—"If the Lord does not build a house in vain do its builders toil" (Ps. 127:1).

Let it always be your endeavor to live in good mutual agreement with your Superiors.

Another point is love, charity. See to it that you love your confreres truly, that you do not stoop to detraction, and that in general you avoid everything that could injure fraternal charity.

And then there is yet another point: Be exceedingly mild in your judgment of others; for by doing so you will contribute much to the preservation of your vocation.

14

Temptations

Our Venerable Father calls attention to various temptations that occur in everyday life and tries to protect his spiritual children from them.

1. When the wicked enemy sees one or more persons who are resolved to serve God zealously and to strive after holiness, he makes use of every means to bring about their fall.

I. Discouragement

The devil makes use of every means to rob one of his confidence in the Institute and in the Superior, because he knows that then things will soon go downward. Therefore, see to it that you immediately resist every tendency to discouragement, no matter whether it comes from lack of talent, from lack of progress in studies, from attacks made upon the Society, or from faults that cling to us or to our confreres and are burdensome to us.

The tree is known by its fruits. But the fruits of discouragement are totally bad.

II. Pessimism

In addition to this the devil deceives especially those who have a very good will and who strive after perfection by painting their own faults and the faults of others in the bleakest colors. He suggests to them the thought: This is not the work of God, in which so many faults are committed.

Let each one look upon himself. Be gentle in judging others. Never judge harshly and uncharitably but lovingly. If you do that you will be spared many a danger.

III. The Superiors Have No Confidence in Me

1. Also here the devil will get his prey. What would it matter, even if it were really so? But in many cases it is not really true.

He who has a childlike trust in his Superior will oblige the Superior in turn to place confidence in him.

Look at the fruits; see whether you are becoming more fervent in the practice of all virtues. And soon you will recognize the tree. Here you have a good test, one that will keep you from making mistakes.

The Venerable Father also gives the means that we must use in time of temptation.

2. To each and every one I would like to say: “Stay awake and pray not to be put to the test” (Mark 14:38). Oh, pray; pray much; pray with devotion!

Think of Peter! “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you” (Matt. 26:35).

3. A time will come when grievous temptations will sweep over you, a moment from which may depend your vocation, yes, your very salvation. All I can say to you is this: Pray, pray, that you may thus store up for yourselves such riches of grace that in those moments you will not sink and fall or that if you do fall you will rise again.

4. Therefore, pray, pray much and thus lay a good foundation for your perseverance.

In his paternal care our Venerable Father never grows tired of again and again admonishing us and urging us on to prayer.

5. I beg of you again and again: Pray! And pray all the days of your life! Pray thus in order that you may ever be protected, especially at those times when the Lord sends great trials; and such times of trial will surely not be wanting.

In giving instructions regarding temptations our Venerable Father also adverts to one’s wishes. Often enough our own desires are the deepest source of temptations. Indeed, in

many cases we find it easier to overcome a temptation of the devil than our own wishes.

Let this principle be a norm of conduct for you: A man cannot make himself such as he would like to be; therefore, much less can he make others so.

The Superiors must strive for what is better for the progress of the Society and of their respective portion of it; but they must do this *praevisis omnibus*, after everything has been carefully considered.

In general, make it a point to avoid demanding a better state of affairs with impatience, haste, and agitation. If agitation manifests itself it is a sign that a thing is not desired and asked for in the right way.

As it is with temptations, so also with wishes. Everywhere, no matter wherever you are sent, in every house, you will have wishes and temptations.

In this matter cling firmly to God, to the rules, to the Superiors. It is they who point the way. The Superiors have the whole plan of government in hand. You are to follow them as long as it is no sin. Thus the great work which providence has assigned to us will make progress. Otherwise more harm than good will be done.

So if you have any wishes take the circumstances into consideration and make your requests peacefully and quietly.

15

Vows

1. It is the sacred duty of every Religious to do what the vows oblige him to do and to conduct himself as becomes his state of life. He must do his duty. Though in this point the faults as such may not be so great because of actual ignorance, nevertheless the results of such ignorance are tremendous. Conscience is silent, but the error spreads and assumes even greater proportions and does immense harm to discipline.

2. Before I leave for Belgium I would once more like to impress upon you earnestly that you live and labor as good, true Salvatorians; that you conscientiously and punctually fulfill the sacred obligations which you have contracted with God; that you do not let the wiles of the wicked enemy keep you from thus doing your duty; and that you do not give in to that personal enemy whom you carry within yourselves.

First of all there is the vow of poverty! How beautiful, how sublime is holy poverty! For by it one frees himself from everything. Therefore, may the day of your holy profession ever remain in your remembrance. May you never grow weary in the battle. The battle that we are engaged in is for a great purpose.

Then there is the vow of obedience. By it you have offered yourselves as a sacrifice to the good God. And yet, how easy it is to deviate from obedience! Who can say that he is not tempted in this matter? There is danger that after the lapse of years one may get so far that he is merely devoting himself to his own concerns. Therefore, I beg of you that you be deeply conscious of your holy vows.

Then there is humility. Become truly humble! Often reflect upon this comforting assurance: "But accords his favor to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5). Think of the example of the Divine Sav-

ior, Who became as “a worm... and the contempt of the people” (Ps. 22:6).

Finally there is self-denial. You will make progress only to the extent in which you overcome yourselves. If you place self-denial aside you will go backward. If you place humility aside the very foundation of the virtues will collapse.

If, therefore, you become good Salvatorians through the observance of the holy vows, through humility and self-denial, you “will be like a tree planted near streams; it bears fruit in season” (Ps. 1:3).

Would that every single one of you had the firm, earnest will to become a thorough Salvatorian! I know that we all make mistakes, beginning with myself. But I can and I must require of each one of you a good will and zealous striving after perfection.

So let it be your endeavor to live, to labor, and to die for God’s cause. If you do that, it will be the greatest consolation to me on my wearisome journey. Yes; remember that it is my greatest joy to know that with a good will you are striving to perfect yourselves ever more and more.

16

Poverty

Our Venerable Father put his whole heart into the practice of poverty. He loved and esteemed it as a mother.

1. See to it that you observe poverty carefully! Do not adapt yourselves to others; for by doing so one can go entirely astray. Let us be guided by the holy rule, by the laws of the Church, by the vows.
2. Holy poverty is so important that it depends upon its observance whether an Order will prosper or collapse.
3. In the course of the centuries and especially through the Council of Trent Holy Church has prescribed and made known by many regulations that Religious should love poverty as a mother. Also we have placed poverty in our Society *tamquam matrem*, as a mother.
4. Through the holy vows you have bound yourselves to the faithful observance of holy poverty and that according to the spirit of Holy Church and the constitutions. From this it follows that when abuses have crept in no one can excuse himself by pointing to other Institutes or Orders.

From this it furthermore follows that I will never in any way dispense in this matter, nor will I under any circumstances approve of any abuse. Rather let it be said once and for all that I will not tolerate what is contrary to this holy rule and that no one can appeal by saying that he has seen this or that elsewhere. The rule is the law book! It is upon this that I take my stand; to this I firmly adhere!

5. Let everyone in his own position look into this and see whether he has kept the vow of holy poverty, whether he has not become a thief in God's regard, whether he is not stealing back what he has given up through the holy vow. You know that you may not possess anything and may not dispose of anything if you have not the permission to do so.

6. I remind all the Superiors that they must insist upon the complete observance of holy poverty; for all time do I remind them of this, also when I no longer live. Remember that the blessing of God will not rest upon us if holy poverty is not faithfully observed.

7. I tell you once and for all time that these abuses against holy poverty are completely and entirely contrary to my spirit. And never will I lend my approval to them.

8. The transgressing of poverty has evil results. If poverty is no longer observed in a religious house discord follows; peace vanishes away; the blessing of God is withheld; and the necessary means of support are not forthcoming.

9. Do not forget the importance of holy poverty, which, as the holy rule says, should be the foundation, the basis, of the Society. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance for the existence, the development, and the prosperity of our Society that holy poverty be observed in the strictest sense of the word.

So I would like to suggest a few points in particular today regarding this matter, since you may find yourselves in various situations in which you are faced with the question as to what attitude you are to take. The rule is indeed clear and to the point; but man in general is inclined to evil and so, too, in the observance of this rule.

In the first place I wish to mention that all of you must be guided by the spirit of the Society, whether you are actually in the community or not; and that also those who are Superiors or who otherwise hold some position of trust must adhere strictly to the spirit of the Society.

9.1. To come down to particulars, I wish again and again to remind you and earnestly impress upon you that pocket money is never allowed in our Society, as has, sad to say, become the custom in various Orders.

Semper et pro semper (always and for always) I tell you that as long as you remain true to the Society you may never think of having pocket money.

Nunquam! Never!

9.2. When you need money for any purpose, get the necessary permission from the Superior.

9.3. In like manner, when you receive anything from home you know that that is not at your disposal. Look upon it as a snake from which you wish to extricate yourself as soon as possible.

9.4. If a special occasion should arise in which it is necessary that you travel second class where one ordinarily travels third class, you are to get special permission. If you have no chance to ask for this permission the matter is to be reported *post factum*.

9.5. As regards eating and drinking, it is against the spirit of poverty if one takes more than is customary. Still, I say, there can be an exception, if such are doctor's orders. There is no rule without an exception.

Adhere strictly to the spirit of poverty and you will have the blessing of God. I would like to wish you for only one day the bliss and the joy that so many saints already experience because of their observance of holy poverty.

Whatever you do, do not underestimate this precious pearl!

If you wish the Society to prosper, if you wish to have joy, if you wish to be happy, if you wish to experience the blessing of God, then observe holy poverty.

And if you betray the Society, you betray it inasmuch as you no longer observe holy poverty.

How can he who does not observe poverty have any joy in the religious life? Sooner or later such a Religious will fall.

Therefore, poverty! And again poverty! And if you do not wish to believe this, then contemplate the Divine Master. He was born poor; he lived poor; he died poor. If we wish to follow the Divine Savior (and we are in duty bound to do so), if we wish to become saints, if we wish to convert the world, oh, then let us become poor!

Cling firmly to holy poverty! And then let the storms break over us; we will stand unshaken. Let us build up this wall so that the Society may be firm and solid.

17

Obedience

Holy obedience stood extraordinarily high in our Venerable Father's estimation. In his eyes obedience was not a slavish "I command, you obey!" It was rather the voluntary, humble, loving surrender of our will to the will of God. For him the Savior Himself was the school of obedience.

1. Contemplate the Divine Savior even unto Golgotha! What a way eternal Wisdom chooses in order to save mankind—the way of obedience and abasement!
2. What Religious can offer an excuse for not being obedient, since the Lord of heaven and earth, the Divine Savior, Whom we are obliged to follow, chose such a way.
3. This day (Good Friday) is an urgent summons, an earnest reminder of our obligation as Religious to practice obedience.
4. When a difficult duty presents itself, would that everyone, in all circumstances, would ever think of the Crucified, Who was obedient unto death.
5. Pray to the good God that he give you strength, that it may be said of each one of you: "He was obedient unto death," and *Et erit in pace memoria eius*: "And his remembrance shall be in peace."
6. How many seek to do their own will until it is too late. They have not known the sublimity of obedience because they have not meditated on the life of the Divine Savior and have not penetrated deeply into the mystery of obedience.
7. Your task is obedience; and that is the first thing for a Religious to remember.

If I am obedient everything will be easy. St. Teresa says: "To pick up a spear of straw out of obedience is worth more than to work wonders by following one's own inclinations."

If you keep this point well in mind you will not wander from the right way.

Our Venerable Father preferred to have a man rather leave the Society than to remain in it as a disobedient member.

8. He who will not obey does not fit in with us.
9. Do what the Society prescribes for you and you will see what fruits you will bring forth for yourselves and for the salvation of souls.
10. Again and again I repeat that in order to work successfully in the Society you must be obedient and preserve charity. I hope you will not take it amiss to hear the same thing over and over; it is so important!
11. Therefore, obedience! Childlike obedience! Humble obedience! Oh, what joy and peace that brings you!
12. In the make-up of a good Religious obedience is the principal thing. Therefore, I cannot come back to this point often enough. How nicely and easily the members do their work and accomplish things where obedience reigns supreme! And by obedience is meant such obedience as is prescribed for us by the rules.

In the first place obedience is to be rendered *integre*, entirely; and that is done when the subject obeys the Superior wholly and not only partially or sometimes.

Then it is to be rendered *accurate*, accurately, not superficially but with exactness, so that nothing can be said against it.

Again, obedience should be universal. A man should obey in all things and not merely in those things that are not difficult for him. Universal, in all things!

Furthermore, you should obey always and at all times, whenever anything is commanded. Therefore, obedience should not be made to depend upon the time or upon whether one is dis-

posed or not disposed. In a word, always, whether convenient or inconvenient!

Again, we are to obey *hilari corde*, with a cheerful heart. Oh, that is so important for your own good! If you obey gladly, with a cheerful heart, then it will be easy for you. But if you already hold back in advance, then it will be hard for you to obey; and you will also make it disagreeable for the Superiors to command.

You ought never to let it come to pass that such a one has to command you in obedience; indeed, whenever possible you should comply with the very wishes of the Superior.

Oh, how hard it is when the Superior has to deliberate, weigh, measure, investigate whether or not the subject will comply with the regulations made and the commands given!

Again, obey promptly, punctually, deliberately, as though you were eagerly awaiting the orders given. *Ecce adsumus!* (Behold, here we are!) *Littera inchoata relicta!* (Leaving even the letter unfinished.)

Then there is also that important point in the matter of obedience which St. Benedict already had in his rule, namely, that the commands are to be accepted as if they came from God; for the Superiors take the place of God.

Since I am here and now speaking of obedience, I would still like to mention in a special way that this holds good for all, not only for the one or the other, or in a lesser degree for the Superiors. It holds good for all, from the lowest up to the Superior. For the Superiors it holds good as regards the higher Superiors.

It can quite easily happen that if you are appointed Superior you may think that then you are less bound to obey. And yet, if you consider the matter rightly, you will see that then you must be even more obedient, since the disobedience of Superiors results in even greater evils, not only for themselves but also

for others. A Superior who does not obey can bring disorder into a whole house.

Therefore, obedience pertains to all! From the first to the last! You who are appointed Superiors and who are placed over others should remember well that not only are the scholastics obliged to keep the rule but that it is also incumbent upon you to do so. You must observe the rules just as well as the scholastics.

Therefore, obedience! Then you will work together in a unanimous, harmonious way. That is of the utmost importance for our Society, since it ought to spread rapidly. But how is that going to happen unless all, from the lowest to the highest, are united by good, steadfast, holy obedience! Resolute, cheerful, punctual obedience!

On Good Friday 1900, our Venerable Father spoke beautifully about obedience in suffering.

13. The Redeemer and Savior of the world became “humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8). “My food is to do the will of the one who sent me” (John 4:34). The will of God is clearly marked out for you. Let it, therefore, be your endeavor to do the will of God through the imitation of Christ, so that at the end of your life you may say: “I have glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do” (John 17:4).

Then, too, your task as Salvatorians is to suffer. You wish to accomplish much and to do great things. You wish to help save souls. You wish to become co-workers with God! And if you desire this you will have to suffer; for it is a well known saying that the results obtained are in proportion to the sufferings endured.

As true Salvatorians you should follow the Savior; but you should follow Him in such a manner that you do not shrink back in fear when pains and sufferings confront you; on the

contrary, you are to go forward courageously to meet sufferings.

Be true Salvatorians in unshakable obedience even unto death!
Be Salvatorians in suffering even unto the death of the cross!

On Good Friday 1901, our Venerable Father again spoke about holy obedience, this time about perfect obedience.

14. During these days the Church so often repeats the words: *Christus factus est pro nobis obediens*, “Christ became obedient for us” (Phil 2:8). Obedience is the sum and substance of the Divine Savior’s whole life, from the Incarnation to the death upon the cross. He who wishes to be a disciple of the Divine Savior, he who wishes to follow Him, must be obedient. The Religious must be obedient.

But what must be the qualities of obedience in order that it may be perfect? It must spring from love. The Divine Savior says: “But the world must recognize that I love the Father and that I act just as the Father commanded” (John 14:31). You should be obedient out of love, out of love for God, for the Divine Savior, out of love for the cross. It is in this way that obedience becomes perfection.

Oh, how sublime, how beautiful is the obedience of a Religious when he is perfectly obedient!

To the words already quoted Holy Church adds this glorious reward of the obedience of Christ: “And for this God raised him high, and gave him the name which is above all other names” (Phil. 2:9). So, too, will the Religious, if he be truly obedient, be exalted; he will have success in his endeavors and he will speak of victories.

If we wish sincerely to follow the Savior the leading characteristic of our life must be obedience!

May you, therefore, learn obedience from the Crucified, Who became obedient for us; may you learn from Him to be disci-

ples of Christ; may you learn from Him to be true Salvatorians!

If it happens that you are given some work or a sacrifice is required of you or you are transferred or something else falls to your lot and you find these things hard, then go and pray to the Crucified and you will receive strength.

May you become true Salvatorians through exact obedience, similar to that which the God-Man rendered to His heavenly Father; then also you will be exalted, not only in this life but also and especially in eternity.

In a Chapter held Nov. 8, 1901, our Venerable Father spoke on how Divine Providence guides Religious through obedience.

15. Through obedience the Religious is guided by Divine Providence. Happy the Religious who is obedient! He will speak of victories. O that you would observe this obedience, as prescribed by our rules, in everything that the Superior ordains; not only in what he commands but also in what he advises, what he wishes, what he entrusts to you—in short, obedience in everything!

The Superior, in addition to the fact that he is in general more enlightened by God, also knows the subordinates better, their qualities, their capabilities for certain kinds of work. But he also knows their weak points. And so he is in a better position to decide upon the right thing for the individual members.

As you yourselves know, no one can guide himself. A great scholar says: "He who makes himself his teacher, makes a fool his leader." Generally speaking, then, a man cannot direct himself. He, particularly the Religious, must let himself be guided, and that by the Superior, who has been appointed by God to guide him. Whatever his position may be, he is bound to obey his Superior. Obedience is the greatest and the best thing. Also the Son of God, Who rules in the courts of heaven, was obedient.

However, not only the welfare of the individual but also the welfare of all together demands obedience.

In a Congregation that has one common purpose in view all forces must be directed to this purpose and must be so employed that the aggregate attains the goal it has in view.

But now the Superiors, and particularly the higher Superiors (abstracting from the fact that they have the special assistance of God) have a general view of the whole and know the individuals and hence are in a position more easily and securely to determine just what is conducive to the attainment of the common purpose in its entirety.

For obedience takes it for granted that the individual member is always open with his Superior, that in all reverence he makes known to him the difficulties which he encounters in this and that.

That is why openness towards the Superiors is such an important quality in a Religious, one that is strictly required in all religious houses and in all Orders.

And let no one think that if he is open towards the Superiors he will lose in respect.

And when one has submitted his difficulties and the Superiors have decided, then he should be at peace. He has fulfilled the will of God.

Therefore, be obedient in all things to the Superiors, who “watch over your souls because they must give an account of them” (Heb. 13:17).

Happy he who obeys! He will preserve interior peace. God will be with Him and he may expect His help. He may be at peace, even if the affairs that he undertakes out of obedience do not seem to be successful, a thing that happens often enough, especially at the beginning of undertakings. But his obedience will be crowned with victories.

But if anyone seeks to withdraw himself from obedience, such a one will not experience the victory and the triumph.

The blessing of God rests upon those who obey.

But how can there be peace, how can there be any blessing, for those who do their own will, who try to win over the Superiors, who do not want to let themselves be guided? That is one of the greatest disorders. It is a reversing of the law.

When a man tries to put through his own will in his work, in his studies, or in anything else, one may in general say that the end will be unhappiness. How can God be expected to bless that which is undertaken in opposition to His own will?

Therefore, "Obey your leaders and give way to them; they watch over your souls because they must give an account of them" (Heb. 13:17). Do you fear to take over an office because it has its difficulties and do you therefore seek to evade obedience? Sacred Scripture says: "They that fear the hoary frost, the snow shall fall upon them" (Job. 6:16). Let us, therefore, take Holy Scripture's word for it that a great evil will come upon him who shuns duty because of difficulties.

Always remember this one thing well, namely, that you are to be obedient and that you are not to withdraw yourselves from obedience.

