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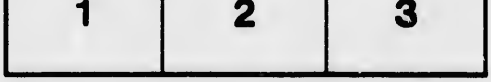

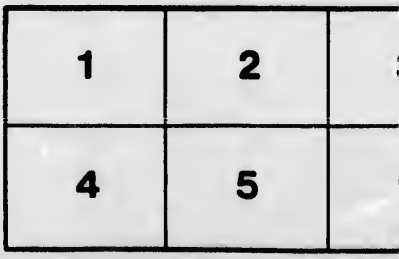

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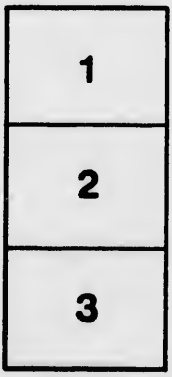

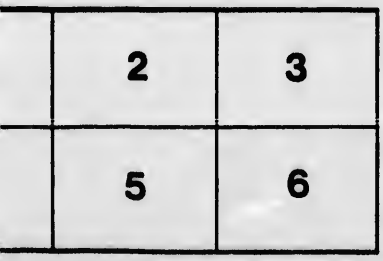

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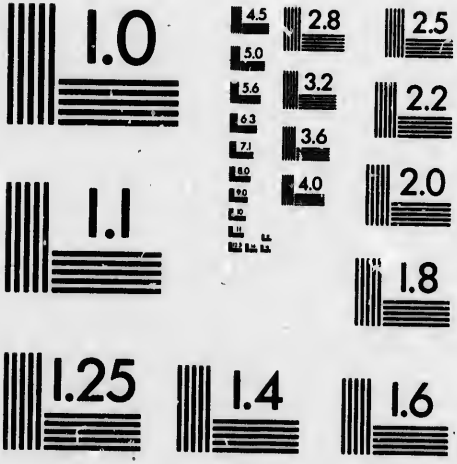

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CONSTITUTIONS

OF THE

Sisters of Charity,

Servants of the Poor and Sick.

KINGSTON:
HOUSE OF PROVDENCE,
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PART FIRST.

Constitutions of the Daughters or Sisters of Charity, Servants of the Poor.

CHAPTER I.

End and Fundamental Virtues of the Institute.

1.—The principal end for which God has called and gathered together the Daughters or Sisters of Charity is that they may sanctify their souls, and thereby honor our Lord Jesus Christ as the source and model of all charity by serving Him corporally and spiritually in the persons of the poor, the sick, the

infirm; and by imparting in case of necessity, or where the Ordinary judges it proper, Christian education to the young. Hence it is that to respond worthily to so holy a calling they should endeavor to lead holy lives, and labor with great diligence to perfect themselves, combining the interior exercises of the spiritual life with the exterior occupations of Christian charity towards the poor.

2.—Conformably to their constitutions, which the sisters will strive to practice faithfully as a means conducive to this end, they must understand that though they are not in a religious order where solemn vows are made, such not being compatible with the duties of their vocation, nevertheless, as they are much more exposed than cloistered religious, having at times no other monastery than the home of the sick; no chapel but the church of the parish; no cloister but the public street or the ward of the hospital; no enclosure but the spirit of obedience; no grate but the fear of God, and no veil but the practice of holy modesty, they are obliged to lead lives as virtuous as if they were professed in a cloistered order,

and to comport themselves wherever they may be with as much recollection, as much purity of heart and body, as much detachment from creatures, and as much edification to all, as if they were dwelling in the solitude of a monastery. They will constantly bear in mind that they must consider the salvation of their souls as of greater importance than all things of earth, and they must neglect nothing which will conduce to keep them in a state of grace, shunning mortal sin more than any other evil, and doing all in their power, with the help of God, to avoid even venial sin.

3.—To obtain of God the graces necessary for this, and to become worthy of the recompense which our Lord promises to those who serve the poor, the sisters should apply themselves assiduously to the acquisition of the Christian virtues, particularly those which are recommended in the following articles:

4.—They will perform all their exercises spiritual and corporal with humility, simplicity and charity, in union with the works of mercy which our Lord Jesus Christ per-

formed while on earth, by carefully directing their intention every morning and at the beginning of each principal action of the day, particularly when leaving for the service of the poor in their homes: and they must know that the above named virtues should animate the whole Institute as well as each member thereof. This is the spirit proper to the Institute.

5.—They will abhor the maxims of the world and embrace those of Jesus Christ, particularly those which regard mortification, contempt of self and of created things. They will prefer the lowest offices and those which are the most repugnant to their tastes and inclinations, to those that are more agreeable and considered more honorable; they will always choose the lowest places, and while consenting voluntarily to be the refuse of others, persuade themselves that they are better treated than they deserve to be, considering their many faults.

