

CHAPTER XV.

SECTION I.

Of the Government of the Confraternity and of its Various Offices.

Although those persons for whom this rule is intended do not live in community nor are, strictly speaking, Religious, yet their mode of living was called an Order by the Sovereign Pontiff, inasmuch as it is ordered by certain rules in imitation of the religious life. Now in order that these rules be observed and that no abuses or disorders be introduced; the rule enjoins that a religious priest be appointed as a Director of the Confraternity, by the provincial or prior of the convent, if they themselves will not attend to that office. If a secular priest be delegated to receive persons into the Third Order, at the same time he is appointed director of the persons he receives and is bound to exercise his office in the manner explained below.

If there be a great number of brothers and sisters, the director shall afterwards by secret votes elect, in a particular meeting, three or four assistants, calling them Discerners or Discreets, and these shall continue in office three years.

If the number of the brothers and sisters be so large that the director is not sufficient for the regular government, then, with the previous consent of the provincial and upon the advice of the Discerners, he shall appoint one brother as superior over the others, with the title of Subprior, and one of the sisters, who shall be called Prioress; and both shall hold office for three years.

He shall, moreover, appoint another one among the sisters, having obtained beforehand the consent of the Prioress and of the Discerners, who shall be called Subprioress and who shall be ordinarily mistress of the novices.

Of the Office of the Director.

The office of the Director shall be to receive the brothers and sisters into the Third Order, having first obtained the consent of the Superior; to watch over all and each in particular so that they live virtuously; to preside over the meetings; to hold once a month the conference and the spiritual exhortations; to encourage the brothers and sisters to the practice of virtue and works of mercy; to visit all those who are sick; to comfort the afflicted, to correct the faults and to dispense sometimes with the Rule if there be just motives.

The Director, moreover, is exhorted to be circumspect in receiving persons to the Third Order, and in admitting the novices of the brothers and sisters to the profession. He shall therefore use all possible endeavors to try their spirit and vocation, and he shall in this have no other end than the greater glory of God and the progress of souls in virtue.

He shall not be wanting in holding the monthly meetings or conferences and the spiritual exhortations, or he should procure another in his place capable of doing this. And if sometimes this exhortation cannot conveniently be given, he should at least read from some spiritual book or from some chapter of this Rule, explaining the same more extensively and inculcating the practice thereof.

He shall not be too credulous regarding rumors coming to his ears, or concerning reports which may be made to him about the faults of some brother or sister; but he shall prudently inform himself and inquire if things are really as represented.

When he must correct the faults already publicly known, he must try to temper the severity of the correction with charity and prudence; neither shall he enjoin too