It is painful for a Superior when he has to fear that if he imposes a task upon someone he will meet with a "No." Ordinarily the Superior will let the matter drop.

And what will be the result of that? Therefore, *Parati sumus!* We are ready, always ready to do whatever the Superior requires. Say that with your whole heart.

16. Would to God that everyone would let himself be guided by his Superior, no matter how weak that Superior may be!

18

Self-will

Inordinate self-will is one of the greatest obstacles on the path of perfection. Our Venerable Father was also a master in the complete submission in all circumstances of his own will to the holy will of God.

1. In the first place you must strive in all things to do the holy will of God. Then you will have nothing to fear, even if you do fall into human failings.

2. If you wish to have peace among yourselves you must give up self-love, your own will, insistence upon your own opinion, too great trust in your own experience and insight.

Just as soon as you adopt the wrong attitude of insisting upon having your own way and following your own ideas, discord results.

As is well known, there is diversity of opinion also as regards what is good. And even in case one holds to that which is objectively the best the results may be bad.

If a man cannot overcome himself he has reason to fear that things will not go well in the future. If you want to be good men, overcome yourselves! I do not require that you take upon yourselves things that are injurious to your health. But you must try to deny yourselves in little things, so that if later on the circumstances arise you may be able to deny yourselves in greater things also.

19

Fidelity in Little Things

Be faithful in little things! That was one of the fundamental principles in the life of our Venerable Founder. He was faithful in little things even unto death.

1. In order to make progress in the spiritual life it is necessary that you not only avoid serious faults but also and especially that you be faithful in little things. I most earnestly exhort you by all means to be truly faithful in little things. First of all because it is the will of God. And also because by doing so you will be preserved from greater faults. He who is faithful in little things will not easily fall into grievous offenses.

Furthermore, he who is faithful in little things will enjoy the blessing of God in his work and will be happy already here in this world. But he who is not faithful in little things is in danger not only of falling into serious faults but also of losing his vocation.

In what does fidelity in little things consist? It manifests itself in everything, particularly in religious observance. He is not faithful who looks upon little things as of no account and pays no attention to them; he is not faithful who, for instance, is not exact in the observance of silence, who is careless in the recitation of the breviary and in the offering of Holy Mass. Indeed, it is evident that one is not faithful in little things when he says his prayers, makes the sign of the cross, in a superficial way; when he does not properly pronounce the words in official prayers. Fidelity in little things also holds good in a particular way as regards poverty. Never transgress these rules, not even in things that are not exactly serious!

If you want the Society to be firmly established, to accomplish great things, then be faithful in little things! That will bring you much peace.

Make it a point to be faithful as regards obedience, as regards the regulations made by the Superiors. Do not wait until you

are given formal orders or are commanded in some strict way. A hint given by the Superior should be sufficient reason for you to obey.

I look upon it as of the utmost importance for the Society that you place great stress upon being faithful in little things, in order that the Society may become firm within and without. Fidelity in little things is one of the chief means of having peace among ourselves and peace with God, and of drawing down upon the Society the blessing of God.

“Anyone who is trustworthy in little things is trustworthy in great” (Luke 16:10). This passage of Sacred Scripture applies to us in quite a special way. For a Religious the greatest and most appalling evil is the loss of his vocation, the collapse of his precious calling. True enough, as long as there are religious Orders that will always occur. But unfortunate is he who thus loses his vocation; for he loses the common life, the community, the confreres, their example, the protection of the Superiors.

It is of the utmost importance that you keep yourselves faithful in little things, that you do not disregard any rule for the sake of greater convenience, or out of caprice, or for any other reason. There are, of course, reasons that may make an exception necessary. But if it happens out of convenience, or laxity, then you are on the downward path.

20

Silence

1. May the saints whose feast we are celebrating (All Saints) be to us a powerful incentive courageously and faithfully to walk the way which Providence has shown us, so that we may make progress through the exact observance of the holy vows and of the holy rules. To this belongs in a very special way the keeping of silence. It is a well known principle that a religious house in which silence is not observed cannot long endure. One might think that this is an exaggeration. But if one looks into the matter in the light of facts and experience one finds that it is only too true.

Unfortunately, man is that way. When once he begins to disregard religious silence he also begins to be guilty of detraction, to speak about others, to confide to others what he has heard, to criticize and distort the regulations of Superiors, to speak against such and such a one. And what is the result of all that? Dissatisfaction and dissension. And where is the root of it all? In the non-observance of silence.

2. For the preservation of order and discipline it is of prime importance that the tongue be kept in check, that one observes the holy rules and does not speak with those with whom he is not permitted to speak, and that, on the other hand, one does not speak wrongly with those with whom he is allowed to speak.

Transgressions in this regard always result in great harm. Not to observe silence means not to observe religious discipline.

3. In your future life you will find out by experience that men who speak only what is good are truly holy men and that, on the other hand, those who make an ostentatious display of the latest happenings are still far from sanctity.

4. In a religious house where silence is kept one may also take it for granted that religious observance is good. But where

silence is not kept one must needs fear that many other evils are likewise to be found.

Observe religious silence! Force yourselves to do so! Overcome yourselves! And be convinced that the more you overcome yourselves, the more progress you will make.

21

Unity

Our Venerable Father had unity very much at heart. Unity in the great purpose of the Society. Unity with the Founder. Unity with the Superiors. Unity among the brethren. It was his firm conviction that the great purpose of the Society can be attained only by the unity of all.

1. *Ecce quam bonum, et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum!* “How good, how delightful it is to live as brothers all together” (Ps. 133:1). It is certainly beautiful and uplifting when brethren dwell together in unity, when all, united with each other and united with God, strive after one of the noblest of all goals, namely, to lead mankind, to lead men, to their highest happiness, to everlasting bliss.

2. Physically and spiritually to support each other, with united efforts to strive to sanctify yourselves and to sanctify others—what joy it is! What happiness! What a splendid relationship! A paradise on earth!

3. Therefore, would that you were all deeply penetrated with this spirit and that you would all fulfill the conditions necessary for such unity! Those conditions are: striving after personal holiness; a desire for the salvation of souls; enthusiasm for the Society and its grand objectives. Love and enthusiasm are, as it were, the wings with which we make progress. If you no longer have them, then progress will cease.

Furthermore, you must battle energetically against all the enemies that seek to destroy this unity.

You must be willing to suffer and must rejoice in suffering. We simply must suffer sometimes, be it in this manner or in that.

You must carry the cross, whether you wish to do so or not.

4. If already here below it is said: *Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum . . .*, how will it then be in heaven above, where we will be united with the Savior in everlasting love!

5. If we would remain firmly united and make of our own wills a sacrifice to God, if in ranks close and deep we would advance against hell and all our enemies, what would we then not accomplish! Hell is going to do its utmost to prevent our doing that. But if we stick together firmly in God, what is there that we cannot do with His help?

6. Unity! Not everything that is good is good in every place. Unity is necessary in great undertakings. This unity will come if you all make for one goal.

7. *Concordia parvae res crescunt, discordia maximae dilabuntur.* Through concord small undertakings thrive and grow; through discord the greatest go to pieces. That holds good particularly in a religious Congregation. Therefore, I would admonish you that you become more and more established, invigorated, and strengthened in unity and that you avoid everything that could be harmful to that unity and concord.

In order to preserve this unity, this concord, this peace, it is above all necessary that each single one conscientiously fills his own particular place or position, that as a Religious he carefully observes the constitutions and applies himself to his work according to the rules and regulations.

If there is a defect in even one single member the whole organism must suffer because of it, as is the case in the human body. But if every member is good and regularly discharges his functions, then the whole organism is in order and serves its purpose. Then everything is calm and peaceful.

So if you wish to dwell together in peace and harmony, you must above all be good Religious, regulars, who conscientiously live according to the holy rule, both in general and in particular.

8. You know how in an organism each member supports the other, how in a machine one part is coordinated with the other. You know how in a building one stone sustains the other, each in its place. It is like that in the organism of the Society. So I would like to call attention to one point that you can never sufficiently keep in mind, a point that you should take along for your whole life and one that you may never forget: Endeavor to promote the happiness and progress of each and every single one!

First of all the individual members should be open towards their Superiors. If you have a serious temptation in consequence of your activity, you should call the attention of your Superiors to the matter.

Furthermore, if you see faults in the house, even in the Superiors, you should report the matter to the proper Superior,—with all due reverence, of course.

Even the Superiors, if they notice faults that must be done away with, should call the attention of their subjects to the same with reverence and love.

Another point is this. When one thinks that someone puts no trust in him he should go to the person concerned and frankly talk it over with him, so that the matter may be cleared up and the unfortunate situation rectified.

You know that the devil makes every effort to arouse distrust just among those who should accomplish great things. Therefore, openness towards the Superiors!

Furthermore, first have recourse to the immediate Superiors; only after you have repeatedly done that should you appeal to the higher Superiors.

It is further to be noted that each one in his place should without fail live according to the holy rule and should obediently listen to his local Superior. Follow this recommendation; for it is of great importance for one's own salvation, for the salvation of others, for the good of the Church and of the Society.

One time, shortly after his name day, our Venerable Father again spoke on unity.

9. Through your fine participation in the celebration of my name day you have shown your devotion, your fidelity, to the Society and also to me. So today I would like to have you take to heart a few special points which will bring it about that all these dispositions will continually grow stronger, that you will persevere, that you will ever advance in perfection, and that thus you will obtain the crown that awaits you if you hold out to the end.

I wish to impress upon you first of all that you be one among yourselves and with your head, as well here in the Motherhouse as in every place on earth where you may happen to be. Be thoroughly convinced that, if you are not united, you yourselves will be more or less undermining your own foundation.

And what you yourselves mentioned on my name day: *Concordia parvae res crescunt*,—"through concord small undertakings thrive and grow,"—that holds good especially in our regard also. And no matter how much an undertaking may seem to prosper, you may be sure that if unity is wanting your work will sooner or later go to pieces. Therefore, unity! That is what God, what our divine Teacher demands of you. Be one among yourselves and one with your head.

But in order to preserve unity it is necessary that you overcome yourselves. If self-conquest is wanting there will be no unity in any community,—indeed, not even between any two members. There will always be something to bear. *Alter alterius onera portate*. "Carry each other's burdens; that is how to keep the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

10. I beg of you to work for the Society as much as you can. Consider the ants, the bees, how they work together! How united they are among themselves! How great, how ceaseless is their diligence! With what harmony they toil in unison for the attainment of one end! With what intrepid courage they go right on when they encounter an obstacle! Let us consider

these little creatures! Let them give us an example and let us not be put to shame by them!

11. I have already repeatedly impressed upon you that you should preserve unity among yourselves and with your spiritual leader. *Ut omnes unum sint*, "May they all be one" (John 17:21). This unity is so important for an association, for a Society. Through it you will become strong and sturdy and will do great things.

But now one condition for the attainment of this unity is the giving up of one's own opinion, the submission of one's own judgment, in order to follow the judgment of one's spiritual Father. And that, of course, holds good first of all as regards the purpose of the Society and the means to be employed for the attainment of that purpose. Also as regards the studies, the meditation, the spiritual exercises. Oh, how I wish that you would realize the far-reaching consequences of this unity! I am unable to express in words how great are the consequences of this unity and of its opposite. But in the years to come you will realize this truth. At present there must be conformity with what the Founder wishes.

I adduce just a few examples from history to show you how necessary this unity is,—also in matters in which those concerned have their own well grounded opinion. St. Ignatius and St. Cajetan are founders of religious Orders. Both were founders of Societies and yet they differed so much in point of view! St. Cajetan forbids begging; he expects everything from Divine Providence. St. Ignatius expressly ordains that all houses of study be well financed, have foundations.

You likewise know how severely the divinely enlightened founder St. Ignatius took action against those who held an opinion of their own. You know how he put a minister of the house out of the house during the night. He did not want to live under the same roof with one of whom he knew that he followed his own opinion.

We know, too, how he simply dismissed the only professor of philosophy in the Society because he held a different opinion in philosophy. Being a divinely enlightened man, he realized how important unity is.

Let us look at our own times. Let us turn to Turin. There we see two founders of Societies. The venerable founder Cottolengo built everything on Providence. And even today 4,000 persons (now 2,738 Sisters and Brothers) live in one house in total dependence upon Providence. The other, Don Bosco, begs throughout the whole world with his writings. And yet both are guided by God. By one and the same God.

Therefore, unity! Each Institute has its own spirit; and just as soon as one deviates from it he finds himself on the wrong road. An apple tree is not a pear tree. And a Franciscan is not a Dominican, a Jesuit is not a Trappist. It is the practice of the Church that after the death of a founder she points to the spirit of the founder.

If you have this unity, if you submit your own judgment, your own opinion, making it conformable to the spirit of the Founder, you will have peace with the Superiors and with yourselves. You will be happy and make many others happy.

If you do not direct your efforts to one end we shall have a Babylon. And Babylon is fallen!

If we show ourselves submissive for God's sake and out of love and with a pure intention, that will be the greatest consolation for us at the hour of death. Then we shall be able to say: "Lord, I have done what Your representative told me to do."

I admonish every Superior and every educator to strive to bring about unity. If he does not do so he works against the Society.

Therefore, unity! And once again unity! And bear in mind how much you injure yourselves by its opposite! Happiness or unhappiness! Peace or discord, joy or sorrow,—the one or the other depends upon you.

In the first beginnings of the Society an eminent spiritual man said to me: "Have you already acquired even one man who lives entirely according to your spirit?" To this I replied: "Yes; I have one who submits himself entirely to me." And he said: "Then the Society is established." The man in question is still in the Society, and that because he subjected himself. His name is Father Bonaventure Luethen.

Therefore, unity! Again I say unity and once more unity!

Enlightened by the spirit of God, our Venerable Father once enlarged upon a cunning trick of the devil in which often no one suspects an assault upon unity and concord. And yet in this way the wicked enemy has already brought much misery upon many religious families.

12. It is certainly a great joy when brethren live together in unity. In connection with this reflection we shall today dwell upon one thing in particular. The devil is always trying to arouse jealous and suspicious thoughts among those through whose efforts the glory of God and the salvation of souls is being mightily promoted. That will always be the case and can be easily understood, since the devil, the enemy of all good, will make use of all possible means to prevent good from being done. Now, if even with individual men he does all in his power to accomplish this, how much more will he do so in a whole Congregation. Hence it is that in holy Institutes, nay, more, even among devout and holy men, there are often certain disagreements in opinion. It is incumbent upon us to do all that we can to ward off the attacks of this enemy; but we must above all make it our endeavor not to foster these disagreements.

Those mutually suspicious thoughts and feelings tend to destroy unity, to change beautiful harmony into harshness and bitterness. That is why we must resist them immediately, from the very beginning, in order thus to preserve this unity, this *jucundum*.

From these suspicious thoughts springs that greatest of all obstacles to unity in an Institute, namely, those direct or indirect

attacks upon authority—criticism. The critic is like a cancerous growth; he is the cause of inestimable harm to the Society.

Through criticism, through censure of regulations, of persons, of authority, are dissatisfaction and uneasiness naturally aroused among the members. And once there is dissatisfaction one will easily find reasons enough for justifying his dissatisfaction. Where there are human beings the human element will always manifest itself.

A further consequence of all this will then be the weakening and loss of one's vocation.

If, therefore, you wish to persecute an enemy, then persecute this enemy, the archenemy, criticism. And persecute it mercilessly. If you notice signs of it, then flee from the same as you would flee from signs of the past.

13. Remember well that through unity our own good is promoted, as well as the good of the whole Society and of the many souls for whose salvation we labor. See to it that you everywhere labor enthusiastically in unity!

With tears I beg of you to be united! Always be firmly united with each other, as children with their parents. As your spiritual father I am in duty bound to exhort you to this.

If I have your welfare at heart I am bound to advise you thus. If I wish to do my duty, then this is the advice that I must give you.

If I love you, then I must advise you thus. If I wish to do the will of God, then I must so advise you.

If I want to conform to the wish of Holy Church, then I must so advise you. Listen to my words! Do not grow weary!

The crown of victory awaits you!

It cannot be otherwise than that the promised blessing will be bestowed.

I have already said before that we are going to spread out over the whole world, that very many enemies are going to rise up against us.

How happy you will be if, firm and steadfast and all of one mind and heart, you suffer persecution for Christ's sake! What joy, what peace!

But on the other hand what confusion if that unanimity, that oneness of endeavor be wanting!

Stick together until the end of time. Unity is the will of God!

Jesus Christ Himself is our Model in His unity with the Father. I will, Father, "that they may be one as we are one" (John 17:22).

14. The devil will do everything he can to destroy the great work of the Society. He is plotting to ruin us by sowing dissension and enmities among us,—among us who are brethren, yes, even among men who are like unto the saints. Therefore, go forward to meet him as one, with one mind and heart. Strike him down through holy unity!

Brotherly Love

Our Venerable Father had very much at heart the great commandment of love given us by our Divine Master. He loved all and especially his spiritual sons. And he repeatedly admonished his hearers to practice brotherly love in all things. It cut him to the heart whenever he noticed any violations of charity. But when he came to a House where all were united in charity he stayed there gladly.

1. *Haec mando vobis ut diligatis invicem.* “My command to you is to love one another” (John 15:17). Harmony, brotherly love is necessary for us above all things. *Ut diligatis alterutrum*— “that we must love one another” (1 John 3:11). Oh, would that all, each one in his own place, would strive for this, that we love one another in very truth, that we be united in the name of the Lord!

2. Another point that is of the utmost importance for apostolic men, especially in their activity, is brotherly love. The wicked enemy will destroy brotherly love wherever he can possibly do so. Let us, therefore, work in opposition to him! Let us take to heart St. John’s admonition: “Little children, love one another!” Oh, keep that well in mind! It is so important for the Order, for the community, where one has so much to bear. Hence through charity you should lighten each other’s burdens; you should endure patiently what goes against you. It simply is that way; we must bear with each other, no matter how good all may really be. *Alter alterius onera portate.* “Carry each other’s burdens” (Gal. 6:2). Therefore, bear with others! And do not always suspect that one has a bad intention.

3. Bear with the Superiors, too, when something unpleasant comes your way, or when they, in accordance with their sacred duty, find it necessary to refuse you something. *Obedire oportet Deo magis.* “Obedience to God comes before obedience to men” (Acts 5:29). Remember that Superiors often find themselves in a position where they would like to grant you this or

that but a higher authority says: *Non licet!* "It is not allowed!" In such a case do not urge the Superior too much.

4. Bear with each other. Each one should be a cause of joy to the other and should not make things hard for him unless he must. Each one should anticipate the wishes of the other; indeed, each should obey the other. Love each other in deed and in truth (John 3:18).

5. We have the duty of carefully living up to the teachings which the Divine Savior gave us when He was still on earth. And how much more we ought to take to heart what the Divine Savior said shortly before His death. One of the most sublime prayers of the Savior when He was going to His death was this: "That they may all be one." That was the dying Savior's most ardent wish.

And so we, who are in a special way in duty bound to follow the holy Apostles, must particularly take to heart what the Divine Savior commanded His Apostles, namely, love. We should be of one heart and of one mind. For us in particular it is a specific duty that we be one. You should be one with the spiritual Father, one with the Superiors and those placed in authority over you, one among yourselves. It is this last point which I would like to touch upon in a special manner today.

This unity among yourselves will be strengthened in particular by means of brotherly love, of *caritas fraterna*. This fraternal charity is a duty. This obligation even follows from the duty of loving the neighbor. The closer the bonds that unite the members to each other in intimate relationship, the greater is the obligation of mutual love. And we know that in a religious Order those bonds are really so close!

It is one family;

there is one spiritual Father;

one purpose;

one common duty;

one religious habit;

one rule.

Therefore we have special reasons for fostering brotherly love.

But love, I might say, should also be like a mother towards her child. It should be true, ready to make sacrifices, patient, attentive, sympathetic, impartial, universal, not one-sided, active in word and deed. It should embrace all. If it is not universal, if it does not include all the confreres, it will do harm. If our love is from God, then we shall love all. If it is from men, then there is danger of our not equally loving all.

This universal love is especially and specifically for our Society, which is destined for all peoples. Oh, whatever you do, hold fast to what we really want, to what is our duty, namely, the imitation of the Apostles! That is why we must have brotherly love.