6.—They will not allow themselves to form any attachments to places, employments, persons, relatives, or even to their confessors; and they will be ready to leave all

when obedience so ordains, remembering the saying of our Lord, that we are not worthy of Him if we forsake not father, mother, brother and sister, and if we renounce not ourselves and all things earthly in order to follow Him.

7. They will cheerfully endure for the love of God the contradictions, mockeries, calumnies and other annoyances which may come to them, even when they feel they are doing their whole duty, and remember that our innocent Lord, while suffering incomparably more than they can suffer, prayed for those who crucified Him. Let them look upon these trials as a portion of the cross which He desires them to carry upon earth, that they may merit to be one day with Him in heaven.

8.—Let the sisters repose their fullest confidence in the merciful and loving Providence of God, and be fully persuaded that, if they endeavor on their part to be faithful to their vocation and to the observance of their constitutions, God will ever keep them under His protection and will assist them in all their necessities of soul and body.

CHAPTER II.

Poverty.

9.—The sisters will honor the poverty of our Lord, and be content to have their little wants supplied with simplicity and in accordance with the usages of their Institute, always remembering that they are the servants of the poor and should therefore live in poverty. According to this principle all will be in common with them as was the case with the early Christians, so that no sister, either in the house or elsewhere, will have anything to keep or make use of as belonging absolutely to herself.

Neither will the sisters have power to give nor to lend any of the goods of the Institute, even what belongs to themselves or may be left over and above their requirements, and much less what has been given them for the poor; nor will they borrow, acquire or receive anything without the permission of the Local Superior, and in matters of importance the permission of the Superior General must be obtained.

Although the vow of poverty taken in the Institute does not deprive the professed sisters of the ownership of their goods, nor the right of disposing of them, yet the administration, usufruct and use of these goods are forbidden them. Moreover, before their profession, they may make either a private or public cession of the administration and use of such goods to whomsoever they may appoint. If they make such a cession to the Institute it will be voided by their withdrawal from it. Furthermore, they may insert a clause in the deed of cession whereby aforesaid cession may be revoked even while they remain in the Institute. But so long as they are bound by their vows they are forbidden to make use of their right to revoke the cession made by them without the consent of the Holy See. The same applies to all property or goods which may come to them under the title of inheritance or donation after their profession.

As to the right of proprietorship, they have the power of disposing of their property either by donation, with the permission of the Superior General, or by will, with-

out it, and this donation annuls the cession they might have made of the administration, usufruct and use of their property, unless they wish it to continue in force notwithstanding their previous donation of it. The sisters can also, with the permission of the Superior, take proceedings to fulfil the requirements of the civil law with respect to the foregoing.

10.—They will earnestly endeavor to practice the rule, so highly recommended by the saints and so exactly observed in all well-regulated communities, namely: "To ask for nothing and to refuse nothing of the mere things of earth." If, however, a sister should need anything she will apply for it to the person whose duty it is to provide it and whether she obtain her request or not she will not show any dissatisfaction.

The officers or local superiors will inquire into the wants of the sisters from time to time in order to supply them with what is necessary, being always careful to retrench superfluities.

11.—Since the sisters cannot make use of what belongs to the Institute or to any par-

ticular sister, without permission, they must not complain if other sisters have been given what they may have expected for themselves.

On the contrary, they will rejoice at the opportunities afforded them of practicing holy poverty and mortification If, however, they have reason to believe or to doubt that anything has been taken from them without lawful permission, they may mention this to the Superior or some one of the officers, but to no other.

They will be careful not to change nor lay aside, without permission, the clothing assigned them when such clothing becomes old or does not please them; much less will they throw them away, or make them over to suit their individual tastes.

12 They will make it a matter of conscience to practice economy in the use of the moneys and other things of which they have the administration, and clearly understand that they would otherwise sin against that poverty which they promised to practice at their profession when they became servants of the poor. To prevent any abuse that might arise in the practice of holy

poverty, particularly in regard to clothing, the Provincial Superiors, or Local Superiors of houses outside the Provinces, will send to the Superior General a sample of the sey and linen to be procured in their respective districts so as to ascertain if it be the same as what is used in the Institute, and the Superior General will decide for them what kind is to be selected. Local Superiors of Provinces will act in the same way towards their Provincial Superiors.

13.—They will practice in all things, as far as possible, that uniformity which nourishes not only the spirit of poverty, but also that of union and order in Communities, and they will avoid all singularity—always a fruitful source of disunion and disorder. With this object in view they will accommodate themselves to the mode of living practiced at the Mother House where the Superior General resides, and conform themselves to the maxims and practices taught there for their spiritual and temporal comportment, without adopting any others however good they may appear to them. As to their corporal wants they will neither seek for better

clothing, nor head-dresses, nor shoes, nor bedding, nor food, nor furniture, etc., than such as are supplied to the sisters in general. If, nevertheless, any sister, after having considered the matter before God, thinks that she needs any extra care on account of indisposition, she should frankly propose the matter to the Sister Superior, who, in her turn, will refer it to the Superior General if she deem it proper to do so.

14.—They will also observe holy poverty during sickness in the use of medicine, food, etc., not showing impatience, nor murmuring when not treated according to their tastes.

Above all, they will bear in mind on such occasions that the servants of the poor should not be better treated than their masters; that it is a great happiness for them to suffer for the love of God, Who makes use of this means to enable them to practice patience in order to increase their merit. Besides, they do not know as well as the physician and infirmarian what is best for them, and to these consequently should be left the care of their health. For this

reason they will neither eat nor drink except in the places and at the hours fixed by the rule, and they will not receive anything nor will they have anything bought for them without the permission of the Superior.

15.—They will not give food nor lodging to any person from outside the Institute without the permission of the Local Superior. The same applies to the Local Superior, and she cannot depart from it without sufficient reason.

CHAPTER III.

Chastity.

16.—The vow of chastity obliges those who make it: (1), to live in continence; (2), to avoid every act, exterior or interior, forbidden by the sixth and ninth commandments under pain of committing a two-fold sin by violating at the same time the virtue and the vow of chastity.

The sisters will promptly reject all thoughts contrary to the virtue of chastity, and will carefully avoid everything that may in any way wound it.

Let the sisters be particularly on their guard against affectation in their gait, their mode of speech, in the clothes they wear, etc., as also against indulgence in too much curiosity, especially when they are out on the streets, against vanity, presumption, and unnecessary communication with lay people.

In fine, they will carefully avoid everything that might occasion even suspicion as to their fidelity to their holy vow of chastity, such a suspicion, even unfounded on fact, being calculated to do injury to the individual concerned, and what is even worse, to the good name and reputation of the Institute.

17.—Inasmuch as holy modesty is necessary to the sisters not only that they may edify others, but also to enable them to preserve that angelic purity which is so easily tarnished by immodest acts, they will be always careful to practice it. For this reason they will guard their eyes, keeping them modestly lowered, when they are on the streets, in church and in the houses of lay people, when they are conversing with persons of the opposite sex,

and also during the time of prayer, of conference, of silence and of meals. They will also avoid precipitation, and observe cleanliness in their clothing and other effects, always carefully avoiding affectation. At recreation they will refrain from all frivolities, from excessive laughter, from the use of unbecoming language, from all forbidden amusements, and in a word from whatever may have a tendency to evil. They will not touch each other without necessity unless when they embrace, in a spirit of charity, new subjects of the Institute or sisters going on or returning from missions. In such and similar cases they are permitted to kiss one another, but only on the cheek, and even this should not be done on the street nor in the church.

18.—They will avoid idleness as the mother of all vices and particularly of the vice of impurity. With this object in view, when the duties of their respective offices and the exercises assigned them for the day will permit of time for relaxation, they will faithfully spend this time sewing, knitting, or some such work, and if they are without work

let them ask for it of the Sister Superior or Sister Assistant. They must not keep birds, dogs nor other pet animals, and thereby misspend their time, the loss of one moment of which should be a matter of conscience, and they will always remember that God will demand them to give a very strict account of their precious time. Neither will they occupy themselves, on working days, in saying other prayers than those prescribed, and they will not remain to hear a second Mass unless there be a special reason for doing so.

19.—As intercourse with lay people may be equally prejudical to the sisters as it certainly is advantageous and meritorious when enjoined under obedience and for the benefit of the poor, no sister will ever go from home without a companion, nor without the permission of the Sister Superior, to whom she will make known whither she is going and for what purpose, and to whom on returning she will render an account of her journey. The Sister Superior will in like manner notify her assistant before going abroad. All the sisters will bless themselves with holy water before going out, and on

bended knees, in the chapel or oratory, will offer to our Lord the action they are about to perform and ask His blessing and grace not to offend Him. They will do the same on their return to thank Him for the graces bestowed and to ask pardon for the faults they may have committed.

20.—They will make no visits without the permission of the Sister Superior, and if a sister should have to confer with a civic official or other such individual, she must take a sister with her. When she cannot thus be accompanied she will take a girl from the school or some woman from the neighborhood, whom she will request to remain with her.

21.—A sister will never go alone to take care of the sick or go anywhere there may be special reason for being on one's guard. The sisters will not visit the sick in places of ill repute, nor will they perform the customary works of charity in such places except through the medium of others.

22.—Every sister must have the permission of the Superior and be accompanied by

another sister when receiving people in the parlor.

Seculars must not be admitted into the "regular places" without the permission of the Local Superior, and the latter to give such permission must have the authority of the Superior General.