Hoc est praeceptum meum, ut diligatis invicem, sicut dilexisti vos. “This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12). *Hoc est praeceptum meum*, that we imitate the Apostles in charity towards all.

To a considerable extent brotherly love secures the welfare and progress of the Society. Yes; that depends in great part upon fraternal charity.

In the first place brotherly love will give us a good reputation in the eyes of the outside world. “Behold, how they love one another” One will feel drawn to enter the Society when he sees how love rules therein.

Furthermore, brotherly love promotes the happiness of the individual members. Through it the burden, the responsibility inseparably connected with the religious life; will be lightened. Oh, how light the obligations really do become when brotherly love reigns in a family! How easily one makes the sacrifices when one knows that sincere, mutual love prevails!

Now I would like to have you take to heart one more point. Here is what I have in mind: If one has not practiced charity, then just that will be one of his sufferings at the hour of death.

I therefore admonish you that you practice fraternal charity well now during life, lest you only then come to your senses when you are lying on your bed of death.

Therefore, have charity!
And have this charity
despite human frailty;
despite faults of character;
despite disagreeable temperaments;
despite the want of tact;
despite moral failings.

Everyone has his faults, more or less. Love everyone. No one should be excluded from charity. Therefore, love one another! May charity reign in our midst ever more and more!

6. The dear Savior says: "I give you a new commandment: love one another" (John 13:34). This commandment is of particular importance for apostolic Religious who wish to lead a community life. Remember what St. Gregory says: *Qui caritatem erga alterum non habet, praedicationis officium suscipere nullatenus debet.* "He who has not charity towards others should absolutely not engage in the apostolate."

The Divine Savior Himself, the God-Man, manifests so great a love. What patience and meekness does He not show towards His Apostles!

Oh, how nicely one gets along when one neither gives offense nor is offended! Truly, it is a duty not to offend against charity.

Again, charity is a sign that one is making progress in goodness.

How many a one you can encourage and urge on to greater goodness if you do him a favor, if you keep some suffering, some cross from him. Strive by all means in charity and meekness to excuse the faults of your confreres and to cover what can be covered with the mantle of charity.

7. Strive to love each other in faith, in God. This love should not be a love of flesh and blood. No; we are to foster it because it is the will of God that we truly love one another.

23

Peace

Our Venerable Father was a man of peace. He loved peace. He looked upon peace as a great heritage left us by the Savior and one that we must preserve even at the cost of the greatest sacrifices.

1. We stand at the threshold of the glorious feast of Christmas, when the Savior of the world appeared and brought us peace. For the feast of Christmas I, too, would gladly wish you peace, peace with God, peace with the Superiors, peace with your fellow men, peace with your confreres. I pray that you may use well the short time that still remains before the feast of Christmas, that you may again restore this peace in the event that it has been disturbed, in case it is lacking somewhere. You must know that any disturbance of peace with God and the neighbor has harmful consequences. How much evil results, for instance, when peace with one's confreres and with the Superior is disturbed! How hard it then is to make progress! Therefore, if somewhere something is out of order in this regard, see to it that you put it in shape.

But be convinced that sometimes peace demands sacrifice. If you would have peace with God, then you must fight and fight hard against the enemies of your salvation. If you are not willing to fight, then you will not attain to peace.

If you would have peace with the Superior you must be able to stand something. If God Himself sometimes afflicts men, whom He loves so much, then there will also be times when the Superiors find it necessary to make regulations that go against human nature.

Then, too, you must remember that the Superiors are also men. *Alter alterius onera portate.* "Carry each other's burdens" (Gal. 6:2). If we would have peace with our fellow men we must be able to stand something.

Sensitiveness is especially dangerous for peace. If we are too sensitive we shall never have peace.

But once you yourselves have this peace, as I hope you have, you must also see to it that you now make the firm resolution to live according to the rules and the regulations of the Superiors and to do all in your power likewise to bring peace to others, to have peace with your fellow men.

Think of the many millions of souls that are without peace, that are steeped in sin or in heresy or in unbelief. Also to such should we bring peace. Also for them the Divine Savior became man.

Then we should bring peace to those who still sit in the shadow of death, to the pagans. No place and no nation, no race and no people should be excluded from our solicitude. We should look upon nothing as too difficult when it is a case of bringing peace to them. We wish to bring peace to all. No one should be excluded, as far as that is possible for us with the grace of God.

But now, since you cannot as yet go out into the world to announce the Gospel of peace, see to it that you do at least what you can here. Even from this place we have a great apostolate to carry on; and we can do much if we are filled with the spirit of God. If we wish to bring peace to men we shall find the means of doing so, never fear.

On the great feast of Christmas may you all be filled with a burning zeal that will prompt you to do your utmost in striving after self-sanctification. May each one be wholly permeated with that zeal! May each one of you be a man of peace, one who brings peace wherever he may be and wherever he may go! *Estote viri pacifici*. Be men of peace!

2. How gratifying it is if one can say of each of you that you bring peace.

3. One thing that is a source of great danger in a religious Congregation is stubborn insistence upon one's own rights.

You may be sure that where this obdurate insistence upon one's own rights is found, peace will not prevail.

It is simply a fact that in a Society there will be misunderstandings and involuntary encroachments upon another's rights; and that would be the case even if all were saints. So if one insists upon his rights to the limit lack of peace is sure to be the result.

4. We shall get and keep interior peace if above all we keep ourselves free from grievous sin, if we resist the passions. *Non est pax impiis*. "There is no peace for the wicked" (Isaiah 48:22).

Again, we shall have peace if we strive earnestly after perfection, if we faithfully perform the duties of our state of life. Interior peace is disturbed as soon as we cease to strive after perfection.

But it is still worse if then this interior peace is not disturbed, if conscience is dead, no longer reacts.

An important point for the preservation of peace is openness towards Superiors and confessors. One should be particularly frank with one's confessor as regards matters of vocation and one's vocational duties.

Today I have a striking example of what blessings this openness can bring. It has to do with a person who lived in great temptation and was grievously afflicted by the devil. He finally decided frankly to tell me all about it. Today I received a communication from him in which he jubilantly tells me that just openness has saved him from great evils. Here we have the blessing that rests upon such frankness.

You must know that it is usually the wicked enemy who has a hand in these things. And what does he fear more than humiliation! It is humiliating to reveal oneself to the Superior, to the confessor. That calls for a considerable degree of humility.

Let it be your endeavor, then, to keep yourselves free from all sins, to strive earnestly after perfection, and always to be quite

candid with the Superiors and confessors whom God has given you. Then you will possess this sublime good, this *pax interna*, this interior peace.

And if you possess this peace, then you will also be the intermediate cause of graces in the pulpit, in the confessional, etc. *Quam pulchri super montes pedes annuntiantis et praedicantis pacem!* “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger announcing peace” (Isaiah 52.7).

Always preserve peace yourselves, so that you may also share it with others.

5. The Divine Savior said to His disciples: *Pax vobis!* “Peace be with you” (Luke 24:36). O that you also might have peace! *Pax vobis!* Peace to you, to your Superiors, to your subordinates. That is one of the greatest blessings that a community, a Religious can possibly have.

But our Venerable Father does not want a peace that is built up on sweet reveries but one that is erected on the solid foundations of justice.

In order that there may be peace it is necessary that each one respect, protect, and acknowledge the rights, the calling, the life, the possessions of the other, or whatever else he may have.

Furthermore, it is necessary that one observe religious silence, otherwise one easily becomes guilty of detraction. And one of the greatest enemies of peace is calumny and tale-bearing in connection with some occurrence.

Again, the observance of the rule and of the prescriptions and regulations of the Superiors is important. In a word, seek to do what pleases others and combat your own ego.

If the peace is thus preserved there will be happiness in the community. The Religious will feel happy and content. The whole community will prosper. Where there is peace there is the blessing of God and His consolation.

24

Piety and Learning

Piety and learning belong to the spiritual armor of the priest. But piety should remain the foundation as well as the crown of learning. Such was the view taken by our Venerable Founder: solid learning supported and wholly permeated by solid piety.

1. There are two things that I would have you take to heart. I refer to piety and learning. The first means that we are to become holy, that we are to strive after perfection, that we are to become truly pious. The second means that we are to strengthen and arm ourselves mightily by means of learning, in accordance with our talents.

It is just this last point that I would like to impress upon you, namely, that you must fully realize the extent of this necessity and not close your eyes to it. It has been so arranged by Divine Providence that we must make every effort to acquire solid learning.

Use the time well and avoid being superficial in the various branches of learning.

I would especially like to recommend to you most earnestly the Latin language, which is an important foundation for a thorough education.

Study moral theology; and remember that it is along this way that you will lead many souls to heaven.

2. I would like to point out that you should be diligent in the acquisition of humility and the other virtues. These are the buttresses upon which we must build. First come humility, obedience, and the other virtues, and only then learning. I am of the conviction that he who has these virtues will accomplish more than a learned man who is without virtue. Of course, you should study as much as possible and perfect your knowledge—and that all your life long. But we must pay

greater attention to the virtues, to humility, to the spiritual life. These will strengthen us in our vocation.

No one loses his vocation because of a lack of studies or of good talents but because of a lack of humility.

If learning is not in proportion to the virtue of humility you will go astray.

My whole tendency is to insist upon learning but without detracting from the spiritual life.

Every one who is humble will be loved by God, by his Superiors, by his bishop, by the poor.

The Society must be built up on good elements, not on learning; for in the latter case it would collapse and you together with it. It must be erected on the virtue of humility.

I have spoken with three bishops who wish to have priests from us, but not so much learned priests as priests who have a love for piety.

3. In order to be good Religious we must make use of the means that are at our disposal; for mere desires, mere wishes will not suffice. You should accustom yourselves to say the prescribed prayers and to make the meditation conscientiously. See to it carefully that you make the meditation as well as you possibly can. If it should be necessary to omit it once that does not matter so much; but if it happens on an average or at least quite frequently, then be convinced that you are in great danger and are suffering a serious loss.

If you hold fast to the practice of always performing your prayers and spiritual exercises well, especially your meditation, then you will not need so many conferences and exhortations. Then the Holy Spirit will speak to you. You will be ennobled and will be good Religious. One will be able to see it in you; mental prayer will also manifest itself exteriorly.

How I do wish that you would all devote a full hour to mental prayer each day! If you want to do battle with the world and to

emerge victorious you need much mental prayer. Unless you pray much it can be foretold with certainty that you will sink down defeated. Therefore, hold fast to prayer and meditation. Seek your help in that respect.

4. In order that you may pray and meditate well, descend into the depths of your nothingness and become humble. Unless we fight against inordinate self-esteem, against pride, the beginning of all sin, we shall not be able to pray and meditate well.

5. Be zealous in the acquisition of virtue. You cannot do without virtue. Even though you would soar aloft to the highest heavens and work wonders, even though you were in the best state of life, without virtue you would nevertheless be in danger. All may seem to be going well, when suddenly things go to pieces. During the fifteen years of the existence of the Society I have experienced much; I could relate many things. All I can say is that if you are not sincere, no matter how much you repress and stifle conscience in order to get through, the time will come when there will be a break, to your greatest detriment.

Therefore, virtues and once again virtues! If you wish to be happy and to persevere faithfully unto the end and if you wish the whole Society to make progress, then acquire the virtues.

6. Our chief study should be *meditari in vita Domini nostri Jesu Christi Salvatoris mundi*, to meditate on the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

7. If you wish to be happy and zealous members of the Society, then be exact and punctual in community life, in the common exercises. Be regular in making your meditation, in paying your visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Let no one be missing at the exercises that are held in common! Never be absent from table, unless you must. Make no exception, unless you must.

I have striking proofs of the fact that the blessing of God rested in quite an exceptional way on confreres whose state of

health was such that I had my doubts about them but who nevertheless did not let themselves be deterred from striving after perfection.

Therefore, be all together and punctual at table, all together and punctual at the examination of conscience, at the community devotions, in a word, make all the community exercises. I might say that you withdraw from the focus of the sun when you absent yourselves from these community exercises. And once you begin to absent yourselves from them you will always drift farther and farther away and will finally grow cold.

Take part in all the community exercises and do not exclude yourselves from them. Unless you so take part in them you may be sure that lukewarmness will be the result. In my opinion you will never find that one who is punctual, who is observant, who performs his spiritual exercises well, is at the same time a critic, a dissatisfied Religious.

The Divine Savior said to His Apostles: "Unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 18:3). Now, if the Divine Savior demands even of a true Christian that he become as a child, then that is all the more important for a Religious, who leaves all things and wishes to practice the Christian life in all its perfection. The Religious should, therefore, be

as simple as a child,
as open as a child,
as humble as a child,
as modest as a child,
as obedient as a child,
as faithful as a child.

In the novitiate the Religious should be introduced into this spirit. In the scholasticate this spirit should then be strengthened, so that it may then remain during one's whole life.

Among the characteristics of a child I mention especially that childlike relationship with the Superior which consists in rev-

erence, in fullest confidence, in complete love, in attentiveness, fidelity, etc.

And that is not to be said of my person as such but as being in the position which Divine Providence has assigned to me.

Therefore, preserve this childlike spirit. Foster the spirit of openness, of humility, of modesty, of obedience, of fidelity, of attachment, and of love. If you do this you will also enjoy the good results. In particular you will then comply with the orders of the Superiors with much greater facility than if you are not like children. And you will also be happy in your vocation. For when the relationship between father and child is undisturbed the children, too, are happy.

Remove especially that greatest of all obstacles, pride, by reason of which things become so hard for many a one. Contemplate the Divine Savior on the cross. He is the most humble. *Humiliavit semetipsum*. “He humbled Himself” (Phil. 2:8). Contemplate His Mother at the foot of the cross. Consider the beloved disciple St. John; see in what a childlike way he perseveres beneath the cross. And then ask the dear Savior and His Mother and St. John to preserve a childlike spirit within you.

8. Tomorrow and the day after tomorrow a very considerable number of our men will be ordained to the holy priesthood. So this evening I would like to give expression to some pertinent thoughts. First of all I recommend that you pray most earnestly. *Adjutorium nostrum venit ex alto*. Our help comes from above. Therefore, pray with the utmost fervor, all of you, and not only those who are going to be ordained. Reflect upon the sublime dignity that now falls to the lot of your confreres. O how much depends upon this hour!

Furthermore, I recommend profound humility to you. *Humilibus dat gratiam*. “God accords his favor to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5). Step forward with great humility, thoroughly humiliated in spirit, deeply conscious of your own nothingness. *Es-tote humiles!* Be humble!

A third consideration is that you should have a most ardent desire for this dignity with which you receive so many graces.

9. Yet another point is that you regularly perform your spiritual exercises, particularly your meditation. Nor is it enough that you simply make a meditation. You should make the meditation in such a way that you strive after perfection even in the choice of the books.

Also in the matter of meditation it can happen that to a certain extent one may be on the lookout for material which will not so thoroughly affect him. He who earnestly strives after perfection, after holiness, will also find the right kind of matter for meditation. But he who tries to avoid holiness will not find it either.

Devotion to Mary

Our Venerable Father had the veneration of the Blessed Mother of God very much at heart. He was a true and faithful child of Mary. To the care of this most holy Virgin he entrusted the whole Society and all his troubles. His confidence in Mary was extraordinarily great. That is why devotion to Mary is so much a part of the spirit of the Society. It was a moving sight to see him on his knees before the picture of Our Lady of Sorrows in the side chapel of the Motherhouse. It was with mighty insistence that he then implored the help and protection of the dear Mother of God.

1. The month of Mary will soon begin and so I would like to remind you once more of our duty of showing special veneration to the Mother of God. Of course, here in the holy city of Rome, in the city of the Mother of God, we are in a place where every Christian venerates her in a particular manner. But for us, for Religious, that holds good in an especial way. For Religious, who strive after perfection, must be devoted to the Mother of God.

But in addition to this there is the special purpose of our Society, which makes it a duty for us to excel in promoting devotion to the Mother of God.

First of all we should assist very devoutly at the public devotions in the chapel.

And then also privately! Let no one neglect, according to his needs, to venerate the Mother of God during this month, particularly through the meditation.

Let every one find out what faults he still has; and let him then energetically lay the ax to the root, in order to remove the last vestige of any faults that still remain.

During this holy month, which is dedicated to the Mother of God, each one should strive after greatest purity of heart.

Again, each one should venerate the Mother of God by practicing the virtues; and just during this month should each one resolve to foster this or that virtue in particular, in honor of the Blessed Virgin.

Furthermore, both in public and private devotions each one ought to pray especially that the Mother of God may spread the mantle of her protection over every single member of the Society, that she may help us in the sanctification of all the members.

Yes; we should pray that she help and protect us, that the Society may grow strong within and without, that it may be successful in the attainment of its high purpose.

Finally, we should pray that the Society may spread more and more, unto the glory of the triune God and the exaltation of our heavenly Mother.

On this occasion I would also like to call to your attention that whenever possible you should write down the resolutions that you make for the rooting out of faults or the increase of virtue. It is a praiseworthy practice thus to put down in writing especially the *lumina* (insights), in order not to forget them and in order to be able to look into the matter later on and to see whether one has really carried out the resolutions. How many good resolutions are quickly made, only to be just as quickly forgotten again! So it is a real help if one makes note of them and reads them over from time to time.

So make your veneration of the Mother of God very good through public and private devotions, through the rooting out of faults, and through the practice of virtue; and see to it that you recommend to our heavenly Mediatrix especially the sanctification of the members and the strengthening of the Society within and without.

2. The month of May is drawing near. The whole Catholic world turns its thoughts to this beautiful month. The fervent Catholic makes haste to honor and glorify the dear Mother of God. Hence it is that also we behold in this month yet another

opportunity of demonstrating our devotion towards our heavenly Mother.

And first of all the whole community should during this month venerate the dear Mother of God through public devotions.

Then each single one should honor Mary by exceptionally fervent prayer and by practicing and making his own those virtues which will cause him to be more like our heavenly Mother. Each one stands so very much in need of the solicitous care of the Mother of God, who is so powerful, of the *Virgo potens*.

The community should honor the dear Mother of God in a special way because it greatly needs the help of its powerful Patroness, who crushes the head of the hellish dragon.

We need her assistance for the many and various new establishments. Only today I read that the infernal enemy rages furiously against great undertakings for the salvation of souls. We all know that he rears himself not only against the Society but against all new establishments and combats them with attacks from within and from without by causing discouragement, by sowing dissension and such like things. Hence there is need of much prayer to our powerful Mediatrix, the Virgin Mary.

Furthermore, you should pray to our heavenly Mother that she send us good and pious candidates who will be an asset to the Society and one day work mightily for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Another thing for which we ought especially to pray is our present need, which has already lasted so long, the pressing and urgent want in which the Motherhouse finds itself and which so greatly restricts its progress. Make use of this month of May in order to implore the powerful intercession of the most holy Virgin that if it be God's holy will this heavy burden (which surely has its good sides also) be taken away. It is a matter of tremendous consequence that the Motherhouse be finally freed from this need, that it have sufficient means to

make progress. Help along, all of you! Help along through sincere veneration of the Blessed Mother of God, through fervent prayer, through the imitation of her virtues, so that this burden, so crushing for the Superiors in particular, may at last be lifted. She is the Mother, you know; so go to her with confidence.

3. Tomorrow's feast of the Immaculate Conception (*Apparitio*, Feb. 11) should remind us again of our obligation as members of the Society to spread devotion to the Blessed Virgin by word and writing. And how are we to promote this apostolate of devotion to the Mother of God? Today I would like to have you take to heart the saying of the rosary. This is prescribed by our rule. See to it, therefore, that you say the rosary, also when you are no longer obliged to say it in common, when you are alone at your mission station. O that you would but say the rosary regularly! I consider this prayer so important that I might even say that in this respect one can know whether he is on the upward or on the downward path.

The recitation of the rosary is a thing of utmost importance. There can be no doubt about that. Give heed to the Vicar of Christ (Leo XIII), whose voice has repeatedly called upon all Catholics to recite the rosary. Can it be that we, who ought especially to promote devotion to the Mother of God, should not say it?

Make it a point to say the rosary for the Society; and make the good intention every day, the *intentio Societatis*. Say it, too, for your own personal needs and for the needs of those for whom you are bound to pray.