23.—On whatever occasion when a sister meets persons of the opposite sex she will be reserved in her words and in her whole exterior, taking care never to manifest too much cordiality towards those persons when meeting them, and dismissing them promptly should there be anything to fear for her virtue, even though their conversation relate to pious subjects, as the care of the sick, etc.

Sisters must not be taught writing by male teachers, nor will they allow any familiar contact with persons of the opposite sex; much less will they allow themselves to be kissed by them, except in the case of near relatives, as their father or brothers. Nor will any sister remain alone with a person of the opposite sex in a room with closed doors.

24.—When going through the streets, or

in houses whither their obligations to the poor may direct them, the sisters should not spend more of their precious time than is necessary, and in their intercourse with lay people they should not, through curiosity, listen to gossip about the private affairs of families, this being opposed to the spirit which fraternal charity enjoins, making it their practice never to converse with lay people, except about something edifying or useful, however, this must not prevent them from seeking all the information they require so as to find out the wants of the poor or other persons in affliction, so as to procure relief and consolation for them.

25.—As temperance and regularity in eating and drinking contribute greatly to the preservation of the virtue of chastity, the sisters will do all in their power to conform in this matter to the rules of the house wherein the Superior General resides, both as regards the quality of the food allowed and the time and place it is to be taken. Should a sister require to take food outside the regular meal hour, or in the house of a laic, or take extra nourishment,

she must ask permission of the Sister Superior, and no sister is allowed to use liquors, distilled or fermented, without the express permission of the Superior, even though prescribed by a physician.

26.—Though the continuous labors of the Daughters of Charity do not permit them to practice many extraordinary penances, they may, however, sometimes, do so, but never without the permission of the Superior General.

27.—As regards the fasts of the Church, the Sister Superior will have recourse to ecclesiastical authority to obtain the necessary dispensations, should such be required. Let the sisters be assured that exterior mortification is of little avail if it is not accompanied by that of the interior, which consists in submitting our judgment and will to the orders of our Superiors, in combatting and overcoming our passions and evil inclinations, and in always keeping our senses under proper restraint.

CHAPTER IV.

Obedience.

28.—The sisters, by virtue of their vows, owe perfect obedience, profound veneration, filial love and unbounded devotion to the Sovereign Pontiff.

29.—They are for the same reason bound to obey their Superior General. Consequently, they will render to her all the respect, love and submission which are rightfully due to all authority emanating from God.

They will also obey the Provincial and Local Superiors; the other officers in what concerns their respective offices, in a word, all to whom they owe submission under whatsoever title. They will observe the Constitutions of the Institute, and obey the first sound of the bell of the Convent, regarding it as the voice of God, Who is calling them to the particular exercise, fixed for that time.

30.—The sisters will readily and cheerfully, and with an entire submission of their judgment and will, (in all things that are

not in themselves sinful) obey Superiors even though the latter may be personally disagreeable to them, and sometimes, according to their own judgment, unreasonable and over-exacting, remembering always that it is not so much to mere human creatures that this homage of obedience is due as to our Lord Jesus Christ, Who commands us by the voice of those He places in authority over us.

31.—Upon their arrival in a parish to found a mission, for the exercise of the works of their Institute therein, the Sister Superior, accompanied by one of the sisters, will go as soon as possible to the presbytery and receive, on bended knees, the blessing of the parish priest. They will place themselves under his guidance in all matters that concern their own spiritual wants—and even when there is question of relieving the sick or poor of his parish.

They will entertain a profound respect for all ecclesiastics, but especially for their confessor, treating him always with the reverence due him when at the altar offering up the Holy Sacrifice, and submitting to

his orders and following his advice in everything not inconsistent with the regulations and practices of the Institute.

32.—They will faithfully execute the orders of the physicians in their treatment of the sick without, however, violating the constitutions or interfering with the good order of the house.

The sisters will try to work in harmony with the local benevolent societies of the parish.

33.—They will not open any note or letter without the permission of the Local Superior, who should first read the document: and should they have occasion to write letters themselves, they must deliver all such to the Superior, whose right it is either to forward or retain them.

34.—The sisters must understand that the preceding article does not apply to letters written to or received from the Holy See, the Ordinary, the Superior General, the General Assistants, and in the Provinces, the Provincial Superior. Private letters received from the above named are not to be shown even to the sisters, much less to lay people, without permission.

CHAPTER V.

Union and Mutual Charity.

35.—The sisters will often reflect upon the name "Daughters or Sisters of Charity' which they have the honor to bear, and while endeavoring to render themselves worthy of that title, by a true and sincere love of God and their neighbor, they will assist and respect one another as sisters whom our Lord has drawn to His special service for the practice of the works of charity; doing all in their power to preserve perfect union among themselves. They will promptly banish from their hearts all feelings of envy and aversion and avoid using harsh or angry expressions, always manifesting by word and look the utmost Christian meekness and most cordial kindness of disposition.

36.—The sisters will cheerfully bear with the imperfections of their companions, and accommodate themselves as much as possible to the wishes and tastes of others in all that is not sinful, or opposed to the constitutions, taking particular care to ex-

ercise great charity towards those whose dispositions are not in harmony with their own; for this holy condescension combined with a disposition to bear the defects of others is an excellent means of preserving peace and union in the Institute.

37.—Should it happen through human frailty that one sister wound the feelings of another, the former will not fail to ask pardon of the latter on her knees, and before the hour of retiring to rest. The offended sister will receive humbly and kindly the apology thus offered her, and will likewise kneel and give her sister the kiss of peace. This holy practice being a sovereign remedy for healing the bitterness and resentment which sometimes arise from a breach of charity. In order not to diminish the ordinary good effect that follows this salutary and holy practice, the offended sister will be careful not to gratify any feelings of resentment towards her, even though she may have frequently offended her, by using harsh or reproachful words.

38.—It is the sisters who will attend to the sick members of their community,

whether at the Mother House or on the missions.

With this object in view they will look upon their sick sisters as the servants of Jesus Christ, and treat them with all possible kindness and affection, even as they would those bound to them by the ties of kindred, for sisters they are indeed, having God for their common father and the Institute for their mother. When a sister is seriously ill, notice should be given at once to the confessor. In what concerns their bodily wants the sisters will conform to what has been prescribed in No. 14, Poverty.

39.—Inasmuch as a morbid anxiety about ones bodily health sometimes interferes with the obligations of charity towards others, the sisters will be on their special guard against that infirmity. They will be particular not to consult any physician about their condition of health unless with the permission of their Superior.

It is only in cases of very extreme urgency that this rule is to be departed from. After their recovery, the sisters will resume their ordinary work and not seek after the special

privileges granted them during their illness.

40.—The sisters will assist at the interment of the members of the Institute who die near to or in the place where they reside, provided they are notified. They will offer for the repose of the soul of a deceased sister the first three of their ordinary communions, the regular chaplet for the nine days following her death, and all the good works performed by them within that time. They will have one High Mass and three Low Masses celebrated in the same intention. These Masses are to be celebrated in the place where the death of the sister occurred. In houses where such can be done, a Low Mass will be said for the soul of each sister at the time of her death. On the anniversary of the death of a sister, there will be a Low Mass offered at the Mother House for the repose of her soul; and every year, during the vacations, there will be a Requiem service in the Mother House for all its deceased members. When the Institute is divided into Provinces, the above named devotions for the deceased sisters will be performed in the Provincial houses. The

sisters will pray for the repose of the souls of the poor who die in the houses of the Institute, and also of those whom they may have attended at any time or in any place. They may also assist at the funerals of the latter if their occupations permit.

CHAPTER VI.

Certain Means Whereby Charity and Union Among the Sisters are Promoted and Preserved in the Institute.

41.—The sisters will cherish a sincere affection for one another, but must carefully guard against particular friendship, which is always dangerous, the danger being concealed under a cloak of charity, and is often founded on sensual inclinations. This is the reason why sisters must be careful to avoid such as they would positive aversions, those extremes of sinfulness, if permitted to exist, would ruin an otherwise well-regulated Community in a very short time.

42.—To remove the occasion of murmuring, which is sometimes more prejudicial to the peace and union of a society than are the two vices above named, and which ordinarily arise from a curiosity to know all that passes under pretext of zeal for the common good, they will not allow themselves to speak of the conduct of their Superiors, nor of the offices not in their charge, nor of the Constitutions, especially with a view to criticise or find fault with them. Should a sister feel anxious about any matter relating to the Institute which she deems sufficiently important to make known to the Superior, she will frankly and humbly apprise the Superior of it, and be careful not to find fault with or murmur at the action of the Superior, all such fault finding and murmuring being a source of scandal and division calculated to draw down the malediction of God, not only upon those who indulge in and who listen with complaisance to such, but even on the entire Institute.

43.—Sisters in their conversation will be careful not to speak of one another's faults

neither will they repeat in the Convent anything calculated to injure the characters of lay people. Should any sister so far forget herself as to indulge in uncharitable discourse, the sisters present will not listen to her, and will do all in their power to make her desist, going so far as, even on bended knees, to beseech her to refrain from such language; and should this be unavailing, then their only course is to withdraw from her presence, as from the contact of a venomous reptile.

44.—Inasmuch as silence is one of the most efficacious means whereby to prevent the commission of sins against fraternal charity, as we learn from the holy scriptures, the sisters will be exact in the observance of silence at all times, and particularly during the time between the evening prayer and breakfast, and between two and three o'clock every afternoon. Furthermore, let them understand that in the churches and sacristies under their care, as also in the dormitories and passages, silence must always be kept. In passing through the streets if the sisters have occasion to speak to each other

they must do so in a low tone of voice and in the fewest words possible.