26

Devotion to St. Joseph

1. St. Joseph is one of our special patrons; it is, therefore, fitting that we honor him in a special way. We already have a monthly devotion to St. Joseph; and tomorrow the novena begins. Now, how are we to venerate him?

I answer that we are to venerate him through prayer. Let it be your endeavor to assist with great fervor at the devotions that we are now holding. And in your prayers during the novena you should keep in mind the particular objects that we have in view. These are first of all the necessities and needs of each single one. Each one will no doubt have quite enough to pray for.

But then you should also pray for the Society, that it may ever gain in interior strength and spread out exteriorly. Also pray that we may again be in a position to be able to receive more members. So beg of St. Joseph, since he is the patron of the poor and so gladly helps, that he also procure the necessary means for us.

Endeavor at this time to acquire those virtues that are so important for a Religious. From St. Joseph learn silence, obedience, humility, poverty, and especially love for Jesus and Mary.

In fact, I would like most earnestly to recommend to you the veneration of St. Joseph your whole life long. I urge you always to go to him both in your personal needs and in those of the Society. You will not regret it. Just recall what St. Teresa says, namely, that she never had recourse to St. Joseph without being heard.

Let us imitate her; and then also we shall experience the powerful protection of this heavenly patron.

Abstracting from the fact that we honor St. Joseph as a patron of the Society, there are three more main reasons why we should venerate him, namely,

his position regarding Christ, the Savior of
the world,

his position regarding Mary, the Mother
of God,

and his position regarding Holy Church.

St. Joseph is the foster father, the guardian of the Divine Savior. He is close to Him in intimate association. In this respect there is certainly a similarity between him and Religious, who are also very near to the Savior.

It is St. Joseph who teaches us how we are to associate with the Divine Savior. This he teaches us through his life, through his blissful converse with God, through his piety, and through his sanctity. Hence, as Religious and priests, we ought to imitate St. Joseph in our intimacy with Christ.

St. Joseph is the trusted companion, the spouse of the dear Mother of God. He is her protector; he enjoys her friendship; he is united with her in love. It is he who teaches us how we are to turn to the Mother of God. He procures for us that exquisite chastity which makes us her special favorites. In this respect he is our model.

He is the patron of Holy Church; he is the protector of the Church and of religious Orders. It is he who provides the means.

So you will now beg of him most fervently, especially during this novena, that he may assist us just in this. Ask him to send the Society thoroughly good members. Ask him to supply us with material means, the lack of which is so often an obstacle to our progress, so that we may always advance more and more.

In order that your prayers may be heard, strive especially during these days to become very much like him in his relations with Jesus and Mary. And pray with confidence.

27

Zeal for Souls

True sanctity is of its very nature apostolic. Sanctity is inflamed with the desire to see God, Infinite Holiness, loved ever more and more. One who is holy fully realizes the awful desolation wrought by sin in the soul. So a man of sanctity is impelled by the Spirit of God to pray, to labor, to strive earnestly that sin may be destroyed and other souls be led on to holiness of life. Here we have that burning zeal for souls which is a characteristic of all truly holy men. This apostolic zeal for souls burnt brightly in the heart of our Venerable Father. His prayers and ceaseless endeavors centered round the souls of men. Hence he founded a religious Congregation which of its very nature should be genuinely apostolic. Every Saviorian should be an apostle through and through.

1. It is certainly a great privilege to be entrusted by Divine Providence with the task of cooperating in the salvation of souls, of gaining souls for heaven, of performing even greater works than raising the dead to life, of calling back souls from the death of sin to life everlasting.

Would that we might ever understand better this task of ours, that we might penetrate deeply into the purpose of our Society, that we might direct all our efforts to the salvation of souls!

2. Consider what dire need prevails upon the earth, in what misery the human race languishes, how many millions of souls are on the road to hell! God has called us and taken us out of the world; He has given us so many graces! Who is there, then, who should not do his utmost to attain the purpose of the Society?

3. When we see the poorest, most abandoned, and lowest of men, we must behold in him an immortal soul for which Christ died and shed the last drop of His blood.

St. Catherine says that the beauty of a soul is so great that she would gladly die a hundred times to save it.

Our Venerable Father looked upon zeal for souls as a great grace of God, one for which we ought humbly to pray.

4. The month of May is beginning again; and this offers us an opportunity to pray for the wants of the Society and for all its members. I hope you will ask our heavenly Mother for one thing in particular, namely, that she obtain for each one of us from God true zeal for souls. We are called to work for the salvation of souls. And how are we to work if we have no zeal?

Consider the holy men throughout the centuries, how much they accomplished through zeal for souls, and follow their example. Think of what the Savior Himself did for the salvation of souls! Think of how the holy Apostles, notably St. Paul, labored for the salvation of souls!

Therefore, zeal for souls! We are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We should excel in holiness and learning. Strive to become holy through the conscientious observance of the rules and fidelity to the duties of your state of life. Never neglect learning! In particular do I recommend to you the sacred science of theology. Study your whole life long! So your zeal for souls should be modeled upon that of our saints; it should manifest itself first of all in holiness and ceaseless endeavor to acquire learning.

Therefore, again and again I recommend to you zeal for souls. Zeal for souls in obedience. Let yourselves be guided by obedience. If in your zeal for souls you do not let yourselves be guided by obedience, if in that respect you are led by your own will, then you run the risk of falling into the pit instead of accomplishing great things.

So during the coming month ask our heavenly Mother for these three graces: zeal for souls, holiness, and learning.

Our Venerable Father points out the sources from which generous souls must derive true zeal for souls.

5. It is very important for our holy vocation that we be filled with zeal for souls; for if we are not filled with it we shall not

accomplish our purpose. In order to acquire zeal for souls you have but to go up to heaven and down to hell and up to Mount Calvary.

In heaven you see the reward promised to those who are saved.

In hell you see the punishment of those who are not saved.

And on Mount Calvary you see the scales of divine justice. There you contemplate how the heavenly Father, in order to save souls, did not spare His only-begotten Son.

These three meditations ought to enkindle our zeal for souls.

Let us add a fourth point to the above, namely, the misery of the world. If we consider the misery of the world, how thousands and millions are being lost, then indeed must we needs be inflamed with zeal for souls. It hurts so much when nowadays one must see how little trust in the Lord there is in the world, how mankind has forgotten the things of heaven and is immersed in the things of earth.

Our Venerable Father's heart was aflame with zeal for souls. That is why he could speak with such glowing enthusiasm about the happiness of one whose heart is filled with this zeal.

6. Oh, what a reward will await you if you follow this admonition! What happiness here below! What peace of soul! What joy! Oh, live up to these exhortations and you will see what bliss it is to be truly filled with zeal for souls!

Zeal for souls may not be blind, inconsiderate, hasty. For which reason our Venerable Father admonishes us that our zeal for souls be always accompanied by the cardinal virtue of holy prudence.

7. Zeal for souls must, of course, be guided by prudence. Zeal without prudence can only do harm. But we must be guided by true prudence and not by the prudence of the world!

Since prudence is a virtue related to humility, it also forbids one to act and work according to his own ideas. It is simply a fact that Providence has arranged things so that no one knows

everything. And he who always does things according to his own notions will more or less make mistakes, even great mistakes.

It is, therefore, important that one proceed, not with anxiety but with conscientiousness, and that one seek advice, especially from the Superiors.

In a Chapter held on January 27, 1899, our Venerable Father again spoke of zeal for souls and pointed out ways of increasing it.

8. During this month many reports are coming in regarding the work, the apostolic labors of our confreres. Some of them show even a marvelous activity. That should fill us with consolation. Thanks be to God!

Of course, all of you wish one day to labor zealously for the salvation of immortal souls and to be actively engaged in this great work. The realization of these desires depends upon various circumstances. One of the main conditions for a blessed and fruitful apostolate is zeal for souls. If you wish your activity to bear fruit you must have great zeal for souls.

How can I stimulate my zeal for souls? First of all there must be lively faith. Then purity of heart. Remember this well: zeal for souls—purity of heart! Otherwise zeal may indeed be present but also great danger.

A third requisite for enkindling one's zeal for souls is meditation and particularly the consideration of the value of an immortal soul. As you know, I have already repeatedly told you of the saying of St. Catherine of Siena to the effect that if one could see the beauty of a soul one would be willing to die a thousand times in order to save it.

A further incentive is offered us by meditation on the passion of Christ. Consider what the God-Man has suffered for souls.

The example of the saints ought to be yet another incentive. During these days consider especially the activity of St. John

Chrysostom (January 27) and that of St. Francis of Sales (January 29).

A further incentive ought to be the reward that you will one day receive in heaven. Consider well what a glorious reward, what a crown is laid up in heaven for the priest who is zealous for souls! Remember that the more souls you save the greater will be your reward! Therefore, take this well to heart in meditation and enter deeply into it: lively faith—purity of heart!

In conclusion let me mention one more help to zeal for souls. It is prayer. Pray much! Yes; pray with lively faith and with purity of heart! Pray much!

And then there is the worthy reception of Holy Communion. We leave this sacred banquet with the strength of lions, breathing forth fire against the demons. Meditate on this and consider how terrible to hell and to the devils is the priest who is filled with zeal for souls. Oh, how you ought to make every effort to become apostolic laborers who are truly filled with zeal for souls! Therefore, zeal for souls! Endeavor to acquire it by all ways and means!

On February 3, 1899, our Venerable Father spoke to us once more on Zeal for souls. He discoursed on his favorite theme, fervent prayer. Our Venerable Father was a master in prayer. And in particular it was apostolic prayer that occupied him almost the whole day long. One time he cried out to a deacon who was entering his room: "O Frater, pray, pray! So many souls are being lost and we can save so many through prayers!"

9. The last time we spoke of how one can acquire zeal for souls. To what has already been said I today add that zeal for souls can also be acquired and increased by the exercise of the same. So if you wish to strengthen and increase your zeal for souls, put it into practice already now, as far as that is possible. True, for most of you it is not yet possible to go into action on the field of battle, to engage the enemy of salvation in the open and snatch souls from his grasp. Still, all of you already have more or less opportunity to practice zeal for souls.

Before all else I mention prayer. Through prayer you can already now develop great zeal for souls, not only within the cloister but even unto the uttermost ends of the earth.

First of all you should practice zeal for souls by praying much for the Society. Pray most fervently that the Society may attain the goal which it has set for itself. Consider how much the Society can do for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Pray for all the members but especially for those who are already actively engaged in the care of souls and who are more or less exposed to grave dangers in their work. Pray in particular for those who are in the Mission, that they may be preserved from dangers and that the blessing of heaven may rest upon their labors.

Pray for sinners, for the conversion of mankind! Oh, how much you can already do here! Pray, therefore, and now use this weapon of prayer in your zeal for souls. By doing so you will at the same time enkindle and exercise your zeal for souls.

Pray for those souls for whom you will one day have to labor and suffer and strive.

But pray with great confidence and profound humility. Oh, I beg of you to use this means of prayer. "The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds" (Sirach 35:17). O that you would finally realize what a powerful means the good God has given us in prayer!

Living and Laboring in the Spirit of the Society

In the depths of his soul our Venerable Father was convinced that he was called by God to found the Society and to instill into it a spirit of its own. In this spirit the Society was for all time to live and to labor, if it would have a happy and prosperous existence. So the Venerable Father often liked to speak to his spiritual sons on the spirit of the Society. His words were then not merely an instruction but a veritable outpouring of his soul. May his words ever be for us as guiding stars, shining brightly and pointing out the way!

1. Our dear Lord has called you and led you into the Society. Called by God, you followed this invitation, this summons, in order to dedicate your whole life to God and to the salvation of souls in the spirit of our Society and for the attainment of its purposes. Through the holy vows you have consecrated yourselves to God and have taken upon yourselves the obligation of living and laboring in this spirit and for this end. So now there can be no doubt that as a result of all this there arises for you the most sacred duty of doing all in your power to live and labor in the spirit of the rule and for the end of the Society.

2. You are called, the Society is chosen and called, to draw countless souls from out of the mire of sin, to lead many unbelievers to the true light of faith. You should form a great, a holy phalanx, a body of God's chosen soldiers in close array who joyfully give their lives and their all for His glory and for the gaining of souls for Christ.

But if it is already clear even to a child, how much more clear should it be to us, that every member must be submissive to the organism as a whole. In a word, you will attain your objective and will live up to your vocation if you do the work that is assigned to you in accordance with the rules and the regulations of the Superiors, through whom you are guided by Divine Providence.

3. You will live up to your vocation only in the measure in which you do the will of your Superiors; you will not live up to it if you do your own will.

How many Religious have become unhappy because they followed their own will and obliged the Superiors to accede to their wishes.

4. In God's sight no position is small and lowly. Let each one fill his place well and he will be more pleasing to God than if he follows his own inclinations, which are after all more sensuous than spiritual.

5. Let each one make himself useful! He who cannot do much can at least do a little. But each one can do something. If one has a good will he can accomplish much.

6. Make it a point often to reflect that you are called to a Society whose purpose it is to follow the example of Christ and the Apostles and as far as possible to forsake all things. St. John Chrysostom says that the Apostles did not convert the world by their miracles but by despising earthly wealth and glory.

Therefore, even if you must use the things of earth, see to it that you do not cling to them, that you have no attachment whatsoever for them.

7. Live according to the spirit and the rules of the Society and you will accomplish great things. Also consider frequently that your greatness, your fame, the fame of the Society, lies in the faithful imitation of Christ and the Apostles.

8. Why should we not with joyful hearts do more than duty demands? Let each one consider well how much time he has, first to do his duty and then to do still more.

I most earnestly desire that you do even more than your duty. With St. Vincent de Paul I would say: "Do all the good that is compatible with your state of life."

One time before the feast of the Immaculate Conception our Venerable Father suggested some glorious mottoes for our Society, mottoes which reflect so well his noble spirit.

9. As a preparation for the beautiful feast of the Immaculate Conception and the anniversary celebration of the founding of our Society I would again like to admonish you ever to grow in zeal for the Society, that it may grow strong within and without, especially through the self-sanctification of the individual members. "Set your hearts on his kingdom" (Luke 12:31). Take these three points as your goal:

1. The greatest possible glory of God.
2. The greatest possible self-sanctification.
3. The saving of the greatest possible number of souls by the grace of God.

Often make this good intention. In a way I would like to set up those three points as sort of a motto for our Society.

In his discourses our Venerable Father took into consideration not only the needs of the moment. He also looked into the future and laid down principles for all times.

10. It is a matter of immediate concern and utmost importance in every organization that we work in harmony with the Superiors and with the Founder. If you depart from the spirit of the Founder, then each one will mold himself according to his own opinion and we shall have a Babylon. Believe me when I say that if you cease to hold fast to the spirit of the Founder you will go astray. So I would like to remind you that you take all responsibility upon yourselves if you depart from the spirit of the Founder.

Also in religious Congregations and even in the various Houses you will find men who have their own personal views on certain matters. Herein lies a manifold danger, unless we hold fast to one and the same spirit. So the first thing is to stick together firmly in the spirit of the Founder. The second thing, a second means of preserving one and the same spirit of our Society, is that we keep our center, the principal seat, the ro-

bur Societatis, the heart of the Society, in Rome. As soon as we give this up the Society is already in part destroyed. It has been founded for the whole world. No sooner would we remove it from Rome than it would be colored, would take on a national character! It would then rise or fall with the rise or fall of that nation!

The nations enter as upon a stage; they make their appearance and then vanish. And there is always danger that public opinion find its way even into the Orders.

A very important reason why we have our center in Rome is unity, unified discipline, unified doctrine. Here that doctrine is taught under the very eyes of the Holy Father.

I do not want to say that sound doctrine is not also imparted outside of Rome. *Sed generatim loquendo: Roma manet centrum et fons!* But, generally speaking, Rome remains the center and the source!

Of course, certain things will be harmful to us, for instance, the climate, etc. But if we wish to pay attention to this we might also ask: Why has Divine Providence, an all-wise, all-knowing Providence chosen just Rome as the central point of the Church? Why has it not chosen some health resort?

We see that the great Pope Leo XIII, in spite of the unhealthy location, draws the Colleges to Rome from all countries. You can understand how that calls for great sacrifices of health. But Leo XIII is looking into the future. He stands in the watchtower and sees things in quite a different way than we, who stand and look from below.

Therefore, Rome shall ever be our center, the *robur Societatis!* And so our endeavors must tend to this, that discipline be observed with the greatest possible perfection. It is very important that we be of one mind in this. And as the blood flows from the heart into the veins, so should the members from Rome go out into the world, into the different Houses, and there keep up and hold fast to the spirit of the Society.

11. It is our task as far as possible to live in the spirit of Jesus Christ and to follow the holy Apostles. However, I would like to call your attention to a point that is of the utmost importance for your welfare and for the welfare of the Church and of the Society but which can easily be underestimated. What I mean is that each one should gladly accept the work, the office, the activity which Providence assigns to him through the Superiors, be it by a command or by a wish.

And how many works and labors and activities for the honor of God and the salvation of souls one single man can accomplish in his lifetime, even if he does not live a long life, provided that he does not strive after important labors and offices but accepts and carries out any work that may come to him through Providence!

Keep that well in mind; it is an important point! Also St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, followed his trade.

This is at the same time an easy means of keeping ourselves humble. I could also adduce some examples for you but charity forbids me to do so. But be convinced of this, that if a Religious wants to climb too high, if he no longer performs the humble *evangelizare pauperibus* (to preach the Gospel to the poor) and other works in the spirit of the Institute, then sooner or later the whole organization will cease to function.

Therefore, let each one gladly take those tasks that are assigned to him. Let him lend a hand wherever he can do good.

12. You need only be thoroughly imbued with true humility, true zeal for souls, with love for the Society, then you will find work enough, more than you can handle. For each one of us the hour of his death has been determined. The duration of his life is fixed and during this time he can work and labor, but not beyond it. Time is a talent with which he can work. Who knows how long a time he still has in which to work! It is certain that his time is limited. Perhaps it will still be many years, perhaps only a few, perhaps only months, perhaps only days,

perhaps only hours! Why should we not use every single moment in order to do good!

Let us use time well; and let us not pick out our own work. That is also a powerful means of preserving brotherly love and a good relationship with the Superiors. Do not underestimate this; it is an important matter!

Contrariwise, if you are particular in your choice of work you will always have difficulties, no matter where you may be. Therefore, it is to be desired that all of you be ready for any work, for any occupation!

13. There are some persons who study for years and years but are like a library that is closed up; and thus they go into eternity, without having done any good. Shall we be able to render an account of this? Do we really want to acquire learning which we can never use, while there is so much that we ought to do?

It is well to call to your attention that you should acquire learning of such a kind that you may one day be able to work in the spirit of the Society and for the attainment of its purposes. No one of you should bury his talent.

Our Venerable Father was very modest in his association with others. Though it was his wish that the Society should accomplish very much for God, nevertheless it was also his desire that it always be unassuming in its activities.

14. Would that the Society might never go up too high! It would then shrivel up, perhaps fare even worse! This often comes to my mind when I see some of those little creatures that are always around, the sparrows, for instance. They manage to get along everywhere; they increase and multiply and are cheerful and happy. Contrariwise, just consider some other creatures, the peacock, for instance. They are quite beautiful indeed. They are admired and looked upon with wonder but that is the end of it.

Be as active as the ants and the bees and the sparrows. Imitate these more than those creatures that put on more of an outward show, in which one takes pleasure, but which are of little use.

15. Today I would like to call your attention to one point, namely, that you submit your will as regards your occupation, your activity in your present and in your future apostolic labors. This is a matter of great consequence and one that can be easily overlooked. It is therefore the duty of your spiritual Father to remind you of the dangers of not doing so and of the advantages of doing so.

First of all you should submit yourselves as regards your sphere of action, your field of activity, so that you willingly and zealously accept and do what is assigned to you by the Superiors, be the work agreeable or disagreeable.

It is above all necessary to mention here that no one should thrust himself into any certain activity or into an office by either directly or indirectly bringing pressure to bear upon the Superiors, even though it is allowed to each one and is his duty with due reverence to explain his reasons to the Superior when a difficulty arises. May it never happen that anyone thrust himself forward. The reasons are clear.

In the first place the Superior is after all the Superior. Of course, he is human and remains human. But he takes the place of God and can justly rely upon the help of the Lord in his administration.

Furthermore, at least generally speaking, he has a better knowledge of the individual, both as regards his good and bad qualities.