Outside the hours of recreation, the sisters will observe recollection; they may converse together, but it must be on pious, or otherwise useful topics, always in a low tone of voice and with such gravity of manner as to indicate that it is not a time of recreation. They will also be particular when going through the house, or in opening or closing doors, especially at night. When permitted to converse together they must do so in a subdued tone of voice, such as becomes their religious state, and contributes to the edification of those who hear them.

CHAPTER VII.

Charity Towards the Sick Poor.

45.—Their principal employment being to serve the poor, the sisters will perform this work with care and affection, remembering that it is not so much to the poor as to Jesus Christ, that they are rendering service. It is in this view that they will them-

selves, or through others, distribute or administer the food and medicine required by the sick. These they will always treat with sympathy, gentleness, cordial respect and impartiality, even those among them who may be disagreeable, ill-humored, ungrateful, etc. They will scrupulously avoid allowing the sick to suffer by neglecting to give them the care they need, as such neglect being always culpable, even should it be occasioned by one's attachment to her spiritual exercises, as our obligation towards the poor takes precedence even before our spiritual exercises.

46.—The sisters should not neglect from time to time to speak to the sick about spiritual matters, viz., how to bear their sufferings with patience, and resignation to God's holy will; of the necessity of making a good confession, and receiving holy Communion with proper dispositions, and to prepare for a good death, etc.

47.—Since ill-regulated charity is not only displeasing to God, but is also prejudicial to the souls of those who practice it, the sisters will not give food or medicine against the

orders or wishes of the Superior or officer in charge.

Consequently they must not make too much of the complaints which the poor sometimes make without sufficient reason. At the same time they must do their best to console and please them, showing pity for their sufferings, and expressing regret at not being able to assist them according to their desires. They should also try to induce benevolent societies to interest themselves on behalf of these poor people.

48.—Alms received from individuals for the benefit of the poor must be applied according to the specified intentions of the donor, and not otherwise. Sisters will bear this in mind, and especially, if among the poor in their charge are to be found some of their relations, whom they would naturally be inclined to favor.

CHAPTER VIII.

Spiritual Practices.

49.—The sisters will always be faithful in their attendance at the regular religious exercises. This is of absolute necessity as a means whereby they may live in the state of grace and fulfil the sacred duties of their vocation. They can, however, sometimes change the hour of a particular exercise, and even omit it altogether without scruple when the urgent necessities of the poor require it; but they must take great care not to do so through indifference or want of devotion, or that undue attachment to the special work they may be engaged in, which is sometimes mistaken for true charity.

50.—The religious practices prescribed for each day, are morning and evening prayers, Mass, one hour's meditation, half an hour's spiritual reading, the general and particular examens, the rosary, and the visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

51.—The sisters will confess their sins once a week to the ordinary confessor.

They cannot go to confession to another without the special permission of the Archbishop. If a sister has a valid reason for it, she can apply for an extraordinary confessor, particularly in *articulo mortis*. At Quartertense all the sisters are obliged to present themselves to the extraordinary confessor.

52.—The days appointed for the sisters to receive holy Communion are: All the Sundays and feasts of first or second class of the year; Thursday and another day of their choice, of each week. The sisters can approach the holy table on other days, but not without permission of the confessor.

53.—Every Friday, unless it be a conge or a holiday of obligation, the sisters will assemble, after night prayer, for the conference of the Superior on the constitutions, rules, customs, etc., of the Institute. After which they will publicly accuse themselves of their faults against the faithful observance of their rules, etc. Should the Superior impose a penance on any sister, the latter will receive it with gratitude, and faithfully perform it. Should a sister have the misfortune to offend or disedify any of

her companions, she will be prompt in asking pardon of her for the fault committed.

At the exercises commonly called *fraternal correction*, which takes place once a month, the sisters will individually ask to be notified of their faults by their companions. The latter will perform this duty of fraternal charity with gentleness and humility, being always careful not to mention faults committed against themselves, personally. When a sister receives an admonition, or a correction, she will accept it with humility and thankfulness and by no means seek to justify herself.

54.—The sisters will make a retreat of one day every month, when it is possible to do so without interfering with the duties of charity. They will also make an annual retreat, during which they will go to confession and reveal the faults committed since the previous (annual) retreat.

55.—The sisters are at liberty to make known their personal troubles, (if they have any) to their confessor, but they must be careful not to reveal them to lay people, or even to any members of the Community who

is not an officer, as if every sister were allowed to speak of her grievances, real or imaginary, as she saw fit, without regard to the persons whom she addressed, the result would be found in many serious troubles, that might eventually bring disaster upon the whole Institute. In matters of conscience, the confessor alone has a right to be consulted.

56.—At the annual retreat, the sisters will present themselves to the Superior General, or to her delegate, to give a report of their work, and make known their difficulties, should they have any. They will furnish a similar report to the Local Superior at their monthly retreat, or as soon after as possible.

57.—Let the sisters be careful not to speak of those things they are under obligation to keep secret; as, for instance, what they hear in conference or in the confessional. Let them be assured that, apart from the sin they commit by revealing such matters, they may, by their indiscretion, make those holy exercises of the Institute become odious, as well as useless, and even hurtful

It is not forbidden, however, to converse on what may be said either at conference or in the confessional, when it contributes to edification, and when no reference is made to the place (particularly the confessional) where such knowledge has been acquired. It is never allowable to speak of such things by way of complaint or murmur.

The sisters will not make known the Constitutions to any one, without the express permission of the Superior General; neither will they allow the book of rules to be read, nor a copy of it to be taken, by any one outside the Community.

58.—The duty of fraternal correction requires that sisters should help each other in overcoming their faults; should a sister notice a fault in any member of the Community, she is obliged to draw the attention of the latter to it, and ask her to correct it. This must always be done in a charitable, kindly spirit. If the sister who is thus warned of her fault, does not amend her life, her case is to be reported to the Superior, or to one of the General Assistants.

Sisters are not to seek to justify themselves when admonished of their faults by their Superiors.

CHAPTER IX.

Special Devotions of the Daughters or Sisters of Charity.

59.—The principal devotion of the Institute is the devotion to our Lady of Seven Dolors. The sisters will make assiduous use of all the means provided by the Church to promote this devotion, as well as the devotion to the Sacred Passion of our Blessed Lord.

60.—One of the annual retreats will end on the feast of our Lady of Seven Dolors, which is the principal feast of the Institute, on that day will take place the solemn renovation of vows.

61.—Another feast of our Lady of Sorrows is the third Sunday in September, which the sisters will celebrate with becoming fervor.

62.—The sisters will hold processions in

the church of the Mother House, and, if possible, in the chapels of the missions, in honor of our Lady of Sorrows, on the third Sunday of every month, when Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament will be given. Sisters can, on that day, receive the scapulars of the Seven Dolors.

63. - They will perform the exercise of the *Sanctified Carnival* every year, commencing on the thirteenth day preceding Septuagesima Sunday. This devotion is intended to make reparation for the sinful pleasures so often indulged in by worldlings before the holy season of Lent.

64.—Every Friday of the year the sisters are to make a meditation on one of the Dolors of the Blessed Virgin, recite the chaplet of the Seven Dolors, make the Way of the Cross, recite or sing the Stabat Mater, and meditate upon the great sorrow that filled the heart of our desolate Mother when she heard the last sighs of her Divine Son.

65.—The churches and chapels of the Institute should be dedicated, whenever possible, to our Lady of Seven Dolors.

66.—The sisters will not be enrolled in other confraternities than those of the Institute.

67.—St. Vincent de Paul, the founder and chief patron of our Institute; St. Elizabeth, of Hungary, and St. Genevieve, must be considered as having a special claim upon the gratitude and homage of the Community, and their feasts especially honored.

CHAPTER X.

Dismissals, Punishments, Etc.

68.—Should a sister so far forget herself as to slander a member of the Community who is eligible to an office, or resort to stratagems to secure the appointment to an office for herself, or for another; if a member of the chapter, she will be deprived of her right to assist at the meetings thereof, until she shall have done penance for her fault, and be formally reinstated; if not a member of the chapter, the Superior General will impose a severe penance upon her. This point of rule must be observed with

the utmost exactness, as nothing can be more inconsistent with holy simplicity, the distinctive virtue of the good Sisters of Charity, than such conduct as the above.

69.—If any sister, which may God forbid, should commit a grave fault against purity or sobriety, or should persist in showing her contempt for the Constitutions, or disrespect for the Superior General, the latter, after having taken counsel with the General Assistants, will impose a penance upon her, such as one of the following, viz: Exclusion from the recreation room; prohibition to attend any of the meetings of the Community; silence during hours of recreation; a period of fasting on bread and water; removal from office, deprivation from active or passive voice, etc. Sisters found guilty of persistent murmuring against the Superior General are to be temporarily separated from the Community, and excluded from intercourse with the sisters. They are to be looked upon as moral lepers, who are studiously to be avoided.

70.—Penances will be imposed on those only who are likely to be benefited by them.

In the case of a sister who is manifestly beyond correction, the following mode of procedure will be pursued: 1st, the Superior General will order prayers to be said in all the houses of the Institute for the reformation of that sister's conduct, without, however, revealing her identity; 2nd, she will repeatedly implore the offender to consider her sad condition and do better; 3rd, if her appeals are unavailing, she will repeat them to the delinquent in the presence of the General Assistants: 4th, if this proves fruitless, she will do the same in the presence of the whole Community; 5th, if the use of these means should fail in their purpose, then the case must be laid before the Archbishop. Between each admonition sufficient time must be given to enable the unfortunate sister to enter into herself and reflect seriously on her deplorable condition.