Again, he is in a position to judge better what is for the greatest glory of God, for the welfare of the individual, and for the good of the Society.

Furthermore, the Superior may sometimes find himself in such circumstances that he really has to assign one to a position that will lead him to quite a different position. If the person con-

cerned refuses the one assignment he will not arrive at the other.

Again, it is of importance that one subordinate himself to the judgment of the Superior because one may then expect the blessing of God. And if one gets into danger he can pray quite differently to God when he can say: I did not come here of my own accord but Your representative sent me here.

But how wholly different it must be when one has to say to himself: I forced the Superiors to send me to this place. Now I sit here forsaken by God and by men.

I would like to put into words, a picture! So often I have it before my eyes. Consider the flies in the night. They fly around and around the light until they have scorched their wings! And how often a Religious can get into similar circumstances. He will not let himself be persuaded. The Superiors have to give in, until the person in question has at least burnt his wings. I beg of you, therefore, that you always be submissive as regards your activity and occupation, so that you may thus look forward to God's blessing and may be able to say: God has sent me to this place.

Already now it is important for you that each one submit himself to the Superior in even the lowest position and gladly accept the occupation that is assigned to him. If you do not accustom yourselves to that now, how will you be able to do it later on? If you do not accustom yourselves to that now, then you may indeed justly fear that sooner or later you will depart from the right way. If now you can overcome yourselves, then there is hope! But do not make the mistake of thinking that later on it will be as easy as now.

Therefore, follow the injunctions of the Superiors everywhere. Abandon yourselves to Providence and do your duty! I would like to admonish you still that, whatever you do, you do not say: God wants it so. Let the Superiors examine the matter and submit yourselves willingly to their judgment.

Even if one of you should occupy a position in which he apparently does not accomplish much, let him remember that he will do great things through harmonious cooperation with the whole.

Therefore, see eye to eye with your Superiors in your activity as also in your wishes. Train yourselves now! *Ecce paratus sum ad omnia. Non mea, sed tua fiat voluntas.* Behold, I am ready for anything. Not my will but yours be done!

And what a consolation at the end of your life if you can say: I have fought the good fight on the battlefield in which Providence placed me. If you go forth to battle and to face danger without the will of your Superiors, then remember well that you will in all probability not be one of those *per quos salus facta est in Israel*, “by whom the deliverance of Israel was entrusted” (1 Mach. 5:62).

16. Here is one thing that I say over and over again: In order to promote the interests of the Society it is a matter of the greatest importance that each one cooperate in his own place through exact observance. Whether a man is here or whether he is stationed somewhere else, the important thing is that it can, always be said of him: *Totus. est!* He is there! Therefore, first of all be a good Religious! Then the Society will march forward in firm and holy battle array.

Ama Societatem, et fac quod vis! Love the Society and do what you wish! Love is inventive. It will show you ways and means, more than if I give you a conference. Love the Society! Study its purpose! I repeat that again and again.

Be all aglow and burning with love for the Society and you will see how things go! And with holy zeal you will take the Society’s part in all circumstances and fight for its honor and welfare as for a jewel, as for the apple of your eye!

17. The Savior says: “Anyone who is not with me is against me” (Matt. 12:30). It is something like that, too, in the Society.

We do not want anything halfhearted. There is not much accomplished with this half-heartedness, this indecision.

18. May your zeal, your enthusiasm for the Society, to which you are dedicated and in which you are incorporated, grow and mount from day to day! That this may come to pass reflect especially upon these two points.

In the first place consider the sublimity, the holiness of the purpose of the Society. Take that as matter for meditation, in order to enter deeply into the beauty, the nobility, the holiness, the objective of our Society.

In the second place consider the great good for body and soul that comes to you through the Society. If you meditate well on these two points it cannot but be that you will manifest love and zeal for the Society.

Keep in mind the great and sublime advantages that spring from this love, this zeal. Never forget how much good will be accomplished, how greatly God's glory will be promoted, how many souls will be saved if you are real Salvatorians, if you are wholehearted members of the Society!

Let us consider how our enemies do everything for the attainment of their evil ends. Think of the enemies of the Faith. What sacrifices! What exertions! They go into all countries, yes, even to places where Catholic missionaries have not yet set foot.

Then consider other people, how they rush about and chase around in search of happiness and honor. Look at the soldiers and see what sacrifices they all must make!

Ought not that to urge us on to labor for an end as sublime and holy as is that of the Society? Indeed, is not that end of such value that one should offer his whole life for it? Therefore, let everyone make every effort wholly and entirely to live up to the duties assigned to him, always to labor for the progress and spread of the Society.

19. It is important that we be one, that we all be united by a strong bond as members of one and the same Society, as children of one and the same mother. This bond should be love for the Society. This bond should bind you all together.

20. As much as possible, show your love for the Society as for your mother; and let it be your endeavor never to tolerate anything, either through yourselves or through others, that could in any way be harmful to the Society or stain its fair name.

21. How it will please you when you are transferred to some other House and see that its members are animated with love for the Society. How truly you will at once feel at home there, if you all prove yourselves to be the children of the same mother.

22. In every organism there are various functions, many different organs, all of which work together for the attainment of one and the same end. Hence it is of importance that you keep this rule (No. 70) with the greatest possible exactness, since the welfare and progress of the whole Society depends upon its observance.

You should be ready to take upon yourselves any office, any occupation, any task, any undertaking that may be entrusted to you by the Superiors, convinced that such is the will of God, that God in His providence guides the Superiors.

The Superiors have a better view of the whole. They know what is necessary. They will take into consideration the individuals, the nationalities, etc. But when higher duties demand it, then you must sacrifice your own inclinations. In such a case neither the Superiors nor the subjects may follow their own inclinations but must see what is the will of God and what the welfare of the whole calls for.

Bear in mind that even if things go unusually well all one's wishes cannot be complied with.

Therefore, accept any work, be it an office that carries with it honor or a position that is apparently lowly.

If something does not function properly in an organism or in a machine, then the whole suffers. Let no one think that he is doing less if he has an insignificant occupation as a priest. It is just through united effort, inasmuch as each one fills well the position entrusted to him, that we are going to accomplish great things. No one who has an important office can glory in it as though it were due to his own merits.

You know how important the task of the Society is, what a sublime purpose we have, namely, to save souls for the glory of God! What could be more important, what more urgent than to save souls! Ought we not, then, to feel ourselves impelled to accept any occupation that has this purpose in view?

Let us compare the activity of the Society with that which prevails on a sinking ship. How everyone works there! Everyone puts a hand to the work; he toils and helps along as much as lies in his power; and he does not stop to figure out whether the assistance he is rendering is honorable or quite ordinary. But now, there is no work nobler than that which aims at the attainment of the goal which the Society has set for itself.

Or suppose a fire breaks out. All have the same end in view. Everyone is glad if he can be of any assistance, if he can bring a bucket of water. And we who strive for such an exalted goal,—how we ought to work!

If we all work together for the Society it will make rapid progress. And there will be unity among the various members. That will keep us all firmly bound together. Then you yourselves will enjoy peace. You will be the joy of the Superiors and will lighten their burdens.

The conclusion can easily be made as regards the opposite of this. I cannot enter into it in detail. It is too bitter. Each one can himself realize it. If a man wants to build a house and no stone will remain in its place, that house will not materialize.

23. I see a structure which the Almighty in His goodness and mercy has decided to erect. A structure to rejoice heaven, to join the angels, to rejoice Holy Church, a structure for the salvation of immortal souls. Many, very many labor unceasingly at this structure. It is to be a firm citadel from which men who are near shipwreck are to be saved. Many labor at this stronghold, many ceaselessly active craftsmen, sent by God.

Many labor unceasingly and with great sacrifices; and to a certain extent they themselves constitute the ornamentation of this holy citadel. They labor solely to build up, in order that the citadel may be beautiful and strong and serve its purpose.

There is another group that also labors; but on one side they build up and on the other side they tear down again. They work according to their own ideas. And when the architect comes it must be torn down again. This is not always due to malice; sometimes it is more thoughtlessness than anything else. But no one can doubt that these people are not true co-laborers.

Here we have this or that Religious who works according to his own ideas and seems to erect monumental works; and then all must be torn down again because it does not fit to the building.

In like manner those who do not observe religious discipline, who do not keep silence, will be more or less engaged in tearing down. They tear down and do not build up. What shall I say? After the sign is given by the bell this and that will still be done and one thinks: I shall still get there in time. Is that building up or is it tearing down?

There is no third way! It is a case of either building up or tearing down! I consider it my duty to speak seriously; for I must needs fear that if we do not live exactly according to the holy rule, God will withdraw His graces from us. Woe to us if we do not live up to our vocation!

It was of deep concern to our Venerable Father that our life and labors in the Society be based on solid and sensible principles.

24. Today I would like to have you take to heart three points in particular, which serve to promote the purpose of the Society:

1. *Magna humilitas*, great humility.
2. *Oratio continua*, ceaseless prayer.
3. *Magna activitas*, great activity.

The first point, as you know, is the most important. Without humility we can do nothing. If we have not humility but are proud instead, then the good God will resist our labors. “For God opposes the proud” (1 Peter 5:5). So if we really wish to accomplish great things for our own sanctification and for the salvation of the neighbor, let us lay the deep foundation of humility. And the higher we wish to build up the structure the deeper must we dig the foundation. Unless we have humility our work is useless. Works that are without a foundation are in danger of collapsing. Therefore, in the first place humility, *magna humilitas!* By its means we draw down upon ourselves the grace of God. As the valleys gather up the rain, so do the humble gather up grace. No water remains standing upon the hills. *Magna, magna nimis humilitas!* Great, exceedingly great humility!

The second point is unceasing prayer, zealous, fervent prayer. *Oratio humilientis se nubes penetrabit.* “The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds” (Sirach. 35:17). It does not rest until it reaches the throne of God.

Let us take this powerful means into account and let us never abandon it! Let us make use of it as often as we can, by day and by night, at our work, and wherever we may be. Pray!

Pray again and again! *Sine intermissione orate!* “Pray continuously and never lose heart” (Luke 18:1). Only in eternity shall we realize what we could have accomplished through prayer.

And even when we are in heaven we shall still find our pleasure in prayer.

The third point to remember, if we would accomplish much, is *magna activitas*, great activity, active zeal. You know that it is from the good God that our powers come, also our natural powers, that we should make use of them, and that our dear Lord wishes that we apply the natural means that come from Him. Therefore, be very zealous in every way that is consonant with our state of life and our vocational duties. Be active for your own salvation and for the salvation of the neighbor! Let it be of deep concern to each one of you in his respective position to cooperate in advancing the cause of the Society.

By means of great humility we protect ourselves and our Society against the assaults of the devil. If we are men of prayer we shall accomplish many and great things.

The Universality of the Society

Our Venerable Father was very desirous of instilling into the hearts of his spiritual sons a spirit of universality. His Society was to be for all peoples and nations. It was to work for the interests of Holy Church by all the ways and means that the charity of Christ might inspire. Wherever the Church stands in need of laborers and of assistance, there his spiritual sons are mightily to lend a helping hand. This idea of universality our Venerable Father has left us as his last testament.

1. It is my most ardent wish that you all be wholly imbued with the spirit of the Society. So much depends upon this, perhaps even the salvation of thousands and millions. So today I would like to have you take to heart a point which must always be looked upon as an essential part of our Society. I refer to universality, to the *omnibus et ubique* (to all and everywhere). Regarding this point I would like to say a few words at this time.

Now, our Society possesses universality. As you know, there are Orders and Institutes whose purpose is limited, restricted to one country, to one nation. But there are other religious Orders in the Church whose scope is universal.

Well, our task, the task of our Society, the spirit of our Society is the *omnibus et ubique*. It is therefore important that you, every single one of you, be imbued with this spirit. *Praedicate Evangelium omni creaturae*. “Go out to the whole world; proclaim the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15).

You have this expressed daily in the *Intentio Societatis*, in which the purpose, the task, the universality of the Society is mentioned. Hold fast to that. Always keep this universality well in mind.

So the Society is not destined for Italy or Germany but for all countries. And each one in his own place has the task, the duty

of cooperating in this spirit for the spread of the Society. With us no nation is excluded. And it is also the spirit of the Society that men of all nations be accepted as members.

This is a very important point. And if you depart from it you do not live up to the spirit of the Society.

As the Society is not restricted in regard to place, so neither is it restricted to certain classes of people. We are to labor among the educated and the uneducated, among civilized and uncivilized peoples. No nation, no people, no class is excluded. This is of such special importance that you are to take it well to heart. From this it follows that you are to be absolutely on your guard against always striving to concentrate there where the best results can be obtained.

We must labor wherever there are souls. And this I would like to leave behind as my testament to you. Do not depart from it!

This is to be particularly taken to heart by those who are engaged in the direction, in the government of the Society. Remember well that if you depart from this spirit you will be disregarding the essential nature of the Society.

The opposite of this spirit of the Society is restriction, partiality, nationality, or whatever one may so wish to call it. It is to give preference to this or that nation or to look down with disdain upon certain peoples.

Therefore, among us, as members of the Society, there is to be no nation! All are to be brethren!

Strive to learn to know the good qualities of every people, to study the various peoples, to acquire an interest in them. If you do this you will not infrequently discover much that is good in a people against whom you were formerly prejudiced. And when you get to the Himalaya or to South America, when you find yourselves among people in the mountains, everywhere say to yourselves: These are my brethren! These must I save!

Therefore, strive to preserve this spirit of universality and as far as possible to foster it in a well regulated manner. And pray that God may give you the strength to do so.

And if tomorrow the call comes to you to betake yourselves to strange peoples, then go joyfully! And do not mind whether you have much or little success. *Omnibus!* (To all!) It may easily happen that you indeed will labor for years without bringing forth fruit, yet another will reap the harvest that you have sown!

I recall the words which the Venerable Libermann addressed to the first missionaries that he sent to Africa: "You must save Africa through the sacrifices that you make." Today we see that the Congregation of the Holy Spirit has accomplished exceedingly much. And so I say to you: "The sacrifices that you make are to help along in the salvation of souls both at home and abroad."

In conclusion I wish once more to impress upon your minds that you must never depart from this spirit of universality. This is my most earnest desire, one that I would like to see firmly grounded before my death, lest later on the *horror difficultatum*, the fear of difficulties, may perhaps result in the greatest harm to the Church. Therefore, *omnibus!*

Whatever country may fall to your lot, let each one bear well in mind that it is my testament that the Society is destined for all peoples, that it is called to accept as members men from all nations, if they can comply with the necessary conditions.

Above all else it is of course important that you do not foster such a thing as repugnance for one nation and preference for another; on the contrary, you are to consider that you are all brethren. Everyone in the Society, be he Italian or French or German or Chinese, everyone is a confrere and belongs to the Society. And each one is to esteem him highly as his brother.

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The Apostolate

Our Venerable Father's whole undertaking sprang from his great, apostolic heart. And that is why his first idea was to call the Society the Apostolic Teaching Society. His heart was aglow with apostolic zeal. And from the very beginning of his priestly life he felt urged to gather a large number of fellow laborers around him in order to more extensively carry out his apostolic work.

1. Concerning the apostolate I would like to mention that it is twofold, namely, the apostolate in the homeland and the apostolate in the foreign missions. We give preference neither to the work in the homeland nor to the foreign missions.

2. One of the leading characteristics of an apostle is the spirit of sacrifice. This spirit is very necessary for an apostle. To be an apostle one must have the spirit of sacrifice. When His Apostles desired distinctions the Divine Savior said to them: "Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink" (Matt. 20:22)? And the Church says: *Calicem Domini biberunt*. "They drank the chalice of the Lord." So an apostle must have the spirit of sacrifice. Also experience shows us that. Go through the long line of apostolic men. Where is there an apostolic worker who did not have to suffer greatly?

When a man betakes himself to the task of saving souls, when he undertakes great things for the salvation of souls and for the glory of God, hell will rise up against him. It will direct its assaults against him as much as it can.

To this must be added human passions, which likewise proceed against apostolic men, to which an apostle must give battle, against which he must struggle.

Then come trials, inasmuch as God permits interior sufferings, lack of success in one's work. Indeed, it may even happen that one experiences what St. Paul speaks of in these words: "We want you to be quite certain, brothers, that we were under ex-

traordinary pressure, beyond our powers of endurance, so that we gave up all hope even of surviving” (2 Cor. 1:8). Hence the spirit of sacrifice is necessary. This we are taught by the Savior, by the Church, by experience, and by circumstances in which we find ourselves.

It is therefore important that you already now accustom yourselves to suffering, that you acquire the spirit of sacrifice, and that you also practice the same, as far as virtue and obedience permit. He who does not put himself in readiness for suffering and who has not the spirit of sacrifice, is in danger of breaking down when he arrives at the field of battle.

Practice up already now by meditating on the passion of Christ. From that source get your strength to suffer! Let each one, when called upon to undertake great apostolic labors, imagine that also to him it is said: “I myself will show him how much he must suffer for my name” (Acts 9:16). You know that an apostolic laborer must accomplish more through suffering than through work. That is why the Divine Savior said: “I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.” He did not say: “I will show him how much he must preach, how hard he must labor, how many he must convert.”

O that all of you might avoid the error of those who in the work of the apostolate wish to dwell on Tabor only and flee from the mount of Calvary! He who is unwilling to ascend Mount Calvary is no good for the apostolate. If we wish to accomplish great things, let us be ready to follow the Savior not only up to Mount Tabor but also up to Mount Calvary.

Prepare yourselves, therefore, and train yourselves by meditation on the passion of Christ. Get your power, your strength, and your zeal from there, so that you may be able to endure everything for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

3. Tomorrow we are going to celebrate the feast of St. John the Apostle (*ante Portam Latinam*); and the Gospel tells us how the Divine Savior asked His disciples: “Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink” (Matt. 20:22)? Here we see that

the Divine Savior asked them whether they could drink the chalice that He drank, whether they could bear the sufferings that He bore,—in a word, whether they were willing to endure suffering. From this we see that suffering is a chief factor in the life of an Apostle. But now, we have the duty of becoming like the Apostles. Hence also we must above all be manly lovers of the cross; we must be willing to drink the chalice.

I might say that it is your task to drink the chalice that our Lord drank. And how should we drink it? Where, why, how will it become our portion? We are following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. We seek to extend His kingdom. We seek to become like the Apostles. We seek to spread the teachings announced by the Apostles. We seek to combat the vices against which the Divine Savior and His Apostles took their stand. That is why the cross shall fall to our lot. How will this cross become our portion?

It will come to us first of all because of the activity of hell, of the adversary of salvation, of the wicked enemy, who hates everything that is of God; it will come from the adversary who hates and persecutes us when we endeavor to destroy his kingdom and to spread the kingdom of Jesus Christ. That is why he will persecute us in every way, as much as he can! Therefore, we must engage in battle with him!

Yet this chalice is still one of the easier ones or, better said, easier to bear. A more bitter chalice is the one that comes to us from wicked men. The second chalice consists in being persecuted by wicked men, who attack us because we go against their evil passions. They will rise up against us when we seek, to curb them in their unrestrained passions, when we seek to subject them to the law of Jesus Christ. And the wicked enemy will strengthen them, so that they will be even worse than those who come out of hell itself. We must drink the chalice that comes to us from the perversity of man.

A third chalice which an apostolic man must drink, and which is even much more bitter, is the one that is prepared for him by the good, when he is misunderstood by these good men, when

his plans and intentions are misinterpreted, and when as a result of this they think they do a good work if they persecute him. The Divine Savior Himself says: "Indeed the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is doing a holy service to God" (John 16:2). So you must also be willing to drink this chalice, the chalice that comes from the good, from those who mean it well but who do not understand. That is the third chalice but not yet the bitterest.

The last chalice, should our dear Lord ever proffer this one to you, comes to you when obstacles are laid in your path by those very persons who are appointed by God to support and protect you, even by ecclesiastical authority itself. This is the fourth and the bitterest chalice.

But the good God may let it come to pass that you must drink this chalice also. If you ask a St. Francis, a St. Vincent, which was for them the bitterest chalice, they will say: "That one, when we were forbidden by ecclesiastical authority to preach."

So if you wish to be apostles you must at all times be ready to drink the manifold chalice of suffering. And even if all these sufferings should come upon you, do not lose heart. Bear them with a view to Him for Whom you suffer. Do and dare as the Apostles did.

Our Venerable Father takes occasion from the feast of St. John the Baptist to stress two beautiful aspects of the apostolate.

4. Tomorrow's feast presents to our gaze a glorious model, that great exemplar of apostolic men, St. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ. He serves as a model for us and he does so inasmuch as he was, as the Savior says of him, *Lucerna ardens et lucens*, "John was a lamp lit and shining" (John 5:35). Let us first of all consider the burning of that light. He was aglow with the fire of the Holy Spirit. He had prepared himself and inflamed his zeal for his mission by long meditations, by long penances, by long solitude in the wilderness.

Would that we might imitate him, as far as possible, during the time of our preparation for the apostolate! Thus we could feed that flame, so that we might all be set on fire by the Holy Spirit.

Try to accomplish this more immediately through meditation, through solitude, through prayer, through study, through penance, through mortification. Oh, there are so many means! O that you would use them fervently in order to inflame your zeal! But also those who are already engaged in the apostolate, indeed, every single one of us, should burn with zeal.

Our Society is wholly contemplative and active. The contemplative element serves the purpose of inflaming you with the Holy Spirit. I might say that it is the pouring of the oil into the lamp in order that it may burn and give light. And if this oil is wanting the lamp will go out. Endeavor, therefore, to imitate St. John in order that you may all burn with the fire of the Holy Spirit.

The second point is the shining, the giving of light. *Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus*. "So let your light shine before men" (Matt. 5:16). Yes; you are called to give light, to show the light to the world. Each one of you should shine by good example and should do so already now in the Society. Oh, how much good a member of a religious Order can do by shining thus! By everywhere showing himself to be a truly observant Religious! How powerful example is! As you know, *Exempla trahunt*, or, as one also says, *Exempla movent*. Examples draw; they move the beholder. Good example is so important. Good example will accomplish more than many words.

But not only here in the community should you excel in religious observance and exemplary life but also when you are away, no matter where you may be. Oh, how powerfully you will work, how forcefully you will preach if you observe even to the last detail what the holy rule requires!

Conduct yourselves everywhere with modesty of deportment and maturity of mind. This means that one should not manifest

any childish traits but should in all things act manfully, as becomes a Religious, that in one's whole bearing there should be nothing unworthy of a religious man. If you wish to preach through good example, then you must also pay attention to these two points.

Therefore, conduct yourselves so, that of each single one of you it can be said that he is *a lucerna lucens*, a shining lamp, through his religious observance and his good example. Such a one lights the way to the true light, to the God-Man. He leads others to Him Whom St. John pointed out, to Jesus Christ.

Every one of you is called to the apostolate. Every one of you is called to make Jesus Christ known to men. "To know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3). So you are to shine by good example and thus lead men to the feet of the Divine Savior.

5. We should make the Savior of the world known to all peoples. *Manifestare Dominum nostrum omnibus et ubique*. "To make our Lord known to all and everywhere." We should join ourselves to Him. But for that it is necessary that we ourselves die to all things, that we tear ourselves free from the world, that we unite ourselves intimately with God.

If you wish to do justice to this task, if you wish to become apostles, if you wish to accomplish great things, then become men of prayer. You cannot fulfill your mission unless you have strength and grace from above.

The more you turn yourselves to the things of earth the less you will live up to your calling. And the more you turn yourselves to heaven the more will you accomplish.

6. Tomorrow's feast of Candlemas belongs to the dear Mother of God. The aged Simeon directs his words to her and to Christ and calls Christ "a light of revelation for the gentiles" (Luke 2:32). Here in particular the Blessed Virgin is a model for the priest. As she offered up the Savior in purity, so ought also the priest in purity to offer up the Holy Sacrifice.

But then the priests should likewise announce Christ everywhere as a light of revelation for the gentiles, so that Christ may really be the light of the nations.

But in order that you may be good, reliable announcers of Christ you ought very especially to prepare yourselves now by diligent study during the time of your training, so that you may acquire a thorough knowledge of Catholic teaching and may be able to proclaim it.

Not only should you yourselves acquire a thorough knowledge of these truths but during this time of preparation you should also learn how to communicate the same to others in word and in writing. Consequently you ought to train yourselves in the use of the written word, so that you may one day also announce Christ through the medium of the pen. Then, too, you ought now to train yourselves in the use of the spoken word, to get practice in public speaking, to train your voice, so that once you make your appearance as a preacher you may really edify, instruct, and move those who hear you announce the teachings of Christ.

But for a good preacher the principal thing is good example. A preacher does not amount to much if his life does not correspond to his words. But a mediocre preacher in whom one can see that he lives a holy life, will accomplish great things. Needless to say, we have examples of this. Think of the parish priest of Ars. He was not one of the most talented and yet how much he accomplished! And, as a matter of fact, when we read the sermons of some saints we do not find in them what we expect. But they produced results.

Not only the priests but also the Brothers can work through good example. They should not forget that it is just through their good example when associating with people in the world with whom they so often come in contact that they can preach powerfully, be it at the door or when they go out on business or wherever they mix with people. How much a Brother really

can accomplish in the missions or in small communities. There a good Brother can be a firm support.

Let also the Brothers take this especially to heart, therefore, and see to it that they let their light shine before men through exact religious observance, through modesty and a holy life.

O that you would exert all your powers in order to make Christ known by word and writing and example! On this day of recollection consider well that you must in every way make yourselves capable of really and truly being instruments of God in this noble task.

The Venerable Father had the apostolate of the Brothers deeply at heart. He counted much upon the prayers and labors of the Brothers in their hidden and devout life. Practical experience had convinced him that pious, diligent Brothers draw down upon the Society's whole activity an extraordinary blessing of God.

7. The Brothers must not forget that they, too, can cooperate in the apostolate and that they can do so through humble, patient labors for the glory of God, inasmuch as they thus assist those who are called to work in the care of souls.

Let them always perform their tasks with a good intention, offering them up to God in humility and patience, and let them never think that they are working less efficaciously. They should be convinced that through the good intention, through their hidden toil they are doing much and accomplishing great things, and that they are walking more securely and are exposed to fewer temptations than a preacher in the pulpit, who, after having preached to others, may himself stand in need of a sermon.

8. Let the Brothers always strive after holiness and diligently and with a good intention and in all humility perform the work that has been assigned to them. They should never think: The work does not amount to much. What is done with a good intention is great before God. Also the Brothers can accomplish much, some of them even more than priests.

From the very first beginnings of the Society our Venerable Father always stressed the apostolate of the press.

9. There is one way in particular in which you can work and that is through the press, both with the pen and in the Publishing Department, by aiding in the spread of printed matter. If great men, secular priests, held such offices and did not consider it beneath their dignity to do such work, can it be possible that we Religious, who ought to exercise ourselves in humility, should be ashamed of it?

10. Would that all might devote themselves to the press! Not a single one of you who are applying yourselves to study should be excluded. Everyone can do it. Only it should be done in subordination, in obedience, under strict supervision. And for this you could use many a spare moment, many a period of relaxation.

11. How many an hour you could usefully employ in working for the press! A single word, cleverly hit upon, can result in manifold blessings! Only in eternity will you see what good our periodicals have done.

You can reckon on about 400,000 readers of our periodicals (1898). So we can say that we have an audience of so many thousands. What a joy it is for a preacher when he has an audience of 1000 people, not to speak at all of 100,000!

But our Venerable Father looked upon the apostolate of good example as the chief factor, as the very essence of the apostolate. A man's life must be in accord with his words. That was what he insisted upon first of all.

12. Among all the means of laboring successfully in the apostolate the most important is good example. Example is the most universal means. All can and should give good example: the priests, the scholastics, the Brothers, the novices, the candidates, the Superiors,—all! So here we have a means that all can use. Good example is the most important means. When you associate with strangers or with your own confreres, they will above all observe what kind of example you give. Each

single one, and especially the priest, will be carefully observed. As regards the priest, they will watch how he conducts himself, how he offers Mass, how he says his office. As regards every Religious, he will be under observation as to how he keeps his rules, how he stands with the Superiors, whether he is modest, humble,—in a word, whether he is what he ought to be, namely, a Religious. This is especially important in new foundations. When a new establishment is started in a place everybody keeps an eye on it and observes whether it is really what it ought to be.

Show yourselves as true Religious and your work will be mighty indeed!

Good example is, therefore, the most important, the most universal means, because all can and should make use of it, from the first to the last. It is the most efficacious, because by its means more will be accomplished than by anything else, according to the saying: Words move, examples carry away.

Good example is the most necessary means for the exercise of the apostolate. It is also the simplest means, since each one in his own sphere, whether he be sick or well, can practice it everywhere and at all times, in association with others within and without the house.

So make it your endeavor everywhere to show yourselves as true Salvatorians. Look at Mary who, though she spoke so little, yet accomplished so much by her example, by her poverty, modesty, etc. Imitate her, so that also you may accomplish exceedingly much through good example.

13. In the first place we should work through good example. There are two ways in which one works in the Church and in the religious state: through good example and through scandal. The one builds up, the other tears down. You should work through good *example*,—*tales*, *quales*,—being such as you profess to be; you should labor as *Sodales Divini Salvatoris*, as members of a Society that strives to follow in the footsteps of the holy Apostles.

You must incorporate in yourselves the purpose of the rule, and that not only through exterior actions but also from the heart. You must be members of the Society from innermost conviction. If you are members only exteriorly, then you will be members only as long as you are seen by the Superiors. When you are no longer seen you will go over to the enemies' camp.

It does not mean a thing to me if you give no scandal exteriorly but you are not true members of the Society from innermost conviction. And you may be sure that if you are not that, then the building is rotten and will probably collapse. The proximate occasion is all that is necessary to make this come to pass.

If you have not learnt how to control yourselves, that is a scandal. Self-control is a thing that our Catholic people look for in a Religious. He who shows no self-control in eating and drinking gives scandal. And one fall is enough to destroy your authority.

Therefore, take this to heart and see to it that you always be shining lights and that through good example you labor diligently at being members of Holy Church and of the Society.

14. How many blessings one single good member can procure! A single one can convert a whole people. *Sufficit unus totum corrigere populum.*

15. In preparation for the feast of our heavenly Patroness *Regina Apostolorum* I would like to impress upon you the importance of good example. I want you to take this to heart and consider what good example is, how much good it does, how powerfully it works.

If you wish to preach, then, unless you show the way by good example, you will not accomplish much. How powerfully St. John the Baptist worked through his example! How powerfully the saints influence us when we read their lives and consider their example! How mightily we are urged to follow their example! Recall the effect produced by the example of St. Fran-

cis Borgia; it was so great that even those who did not understand his sermons, his language, were moved by his example.

Even the pagan Seneca said: *Plus creditur operibus, quam verbis*. "One believes deeds more than words."

Someone has said of a Religious that when he had ascended the pulpit the sermon had already been delivered through his good example. So also will your apostolate be crowned if you give good example.

16. A short time ago a Bishop said to me: "Give me one of your members, so that he may travel around and people may say: 'See, that is one of them!'" In like manner ought people to be able to say of each one of you, wherever you make your appearance, wherever you show yourselves: See, that is one of them, that is one who is the way they ought to be, one of the *Societas Divini Salvatoris*.

17. May each one of you be able to say, no matter where he may be, what St. Paul said of himself: *Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi*. "Be imitators of me as I have imitated Christ" (1 Cor. 4:16). Thus you will exert great power of attraction. You will arouse vocations; and you will stir the hearts of many to their conversion.

Steadfastness and Constancy

It was a characteristic of our Venerable Father to adhere to the great purposes he had in view unwaveringly and with steadfastness and constancy. He would not let himself be discouraged by any difficulty. Once he arrived at the conviction that a thing was the will of God, it had to be carried out. He then confidently relied upon the help of the Lord.

1. Steadfastness, constancy, perseverance is of great importance, especially for a member of our Society. This steadfastness, this constancy will be a real asset for you in your work of self-sanctification and the sanctification of the neighbor. First of all we should have this constancy, this steadfastness in our labors, in our studies. One should not let himself be disturbed by difficulties and inconveniences but should persevere with steadfastness and constancy in the studies necessary for his vocation, mindful of the proverb: *Gutta cavat lapidem non vi, sed saepe cadendo*. "Constant drops of water wear away the stone." Though that is a profane proverb, it nevertheless contains an important lesson. A drop,—how insignificant, how small, how powerless! And yet through constant falling it finally hollows out the hard stone. Therefore, constancy, patience, steadfastness!

However, this constancy is necessary for us not only in our studies but also in our striving after perfection, in our acquisition of virtues, and in getting rid of our faults. In this great struggle we stand in need of great constancy, of great patience.

Oh, how many faults man has! What hard battles he has to fight when he must overcome himself, when he must overcome his inborn failings, his natural inclinations! It is easy to become discouraged when one falls back into the same faults again and again. Therefore, perseverance, patience, firmness in combating faults, especially that fundamental evil of pride, which is more or less inherent in every man. Do not lose heart! Only patience, constancy! *Patientia, constantia!*

Then, too, constancy is necessary for the apostolate. If an apostolic laborer has not this constancy, if he gives up the work begun when difficulties arise, just when it is so necessary to persevere steadfastly, he will accomplish nothing. If difficulties arise one must be all the more zealous and persevering.

Difficulties should not discourage a man; indeed, it is just then that he should show his strength and practice perseverance and firmness. Remember that the Romans conquered the world through patience, perseverance, constancy, tenacity (1 Macc. 8:4).

You will undertake hardly any work of the apostolate that will inflict a blow upon hell and give assistance to men without meeting opposition. It is just in great undertakings that things can come to such a pass that you think all is lost, that you imagine all is over.

When the God-Man died upon the cross on Golgotha they thought it was all over; but it was just there that one recognized that He was God. Therefore, do not lose heart in the work to which your calling will bring you in the future! And if you have to spend five or six years in one place without seeing any fruits, just persevere! Through sufferings and labors and cares and endurance you will bring forth much fruit.

How disadvantageous is not the opposite! If you could gaze through the history of mankind, what would you see? How many men began this or that. They begin an undertaking; but then come contradictions, little success, or other adversities, and what do they do? They give it up!

But such a way of acting is not worthy of an apostolic man; on the contrary, he will press on to the limit in the work of doing good, in the apostolate, in the saving of souls. And even if days should come wherein you could say with St. Paul: "So that we gave up all hope even of surviving" (2 Cor. 1:8), even if sufferings and contradictions should come in such abundance that you are disgusted with life, only persevere and keep up the good work to your last breath! Persevere, even if you can only

do what the soldier did who was resolved not to lose his banner and, dying, still held it between his teeth. (Nicholas Tut, Mayor of Zofingen, Switzerland, 1386).

Therefore, steadfastness! Constancy! Constancy in study, in learning; constancy in the eradication of faults; constancy in your activity, in the apostolate! Then you will certainly see what great things you can accomplish.

But if you have not this constancy you will be unsteady and will hardly accomplish anything great in life.

2. You know, it is just by difficulties that your zeal must be strengthened and inflamed.
3. I would like to call your attention to that weighty saying: *Non progredi est regredi*. "Not to go forward means to slip back." I wish to admonish you never to desist from going forward on the path of perfection. Both with priests and with Brothers there is not a little danger that, though one begins well in the novitiate and is fervent and though after profession he at first shows zeal for progress in religious perfection, as soon as he is sitting tight, as the expression has it, he begins to be less perfect. When you consider the many graces you receive, the holy Sacraments, the instructions, the watchful solicitude of the Superiors, and if in spite of all that you do not make progress, then you may be sure that you have a heavy responsibility of which you will one day have to render an account!
4. The experience of centuries teaches us that one must be on his guard in order not to get into danger. History teaches us that a man is not safe in any place. Lucifer was a seducer among the angels. Judas was a betrayer among the Apostles. In every state of life, at every moment, everywhere one must be prepared for dangers, knowing that disillusionments can be experienced even in a religious Order. St. Ignatius, who was such an enlightened and prudent man, once admitted into the novitiate a person whose only purpose was to corrupt the Society. And only after a long time was he unmasked. There are

dangers everywhere. And if care is not taken what immense harm can result!

But if you all keep the rule and work hand in hand with the Superior many dangers will be obviated.

5. Remember that a good Religious is happy and content; peace dwells in his heart and he will spread it around. He will live up to his obligations. He says to himself: "What, then, will anyone gain by winning the whole world and forfeiting his life?" *Quid enim prodest homini, si mundum universum lucretur, animae vero suae detrimentum patiatur?* (Matt. 16:26).

On his name day in the year 1901, our Venerable Father again stressed the importance of devoting all our energies to the service of the Church.

6. I thank you for your congratulations and your demonstrations of affection. The best good wishes you can offer me consist in this, that with a firm will you strive for the attainment of our sublime goal, that you keep the rules both in particular and in general.

In our times it is so necessary, so important to help Holy Church, which is being assailed, attacked, ridiculed, and calumniated on all sides. Though men have at all times fought and suffered for the Church, nevertheless in our days of such widespread unbelief it is especially necessary and important that you take to heart and actively embrace the noble task God has given you; for the good God has called you in these crucial times to take your place as a new army in the ranks of Holy Church, to labor and battle for her with all your might. You will accomplish this if you cling firmly to Christ, if, through the observance of the holy vows and of the rule, you combat the *concupiscentia carnis*, the *concupiscentia oculorum*, the *superbia vitae*, the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16).

The weapons with which you should fight are these. You should love humility, humiliations, and poverty, as Christ loved them; and you should learn the art of self-mastery. If we

wish to save the world, to save souls, if we wish to come to the assistance of Holy Church, then we must take the way that Christ and all the saints took.

If we wish to come to the aid of the Church by taking other ways than those we shall accomplish nothing.

Again, for us who must scatter throughout the whole wide world it is simply imperative that we be closely united, that we be of one mind and one heart, that we subordinate our personal opinions and advantages to the common good.

Work in unshakable harmony and loyalty with the Superiors whom God has placed over you. Be one with them. By so doing you will command the respect of those among whom you labor and will be terrible to the powers of hell.

May the good God bless you, so that you may attain to this. May you be found worthy to become a chosen band, a whole army for the glory of God and the Church!

*Benedictio Dei omnipotentis, Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti,
descendat super vos et maneat semper vobiscum. Amen.*

Love of the Cross

Our Venerable Father himself said that love of the cross was his favorite theme. He was wholly penetrated with love of the cross. It was not a mere formality for him when he assumed the name Francis of the Cross. No; at that moment he took upon himself, with complete abandonment to God, the cross that would thereafter be his. He remained true to this love of the cross even unto death. And again and again he talked to our hearts about the holy cross, about the carrying of the cross, in order that we might be made strong through the cross. The cross should be to us a sign that God loves us.

1. It is my most ardent wish that you all seek to penetrate deeply into the mystery of the cross, into the love of the cross, so that you may love suffering. If you do this, then I have a well founded hope that you will all persevere, that you will obtain your crown, and that you will lead many souls to heaven.

I long for your happiness, your peace here below, your salvation, your welfare, your blessedness. And so it is my wish that you ever more and more study the cross and suffering and resignation in suffering, that you be convinced that only in the shadow of the cross do the fruits of salvation thrive.

And no matter how much you may seem to accomplish, no matter whether you perform task upon task, promise yourselves nothing unless you suffer much. For our work is different from that of the world. We should lead souls to God. And for that purpose the blessing of God is necessary. Through sufferings, through patient sufferings you will draw down upon yourselves blessings from above.

So if you yourselves wish to make progress in the spiritual life, if you wish to be happy, if you wish to save many souls, then become lovers of the cross!

May the good God ever grant you more love of the cross! O the cross! *Fugite, partes adversae, vicit leo de tribu Juda!* Suffer! Unite your sufferings with those of the Divine Savior. Through His sufferings our dear Savior has redeemed the world. Would you, then, wish to choose another way?

2. We simply have to carry the cross. Having sinned in Adam, we are all condemned to the cross. He who cannot work can at least suffer. And perhaps such a one can do more than one who wears himself out by work.

3. Let it be your lifelong conviction that you are to become holy by receiving many crosses. And you must carry them patiently if you wish to save many souls.

4. Be not afraid of the cross! It is a sign that God loves you.

5. *Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum.* “God works with those who love him and turns everything to their good” (Rom. 8:28). If now and then somewhat difficult times come for the individual and for the Society they will be for the good of the individual and of the Society. Indeed, already Segneri said that the days of misfortune for men are just those in which everything goes the way one wants it. Very often it is just then that things are at their worst.

6. May the meditation of the history of the passion of our beloved Savior be for us again and again a new incentive to abandonment to God!

7. It is a more blessed thing to suffer than to cause suffering. And when you must suffer through others, then comfort yourselves with the thought: I am much happier because I suffer than is he who makes me suffer.

8. Today we are celebrating the feast of the great St. Paul. When we contemplate this hero we are urged on to do great things for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, as he did. Who would not feel himself thus impelled when he meditates on the life, on the apostolic labors of this great Apostle!

Today I would like to pick out especially one point from the life of this great Apostle, namely, his constancy in suffering. That, as you know, is one of my favorite topics; for I see how important it is that an apostolic man who wishes to accomplish great things be ready to suffer much and possess great constancy. So if we wish to do great things, if we wish to accomplish much, then we must suffer much. So I desire that every member of our Society be ready to suffer for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, that he be constant in suffering and full of zeal.

If you go through the history of men, if you go through your own history, you will find that often great works depend upon little sufferings.

I would have you be so firm that neither by tribulation, nor suffering, nor persecutions, nor spiritual aridity, nor misunderstandings, nor by anything else whatsoever will you let yourselves be deterred from carrying out the good work you have begun, from unwaveringly following the path you have chosen.

If for the sake of the glory of God and the salvation of souls we should be offended by a confrere or by a Superior, ought we not, I ask, to bear that patiently? Oh, let us suffer! Through profound humility let us hold ourselves in readiness for suffering. Let us to some extent make ourselves capable of suffering. If in your labors you have the good intention, then you will look up with confidence to Divine Providence.

If you suffer injustice, then justice will again fall to your lot.

If your good name is brought into disrepute, then you may be sure that Providence will help again.

The good God permits trials to come upon you in order that your labors may be rendered fruitful through your sufferings.

Never forget that the successes of an apostolic man are in proportion to his sufferings.

Of course, the sufferings are often very bitter. But for that very reason we should be ready to accept them just the way the dear

Lord sends them to us. Let us not try to select them according to our own will.

I am convinced that if you are thus resolutely prepared to suffer you will persevere and will later on be happy. The blessing of God will accompany your labors.

The Confidence of the Superiors

In order to live happily and labor successfully in the Society it is of very special importance that one enjoy the confidence of the Superiors. When a subject is, so to speak, borne along by the confidence of the Superiors he finds it easy to do his work and is happy in the doing. Mutual confidence arouses and fosters the family spirit and promotes the work done for the Society as a whole.

1. One great good for a Religious is the confidence that he enjoys with the Superiors. And that good is all the greater, the greater the confidence shown him and the higher the Superior who shows it. Through confidence the person concerned is honored, encouraged, urged on to what is good, and made to relish arduous labor. But what is this confidence? It is the fruit of good characteristics and of firmness of character.

This confidence, therefore, is not to be found in the whim of the Superior; on the contrary, it is the fruit of the qualities of the person concerned; it depends upon how he conducts himself. He who conscientiously does his duty, who is constant in what is good, who perseveres in the midst of difficult circumstances, who manifests firmness of character, who is prudent in action,—in a word, he who by his firmness of character and by his conduct proves that he is worthy of confidence, to him confidence will be given.

It is very important to reflect upon this subject of confidence; for there is always danger of accusing the Superiors of showing too little confidence. This confidence is determined by the conduct of the person concerned.

If that were not the case, then the Superiors would indeed act imprudently, capriciously, even unjustly. If they would place confidence in one who does not deserve it, then they would punish that person himself; they would do harm to God's cause; and the consequences would be bad. I myself once heard of such a disillusionment regarding a certain Superior

and that from a high personality. It made me very uncomfortable. And why did this personage speak so indignantly? Because the Superior in question placed too much confidence in his subjects.

He who wishes to enjoy confidence should see to it that he makes himself worthy of confidence. Confidence will be measured out to him in accordance with his conduct; and it is the duty of a Superior not to place confidence in one who does not deserve it.

But there are different phases of this confidence. One says, for instance: This man enjoys the greatest confidence, full confidence. Of course, not every one will obtain the greatest confidence. But every one can make himself worthy of confidence if only he does his duty, especially if he overcomes himself, shows firmness of character, perseveres in good and does not desist therefrom at every occasion of adversity.

Also when a man has erred grievously (we are all men and can err grievously) he can again merit that confidence be shown him. Even Peter, who fell so grievously, nevertheless was put in the first place. So the confidence of the Superiors lies not in whim but is entirely the result of your own conduct.

In all earnestness I would now like to admonish you that each one seek to merit the fullest confidence of his Superiors. And you will attain to that if you become and remain men of firm character, of solid principles, upon whom not only the Superiors but also the Church can rely.

Be not like a reed that is shaken to and fro by every wind (Matt. 11:7). Steer straight for your goal. Be firm. Be conscious that you are men who step forward manfully as soldiers of Christ, who are not afraid to show themselves as good, conscientious Religious and who remain that way.

He who enjoys confidence will find his activity blessed with abundant fruit. Keep this confidence if you possess it. And should it have diminished, do all in your power to regain it.

May you, therefore, direct all your energies to the end that one may have confidence in you, for your own good and for the good of the Society.

Meekness and Humility

Meekness and humility were the favorite virtues of our Venerable Father. He spoke to us about them whenever the opportunity presented itself. He was the model of a humble soul. He had to face the bitterest difficulties; but he bore them humbly and overcame them heroically. Even when in 1906 a storm of criticism was let loose against him and the Society in a certain periodical he bore no grudge against anyone. He forgave all and expressed himself in this manner: "Surely they mean it well and think that their view is correct."

1. The month of June is dedicated to the veneration of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. And we Religious in particular ought to practice this devotion, especially by imitating this meek and humble Heart.

We should imitate the divine Heart of Jesus in its meekness. We should be meek. We should let the dear Lord dispose of us just as He wishes, accepting everything that He sends us and bearing it patiently. We should abandon ourselves to Him wholly and entirely. No matter what happens to us, we should never murmur and complain against the good God but should bear everything meekly and with patient resignation.

Then we should be meek as regards the neighbor. Oh, how powerful is he who bears all things! Let us be meek inasmuch as we bear with faults and weaknesses and everything that is disagreeable to us. *Alter alterius onera portate*. "Carry each other's burdens" (Gal. 6:2). Therefore, let us be patient and gentle towards the neighbor, towards our confreres, inasmuch as we not only bear patiently what is hard for us but also see to it that we do nothing to cause others to suffer; we should see to it that we do not sadden them in any way, that we do them no harm. Very especially should we take to heart the saying: "Treat others as you would like them to treat you" (Matt. 7:12).

O what peace and unity there will be if you try in every way in your power to make things nice and agreeable for each other! Therefore, meekness! How powerful meekness is! Through it we win over the Heart of God; through it we obtain mastery over ourselves and mastery over the neighbor.

So try during this month to acquire this meekness and you will soon experience its effects. Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, make our hearts like unto Thine! If we have this meekness, then we will be one, then charity will reign supreme. Let us be careful not to underestimate this meekness. Remember what the Savior says: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11:29). He Himself wished to appear and to rule as a lamb, the Lamb of God.

Therefore, be meek, you who are called to guide men! Be convinced that through meekness you will gain men for God! The way which our dear Savior took you also must take; and that is the way of meekness and humility. Pray with inmost fervor to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that He grant you this grace of meekness!

2. Humility impels us to recognize our own lowliness, our nothingness, our littleness, our sinfulness, our faultiness. When we realize what we are we shall feel urged to despise ourselves. We shall feel impelled to humble ourselves, to lower ourselves. We shall be urged on to act according to this self-knowledge. If we realize our own pitiableness we shall also let ourselves be treated by God accordingly. We shall always realize that this is exactly what we deserve. And when the good God punishes us we shall humble ourselves.

We shall feel ourselves seized by a desire to be despised by men. If we know ourselves, then we must wish that the others, too, treat us for what we really are.

Furthermore, if our will tends towards personal humiliation we shall also treat ourselves accordingly. Consider the saints, how they call themselves the greatest sinners. But it is not sufficient

to realize all this; no, we should also act according to this knowledge.

But what is it that should urge us on to practice humility in this way, to descend thus into our nothingness? It is the example of our Divine Master that should impel us to humble ourselves and to humble ourselves deeply. He, Who is sanctity itself, wished so to humble Himself. He chose the cross, Golgotha, the place of skulls. He chose hiddenness. He chose the tabernacle. Thus does the Lord of heaven and earth, sanctity itself, humbled Himself. Why should not we feel the urge to humble ourselves?

Again, we should find an incentive in the fact that the humble are pleasing to God. As you know, *Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam*. "God opposes the proud but accords his favor to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5).

Furthermore, peace of heart should be an incentive to humility. What peace there is in the heart of one who is humble! No matter what happens to him, he quietly reflects: That is just what I have coming to me; I do not deserve anything else. Finally, we should be drawn to humility because it is the very foundation of great sanctity, of great deeds, of working mightily for our own sanctification and for the salvation of souls. And what a powerful source of activity is to be found in the humble!

The taller the building is to be, the deeper must the foundation be laid. The greater the edifice of our self-sanctification is to be, the deeper the humility that is necessary. The more we wish to work for the salvation of souls, the greater must our humility be. How can we count on God if we have not the virtue of humility?

May you, therefore, ever strive with all your might after humility. As long as you live in this world you will have to battle against pride. You will be seriously tempted and assailed, be it openly or hiddenly. Do not for a moment imagine that you will be spared by this enemy. And even if you should have arrived

at a high degree of sanctity, pride will nevertheless still assail you.

Therefore, humility! Imitate the Sacred Heart! Especially today, on its festival, you should make the resolution to imitate the meek and humble Heart of Jesus. Therefore, *Estote mites et humiles corde!*

3. First of all let us become humble. Let us try over and over again to ground ourselves firmly in humility. You are no doubt familiar with this statement of a renowned spiritual man: "Take humility away and all virtues are vices."

Therefore, profound humility! *Fundamendum profundum*, so that you may erect a good building!

Be humble, devote yourselves to prayer and meditation, and you will be one;

you will strive to attain one and the same goal;
you will be obedient to Superiors;
you will not try to put through your own notions and ideas;
you will gladly submit yourselves.

If you walk in humility the blessing of God will come down upon you and the Society. And each single one will perform the task entrusted to him according to his abilities and the grace of God.

If you are humble, then you will also obey; and thus you will attain your end.

4. *Tota vita Christi crux fuit et martyrium*. "The whole life of Christ was a cross and a martyrdom," says *The Imitation of Christ* (Chapter 12).

Christ suffered for us. We Salvatorians should imitate the patience of Christ. This patience is of the utmost importance for us, both for our own sanctification and for our success in apostolic labors. "This, in fact, is what you were called to do, be-

cause Christ suffered for you and left an example for you to follow in his steps” (1 Peter 2:21). He has left us an example of patience.

Hence, a Salvatorian, a follower of Christ, must above all imitate the patience of Christ. *Agere bonum est, pati melius.* “To act is good, to suffer is better.” Suffering is more efficacious for our own sanctification and for the apostolate.

Therefore, no matter in what position we may find ourselves, let us see to it that we possess patience,—patience, which is the test of humility.

We must practice patience in every position, be it as a teacher towards the pupil, be it as a priest in the apostolate, be it in the mission, be it as Superior or as subject, be it in work around the house as a Brother,—in every position and even where we must practice patience and humility, otherwise we ourselves shall often tear down what we have built up. Through patience you will bring forth fruit.

Therefore, practice patience, which is so necessary in every place, especially in our Society, which is still in the making, which is still very young and has so many new foundations to establish, because of which one must have a greater spirit of sacrifice, must practice more patience. *In patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras.* “Your perseverance will win you your souls” (Luke 21:19).

If we do not make progress in self-sanctification, then we shall find that the reason for this lies in a lack of patience.

How many good works are begun! But when difficulties come, sufferings, calumnies, criticisms, you often drop everything for which you labored so long, because you have not enough *patientia*, patience. Patience is wanting.

So let it be your resolve never under any circumstances or in any situation to lose patience. And live in the conviction that, unless you possess patience in a high degree, you will never

accomplish great things for your own sanctification and the sanctification of the neighbor.

How is it possible to strive and struggle against the enemy if we have no patience? It is just patience that is so important for us in our combat with our enemies.

You know the words of the Savior: *Ecce ego mitto vos sicut agnos inter lupos*. “I am sending you out like lambs among wolves” (Luke 10:3). So how will you labor without patience?

It is patience that conquers the world. Patience accomplishes great things. Therefore, *patientia* and again *patientia*, this test of humility which you should always, as much as possible, seek to preserve!

Friendliness

1. I would like to admonish you that you strive to the best of your ability to acquire meekness, humility, modesty, the culture that is implied in general politeness; and be on your guard against underestimating these things. However, do not acquire these qualities in order to please the world but in order to work more efficaciously. But by no means would I have you think that I require the worldly affectation and mannerism of some persons; no, I mean modesty, purity, friendliness, humility, meekness, mildness. There is, if I mistake not, a proverb to the effect that friendliness is a compass that guides one throughout the whole world. This shows to some extent how important modesty and friendliness are. With these qualities one gets along everywhere. Even the most uncultured person is pleased with them.

As regards friendliness, there are some who have received so much of it from the Creator that they must rather keep themselves within bounds than make an effort to practice it. Others have to strive and struggle to acquire it.

Rude behavior can do much harm, especially in the care of souls. By rough, harsh, repelling conduct a pastor can estrange from himself a whole parish.

In dealing with the female sex friendliness threatens to be a danger. Therefore, always keep in mind what is said in the chapter on chastity; for as regards this matter a certain reserve is always in place. But in your dealings with other persons make it a point always to be very friendly.

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Gratitude

Gratitude is pleasing to God and to men. Our Venerable Father was grateful. He thanked God for all benefits received, not only for what was agreeable but also for what was disagreeable. He showed a touching gratitude to every fellow man for even the least service. One time he sent a novice to the penance table because he did not immediately thank a benefactor. Our Venerable Father placed very much stress on great gratitude towards benefactors.

1. There is another point which I would like to have you take to heart, namely, that you always be grateful children. First of all you must be grateful to God, your greatest Benefactor. Do not forget that a prayer said in grateful remembrance of benefits received will surely be heard.

Be grateful to your Superiors; for that is your duty. Your gratitude will incline the Superiors to cherish kind feelings towards you. Every manifestation of gratitude is an incentive to good will.

Be grateful to all your benefactors. Also among men it is a fact that if we are grateful they will be the more inclined to give to us. I would like to impress deeply upon you an appreciation of the virtue of gratitude; for it is of such great importance and is nevertheless so easily forgotten by men. The renowned Faber says that were he to hear that a man keeps his benefactors in grateful remembrance and is extraordinarily grateful he would consider it more probable and have greater hope of this man's becoming saint than were he to hear that he scourges himself unto blood and has visions of the Blessed Virgin.

So take this well to heart and see to it that you be grateful to God and to all towards whom you have obligations. Never suffer the approach of that vice which is called black ingratitude. Now, at the end of the year I beg of you to be grateful to

God, to your Superiors, to your benefactors, and to all. Make the resolution to be very grateful your whole life long.

2. The good God has given many graces to each single one. But He has also bestowed countless graces upon the whole Society, in addition to the manifestations of extraordinary favors. In the short time of its existence (16 years) He has caused the Society to grow strong and to arrive at such a development that our priests already carry on the apostolate in thirteen different languages.

3. We have already begun the novena in preparation for the feast of the Immaculate Conception, which will be the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Society [2001]. Twenty years have already passed since Divine Providence founded this work.

When we think of all the good that we have received we must be filled with special joy on this day. We have good reason to rejoice. First of all, in a spirit of grateful remembrance, we should give the glory to God; we should thank Him for the many, many benefits which He has bestowed upon us during these twenty years, particularly by warding off dangers. How many a storm came up against the Society! How many a storm from within and from without! How many a difficulty before which we stood helpless! But God has always come to our aid.

Moreover, on this day we should not only thank God for warding off dangers but we should also thank Him for interiorly strengthening the Society. And what a robustness! I cannot sufficiently describe what interior vigor the Society has now as compared to then.

Educational Houses

1. In the present stage of the Society one of our most important tasks is the training of apostolic Religious, of religious priests. Hence, also the erection of educational houses is of prime importance. In this way the glory of God and the salvation of souls will in very truth be promoted in a practical manner.

St. Vincent de Paul says: “You will not be able to devote your energies to anything greater than the education of a priest.” If it is already something grand to help educate one priest, what a sublime task it must be to help train many priests, even large numbers from all nations.

Therefore, no matter where you may be, always look upon it as one of the principal tasks of the Society to work for the training of good members for its own ranks. That is the hope of the Society; that is the hope of the Church.

If today or tomorrow you all become priests and then go out to toil and labor and after so and so many years you die and there are few to take your places—what has then been gained?

Separation of the Various Sections

1. It is the spirit of Holy Church that the scholastics be wholly separated from the priests, and the professed from the oblates.

This regulation is also found in other Institutes. I shall adduce an example from the rule of St. Dominic: “If a professed member speaks with his pupils outside of school he shall lose the lectorate and active and passive voice for four years.”

If our Society is to be happy, then it is absolutely and utterly necessary to separate the professed clerics from the rest. And in addition to this a complete separation of the various sections must be introduced, in full accord with the spirit of Holy Church, as far as circumstances permit and demand it.

So I beg of you to observe these restrictions with all fidelity. You must be of such a mind as to enter into the mind of Holy Church. Then we may also hope that God’s blessing will rest upon us much more abundantly.

Religious and Secular Clergy

1. *Vos estis lux mundi.* “You are the light of the world,” says the Divine Savior to His Apostles. The priest should be the *lux mundi*, the light of the world. The priest, especially the religious priest, is placed upon a candlestick. He is to shed light around. Indeed, the Religious should not only be a light to men in general but also to the secular clergy. In fact, many a zealous bishop who is concerned about his diocesan clergy calls Religious into his diocese that they may be a support, a help to the secular clergy. But how is the Religious to be a light to the secular clergy?

He should be a light by his holy way of living, by good example, so that wherever he comes into contact with the secular clergy he gives the example of a saintly religious life. Moreover, not only the priest but also the religious Brother can make an impression upon the priest by his good example, as we know from the lives of holy Brothers.

In the second place the religious priest should exert salutary influence upon the secular clergy through instruction and admonition in the confessional. It is well known that when good Religious are around the secular clergy gladly come to them for confession. There the opportunity is offered you of being a prop to the secular clergy.

Furthermore, on the occasion of the retreats that you give the secular clergy you can exert a salutary influence upon them.

Again, you should exert a salutary influence upon the secular clergy when you help out in the care of souls, when you come into contact with secular priests. See to it that you then be men who live by faith, that your conversation be not of a worldly nature but such as flows from the high ideals of a holy Religious. In this way you also exert a holy influence in the rectory when you go out to assist the clergy. And as you exert a salu-

tary influence upon the clergy, so will you also exert the same upon the parish.

So see to it, all of you, that you be a *lux mundi* and that not only in general but also to the secular clergy, in the manner already suggested.

And you can be that, too. First of all it is easier for you to acquire holiness and virtue because of your greater separation from the world. Remember how many a secular priest is living in the midst of cares and dangers!

Furthermore, you have the holy rule, according to which you live and which is wanting to the secular priest.

And finally you have the observance of the holy vows.

May you always have the right view of this lofty purpose and ever live so that the secular clergy may have confidence in you, that they may feel drawn to you, that they may ever see in you enlightened and holy men.

Communications to Outsiders

It may sometimes be necessary to ask advice of outsiders. In many instances, however, it is a decided disadvantage. That is why our Venerable Father gave clear and sound directions about this matter also, in accordance with the regulation in force at that time: EXTERNOS NEMO CONSULAT, NISI SUPERIORE PERMITTENTE. "Without the permission of the Superior no one may consult outsiders."

1. It is well not to communicate the private affairs of the Society to outsiders. It is also well not to divulge one's own affairs to outsiders, especially if they are of an unfavorable nature; on the contrary, one should, so to speak, bury such things within the family circle.

Where should one seek advice? One should seek it from those in office, or from the higher Superiors of the Society. These are the ones whom we should ask for advice; and only if these consider it necessary should one have recourse to outsiders.

The Superiors are the ones appointed over us by God; wherefore they will also have enlightenment. They are likewise the ones who, generally speaking, are in the best position to advise you; no one is better acquainted with you and your affairs than they. It is they also who can better judge the conditions that prevail in the Society. It is they who, generally speaking, can show you more love than one who is outside of the Society.

Or ought not a mother to have a greater interest in her children than anyone else? For these reasons the Superiors, the confessor, the spiritual director can better advise you.

Keep that in mind; it is a matter of great consequence. The opposite course, seeking advice from outsiders, may result in great harm for yourself and for the Society.

It happens only too often that one goes to outsiders when one is ill-disposed. Such ill-humor and depression of spirit generally makes one partially blind. One goes to outsiders to seek

advice and seeks a counselor of whom one knows in advance that he will give a favorable decision. How can one in such a case pass correct judgment if, as frequently happens, he is not sufficiently informed, if he does not know conditions?

Live as good children of a family are wont to do! When the children have trouble among themselves, when they get into a quarrel, they even out their differences among themselves, with their parents, and see to it that the matter does not come to the knowledge of outsiders. For once such things become public, then peace vanishes; and with peace goes the happiness of the family. It is very much the same with communications made to outsiders. It is difficult to make good again what one has spoken to outsiders. Thus it comes to pass that instead of building up one tears down.

Be candid and sincere with the Superiors, with the confessor, with the spiritual director. And if it is necessary have recourse to higher Superiors of the Society. And even if you sometimes think that for the time being such a course of action is not to your advantage, yet, all things considered, the blessing of God will come down upon you.

The Superiors appreciate frankness highly. They have so much discretion. Whom ought the Superiors love more than just the good members of the Society? In whom ought they to show greater interest? Why, it is for their own good and that of the Society!

So be prudent and never ask outsiders without permission. If it is necessary the Superiors will give the permission. And then you can be quiet about it.

Sins of Omission and Sins of the Tongue

1. At the examination of conscience it is easy to make the mistake of paying too little attention to sins of omission. One can also be at fault in this way. So I would like to call your very special attention to this one point, namely, that when you make the daily examination of conscience prescribed by the rule you should also examine whether you have done everything that is demanded by your state of life, by your vocation, your occupation, etc.

In the first place I would like to remind the scholastics that they conscientiously fulfill their duties as regards their studies. Remember that you are at fault if you make them carelessly or only in part. So, too, if, for instance, you devote too much attention to some favorite occupation to the neglect of other occupations that are equally necessary. The scholastics should devote themselves to their studies in accordance with their importance and as duty demands.

The priests who hold an official position should see to it that they fill it conscientiously; in preaching, in oral discourse, and in the written word, let them be punctual and exact in their performance.

Priests who are without official position should conscientiously devote themselves to their studies, should prepare themselves for their activity in the care of souls, and should also otherwise, as far as time permits, try to make themselves useful for the glory of God, so that no one be idle.

And let the Brothers see to it that they conscientiously apply themselves to their occupation, to their position, even if it be seemingly insignificant, each in his own place, in this or that work, according to the regulations of the Superiors.

I earnestly ask that all of you, priests, students, and Brothers, be conscientious and punctual in everything, that you attend to

everything well and with exactness, that you be punctual and prompt and expeditious in all your occupations and labors. That will give you a good reputation, also as regards outsiders. You will endear yourselves to your Superiors; you will merit respect. Through punctuality you will find joy in your vocation. That means life and energy. That is like running water, which does not become stagnant and does not freeze. May you proceed thus, so that you may pass the examination on the day of reckoning when the Lord says: "Give an account of your stewardship" (Luke 16:2). May no one be a "wicked servant" (Luke 19:22) but may all merit to hear the words: *Euge, serve bone*. "Well done, good and trustworthy servant, you have shown you are trustworthy in small things; I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness" (Matt. 25:21).

2. St. James calls the tongue a member that cannot be tamed, a member full of poison. That is a terrible warning. If we cast a glance into a religious house we see how easily one can be at fault in this matter. One must needs wonder at the lack of reflection and the thoughtlessness shown (for we cannot otherwise explain it), so much so that many hardly scruple at detraction and calumny.

If one of you would do bodily harm to a confrere or endanger his life, what would one say of you? But now consider well what a greater evil it is to lessen the reputation of a confrere, to rob him of his good name.

3. In converse with each other much is said that is not good and is against the rules; and in this way love and respect for the Society and for one's vocation is nipped in the bud.

4. There is another thing which begets mistrust and that is malicious gossip. If one had the misfortune of making a remark about a confrere and this remark is at once relayed to the person concerned one does not stop to think that, for the sake of a bit of news, he excites the person spoken of and causes

him pain. Nor does one reflect how reprehensible that is in the eyes of God.

Hold the reputation of your confreres in high regard!

5. In order that the precious good of unity and harmony may be preserved in a family it is especially necessary that the tongue be not misused by speaking ill of a confrere or, what is still worse, of a Superior. Indeed, one should even guard against saying anything that is not to the credit of a confrere.

When you are about to speak think it over well and see to it that you do not speak without necessity, when it is not your duty to speak, lest it come to pass that you commit a sin and do great damage.

Consider that you must give an account of every idle word; how much more, then, of detraction. And not seldom it happens that calumny is added to detraction.

A noble heart, noble lips will speak of the faults of others only with repugnance, with a certain horror, and will say only as much as duty demands.

Be guardian angels! Protect each other's good name; guard the reputation of your Superiors. There is no man with whom one could not in some way find fault. We all know well enough in what a light the God-Man was placed and what happened to most of His saints. Where is the man to whose actions one could not give an evil interpretation in order to lessen his reputation?

The evil tongue does its most devastating work through criticism of the confreres and the Superiors. Our Venerable Father calls it a pest and proceeds against it severely.

6. The thing that very especially impedes brotherly love, fraternal community life, and progress in perfection, is criticism. And I mean criticism not only in words but also in any way whatsoever in which it may take place. By silence, in some cases by the shrugging of one's shoulders, one can ruin a man completely, without even saying as much as a single

word. All that is necessary is that the circumstances happen to be just so.

7. Bear in mind that criticism of the Superiors displeases God very much. It is the ruination of cloistral peace and harmony. Love of the brethren and of the Superiors will gain in strength only when detraction and criticism are kept away.

8. When I think of the Society, when I go through the various houses, when I consider the individual members, and when I see enemies hurl themselves against this holy undertaking, then deep sorrow comes over me, then I am filled with profound grief.

You will ask me: Who is our greatest enemy? Who harms us the most? Is it perhaps the Freemasons? Or is it the Liberals? I answer: No! Our greatest enemies are rather those who are within. *Et ex vobis ipsis exsurgent viri loquentes perversa.* “Even from your own ranks there will be men coming forward with a travesty of the truth on their lips to induce the disciples to follow them” (Acts 20:30).

As in the beginning of the Church the greatest enemies were not Diocletian and other persecutors but the heretics, so it is in every Society when the spirit of criticism enters and the members fail to stick together in true and intimate union with the Superiors.

And even if I go through the Society from the beginning to the end, there is no greater enemy than this.

How many a vocation has been lost! How much enthusiasm has been quenched, how many a soul has been lost for the Order! And just ask, ask each one who goes astray, who weakens in fervor, who loses the way! And he must needs confess: It was criticism against the Superiors. Yes; criticism of the regulations of the Superiors, condemnatory judgment, the collecting of all verbal rubbish and refuse wherever it was found—was not that the reason?

I tell you frankly: I would not like to be in the place of a critic at the judgment. Oh, how many a one might shine as a saint in eternity and possess a throne in glory. But because of criticism he has his place in hell!

I cannot describe what criticism is. But of criticism I say: This wicked tongue, which finds fault with everything, is the greatest enemy in the Society!

I beg of you that you all fear the critic more than anything else. Even if he does not directly lead you into sin, even if he does not make you shaky in your vocation, you will nevertheless relax in fervor and in striving after perfection. He who listens gladly to a critic by that very fact already acts against perfection; and one will soon notice in him, as in one who reads bad papers, that he is no longer on the way whereon he used to be.

So once more: This is the greatest enemy in our Society.

I tell you frankly that I cannot endure that monster of criticism, which does so much harm to body and soul.

You who are called to the apostolate should remember that if you criticize you are no apostles.

God's Care of the Society

The Society was dear and precious to our Venerable Father. He rejoiced with his whole heart every time it made progress. His noble soul everywhere saw the workings of Divine Providence. It was often necessary for him to protect his spiritual sons from discouraging criticism.

1. A few days ago we celebrated the anniversary of the foundation of our Society [1898]. So we take this occasion to cast a glance over the past. Seventeen years have passed, seventeen years during which the Society has been supported from above, has been protected by heaven. It has come forth victoriously from every attack. We cannot sufficiently thank God for the great help, the repeated assistance which He has rendered the Society in these seventeen years. If we wished to tell of all the enemies and of all the storms that assailed it, O how much there would be to write about! Storms from without, enemies from without, enemies from within! How often one thought: Now it will soon be all over with the Society. But in spite of everything we see that the Society has only become stronger and that at present its condition is such that we can say: It is a firm body.

I know the Society; and you must not think that there will ever be a future time, no matter how strong and firm the Society will be, when there will not be some sluggish members in it. That is human frailty! Since men in general have faults and frailties, so also imperfections will manifest themselves in a Society. Not all will be as they ought to be.

I really would wish that everything that happened during these seventeen years could be written down. I have already repeatedly been in a position in which one had to say: Here God alone can help. A member of the Sacred Congregation once assured me: "If you had not had protection from above the

Society would long since have gone to pieces because of this difficulty.”

Oh, all the things that one already wanted to do to me! Even at the beginning of the Society a priest came to me and told me that it would be the best thing for me if I would leave Rome. And he assured me that in two years I would be dead. And since then five times that many years have passed away and even to this day has God preserved my life, has preserved it in spite of my poor health.

Great indeed has been the protection from on high during these seventeen years, in which storms broke loose from within and from without. I know not if there be any authority to which one has not appealed, from the lowest in the Society up to the Pope. And in spite of it all the Society endures! Only in eternity will you see this.

There was one who told me: So and so has already written it down and soon it will break loose over the Society—and in a few days he was in the grave.

How often it happened that the danger, the need was so great that I could seek help from God alone. And in spite of it all, no matter how high the waves of the sea piled up, they again subsided, without having done any damage.

How many have already thought that the Society would soon be done for. Indeed, they already saw the time arrive when they could say: Now it will be dissolved! And yet it stands, walks and marches on. Yes; one has already gone so far as to look upon it as a good work to destroy the Society. Think you that without protection from on high, without help from above, the Society would still exist?

The conviction that the Society is from God must needs strengthen and confirm us all the more in our reliance on heavenly protection. This protection must encourage us to give battle and to persevere and, above all, not to relax in our fervor and to arm ourselves against dangers. One weapon which I very especially recommend to you is that you simply put your

trust in God. If critics or the fainthearted put in their appearance, or no matter what may turn up, remember that *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini*. “Our help is in the name of the Lord” (Ps. 124:8).

Or if one leaves the Society or if a number of members fall away: *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini*.

Or should you have to suffer material want of some kind or should other difficulties arise from which you do not see your way out: *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini*.

In all these things, however, you are not to pass judgment on any individual. We have no right to judge anyone. So -if a member should fall away or step out or agitate in any way against the Society, even if he should look upon it as his duty to work for the destruction of the Society—the truth will manifest itself! Whatever we do, let us not pass judgment on the individual! Let us give his actions a charitable interpretation whenever we can. Judgment belongs to God.

When you get out into the world, into active life, how many views you will then hear, how many opinions of the Society! Then always remember: *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini*.

Therefore, stand firm in all circumstances, in all necessities and dangers! Be firm! Do not place your hopes in men but: *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini!*

2. This week Holy Church celebrated the feast of St. Bridget. And during these days you have perhaps visited the holy place made memorable by her presence or you will still visit it. When I went there this week you can well imagine what sentiments filled my mind as my thoughts went back to the time twenty years ago when we lived in that holy place, offered up the Holy Sacrifice, and founded the Society. There the whole Society was so small, so insignificant and poor, so unknown and hidden away! There the foundation stone was laid for so many establishments and nurseries of the Society.

Who did it? Whom have we to thank for it? The merciful God, the help from above, Providence. *A Domino factum est istud.* "This is God's doing" (Ps. 118:23).

But in what way did it happen? It was that very way which the Divine Savior; the redeemer of the world, took. It was the way of the cross. Oh, how much suffering there was! How many adversities, how many persecutions, and how much hostile action from without! How much had to be endured and what afflictions came upon us from within during those twenty years!

How many a one said and believed that the Society was standing on the brink of an abyss, was doomed to destruction, would be dissolved. How much talk and gossip there was about this! And the outcome of it all? Where are all those human judgments today? They are buried. And many a one does not like it when one reminds him of what he said.

From all this we see how one must walk and labor in doing the will of God; we see that one must not let himself be led astray by anything. How many did let themselves be led astray! Just recently a letter came again from one who had let himself be very much influenced. And now he admits that he was sadly deceived.

So if you want to accomplish great things do not let yourselves be confused by the opinions of men. Such judgments must come, in order that God's work may appear to you in a clearer light, in order that you may see that the Society goes right on, despite all storms and despite the frailties of men. *A Domino factum est istud!*

So keep that in mind in case you are called to a new foundation, to a new house, to a new establishment. Recall to some extent at least what the Society has gone through, so that you may stand firm and not lose your bearings but calmly proceed in obedience along the straight way marked out by the Superiors.

The individual establishments will have to go through humiliations, through calumnies, through miseries, poverty, and distress. But do not let yourselves get confused. We have made the experience that where things go very hard in the beginning, there we may expect a sudden change for the better.

Quite a while ago a certain canon of a cathedral said to me: "You will certainly still accomplish much good here because you suffer so much." And as a matter of fact much good has already been accomplished.

See to it that you cultivate such a disposition as never to let yourselves be influenced by difficulties and by the opinions of men. In particular do not let yourselves be deterred, as soon as some difficulty arises, from carrying out a good work that has been enjoined by the Superiors. Here is what I have read in Sacred Scripture about the Romans: *Possederunt omnem locum consilio suo et patientia*. "Making themselves master of the whole country by their determination and perseverance" (1 Macc. 8:4). That is a consideration of prime importance. By counsel and patience the Romans were everywhere victorious.

Live up to this conviction: If we wish to accomplish great things, if we wish to do much for the glory of God, then we must take the way which the Savior took. *Per crucem ad lucem*. Through the cross to the light.

Therefore, let us not lose courage and flee from the cross! There is simply no other way to God than the way of the cross. All your good works must be marked by the cross. Bearing the cross we must follow Christ; for it is by His holy cross that He has redeemed the world.

Therefore, dearly beloved, no matter what your work may be, accustom yourselves to taking up the cross. If each one of you here assembled faithfully performs the duties of the position entrusted to him by the order of his Superiors, how much good we shall accomplish! What splendid progress the Society will make!

Yes; if that had always happened in the past, how nice things would be now!

Hence, during this week, if you can do so, be so good as once again to pay a visit to that holy place where St. Bridget and St. Catherine lived so long and where they suffered and died; and there recall that the Society has been strengthened by the cross and that also you must not let yourselves be discouraged in your undertakings.

Oh, pray to St. Bridget, whom we have so often invoked in her room, where we spent the midnight hours in earnest supplication; pray that you may never lose heart, that you may always act and labor according to the will of your Superiors.

Threefold Progress

At the end of the year 1898, our Venerable Father spoke very appropriately about a threefold progress that we can make in the course of a year.

1. At the close of the year it is quite fitting that we cast a glance over the past and ask ourselves the question: What progress have I made in the past year? One can make a threefold progress, namely, progress towards eternity, progress towards heaven, and progress towards hell.

We have certainly made that first progress. Each one has drawn one year nearer to eternity. And for all we know this year may be the last. So let each one ask himself: What progress have I made on the other two ways? Have I made progress on the way to heaven, or, which may God avert, on the way to hell? Is there perhaps danger that if I continue to walk the way that I have been going I shall not arrive at the goal?

Let us, therefore, not walk the way that leads to hell but rather the way that leads to heaven! Let us keep in mind the words: "The tree shall fall in the direction in which it leans." Let it be our endeavor, therefore, during the coming year to lead a conscientious life according to the duties of our calling, so that at the end of the next year, in case another year should be granted us, we may be able to say: I have walked on the way that leads to heaven.

Rendering the Account

1. *Redde rationem villicationis tuae.* “Draw me up an account of your stewardship” (Luke 16:2).

Let us imagine that this demand is made of us: Give an account of thy stewardship. It is good for us frequently during life to give ourselves this summons in order that one day we may be able to appear without anxiety before the Judge and render an account of our stewardship.

Redde rationem. Give an account of your vocation, of the use you have made of this great grace. Give an account of how you used the many graces bestowed upon you. Give an account of how you fulfilled the duties of your office, of your position. You have duties everywhere. Go through them and ask yourself: Can I without anxiety give an account of them? Render an account of the use of time. Examine yourself as to whether you have always used time in accordance with the will of God. Give an account of the spiritual goods. Give an account of the temporal goods. That is important in our Society, which lives for the most part from alms received chiefly from poor people; and what they give us they have earned by the sweat of their brows; and they give it with the intention that it be well used.

Let us also think of the sins of omission. Let us often, every evening, I would say, give ourselves the summons: *Redde rationem!*

2. Make use of this time of preparation for the great feast of Easter to examine yourselves in detail as to how you have thus far kept the holy rules. Ask yourselves as to whether you have lived up to your vocation, especially in the observance of holy poverty; whether you have anything in your possession, in use, for which you have no permission; whether you have any inordinate attachment to this or that.

As regards chastity and obedience, examine yourselves as to whether you live up to your obligations in everything. See how you are doing as regards the performance of the spiritual exercises. Remember well that if you do not perform them great harm will result; remember that you may come to naught.

Hold firmly to religious observance, all of you, without exception. Then you will see that the blessing of God will come down upon each and all.

At the Turn of the Century

Our Venerable Father spoke in a similar earnest way at the turn of the century 1900.

1. We now stand at the close of another year, and this time at the close of a century. This reflection is of great importance for us. First of all it is important for us to look back over the past year and the past century in order to see how we have made use of this talent for our salvation, for the glory of God, for the welfare of the neighbor, to the end that we may be able to say that we have put it to good use and that we may not be found wanting should the Lord deliver to us the summons: "Draw me up an account of your stewardship" (Luke 16:2).

During these last days I therefore beg of you once more to consider well what you have done, how you have conducted yourselves, and what you think must be changed. We shall never again live at such a period of time; for we stand at the beginning of a new century.

Let us meditate on what awaits us. And you certainly have to expect that. It shall overtake each one. It is death and judgment. Not a single one of us who are here gathered together will venture to assert that he will outlive the century now beginning. When the new century will have run its course we shall no longer be numbered among the living.

Absolutely certain, too, is the sentence that will be pronounced at the judgment—unto eternal rest or unto everlasting damnation. As a man lives, so he dies; this is a common saying. As we have lived, so will also our eternal lot be. Hence it is certain that this is what we have to expect: death and judgment, and that in this coming century.

Should the sentence pronounced at the judgment be unfavorable, must we not fear that then many accusers will rise up against us? We shall be accused because of the much good that we could have done but did not do. We shall be accused by the

souls we could have saved; by the poor whom we could have helped.

But if the judgment is favorable, what joy, what bliss, what triumph! Then the souls we saved shall constitute our glory and our crown.

Oh, be sure to give profound thought to that which awaits us! Let us use the time of this life well; for we know not how much longer it will last. Let each one consider what changes he has to make in himself. Let us apply ourselves to this work, even though it should mean sacrifices. Now there is yet time. Let us, therefore, still use these last days for our betterment. The more sacrifices we make, the more merits we shall have.

O that we would meditate earnestly on these truths and strengthen ourselves in the firm resolve so to begin the new year and the new century that we may hope for a favorable sentence on the day of judgment! Time goes by so rapidly. Whether we wish it or not, whether we close our eyes to the fact or not—death is certain! And the judgment is certain!

Let us not permit ourselves to be confused by hellish influences, by the enticements of the world and the flesh, lest our eyes be opened when it is too late.