After the expulsion of a sister, fervent prayers will be offered up by the Community for her conversion.

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

Government of the Institute.

71.—The government of the Institute of the Daughters or Sisters of Charity, Servants of the Poor, comprises a General Chapter, a General Council, General Officers, Provincial and Local Officers, whose respective duties are set forth in the following rules:

The General Chapter.

CHAPTER II.

Section I.—Composition and Meetings of the General Chapter.

72.—There will be a meeting of the General Chapter convened every six years, at the

Mother House, or some place selected by the Superior General and her Council. This meeting should be held in the month of July.

The precise date for holding the meeting of the General Chapter in the diocese, is fixed by the Ordinary.

73.—Extraordinary meetings of the Chapter may take place at other times, as, for instance, should the Superior General die before the end of her term of office, resign or be deposed; in which case, a meeting of the Chapter is to be convoked within six months by the Assistant General for the appointment of a new Superior.

74.—By virtue of an Indult of the Holy See, extraordinary assemblies of the Chapter may be convoked at other times by the Superior General, with her Council.

74.—The General Chapter is composed of the General Officers, Provincial Superiors, and Deputies.

76.—Each Province of the Institute must send one deputy to the General Chapter.

77.—There must be two-thirds of the

members present to constitute a regular assembly of the Chapter.

78.—The Ordinary will preside at the Chapter, or be represented by a delegate.

Section II.—Preliminaries of the General Chapter.

79.—Six months before the regular meeting of the Chapter, the Superior General will issue circulars to Provincial and Local Superiors, instructing them to read to the sisters in their charge the Constitutions and customs of the Institute.

80.—Three months before the meeting of the Chapter, every sister must write to the Superior General, and state how, in her locality the works of charity are performed, and how the Constitutions and rules are practiced.

81.—It is the duty of the Superior General and her Council to prepare the subjects which are to be discussed in the Chapter. They will, therefore, carefully examine the Constitutions and customs, and ascertain

whether any of these rules have been changed or fallen into disuse; and, also, whether abuses have crept into the Institute, and what means should be taken to correct them.

82.—The result of the above important examination will be written out by the Secretary, and signed by the Superior General and her Councillors, for presentation to the Chapter.

83.—The Superior General will respectfully ask the Archbishop to fix the date of the proposed meeting of the Chapter, and to graciously preside. The Superior General will convoke the Provincial Superiors and deputies by a circular letter announcing the day fixed for the opening of the General Chapter by the Archbishop. This letter must have the seal of the Institute affixed to it, and be signed by the Superior General and Secretary.

84.—On receipt of the letter of convocation, the recipient will write to the Superior General in acknowledgment of it. All the electors are obliged to be present on the appointed day, unless dispensed by the Superior General. If a Provincial Superior is

dispensed from voting at the Chapter, she will be replaced by a delegate of her choice.

Section III.—Election of Deputies to the General Chapter.

85.—Prudence, discretion and solid virtue are indispensible qualifications in a deputy to the General Chapter.

86.—No one can be elected deputy who has not had eight years of profession.

87.—For the election of a deputy a majority of votes is required. The voting in the Provincial Chapter is done by ballot. The counting of the votes is done by two sisters called scrutineers who are appointed by the council. The Provincial Superior and vocal sisters must be present at the counting of the ballots.

88.—The *act* of the election is signed by the Superior and the Councillors, and transmitted to the sister-elect as a voucher of her election, and as an evidence of her right to take part in the meeting of the General Chapter.

89.—If a deputy should be unable to attend the Chapter another deputy must be elected to take her place.

90.—There must be an election of deputies for the General Chapter before every election of a Superior General or a General Officer.

91.—If the Chapter be convened outside of the usual time, the deputies elected for the regular Chapter can attend it, unless there is question of the election of a Superior General, in which case there must be another election of deputies.

Section IV.—Functions of the General Chapter.

92.—The General Chapter will assemble at the Mother House every six years, and in the month of July, if possible,

93.—While attending the Chapter the electors will occupy separate rooms. The Superior General will preside at the common religious exercises.

94.—The chief purpose of the meeting of the Chapter is to examine into and ascertain

the actual condition of the Institute. After reading the resolutions passed at the previous meeting, the Superior General will present her report, which will state the manner in which those resolutions were carried out in the interval. This report should also state the number of religious actually in the Institute, the number of new and of suppressed houses, (should there be any) the number of deaths since the previous session, and also set forth whatever success attended the works of charity of the Institute.

95.—The Treasurer will also present the financial status of all the houses, commencing with the Mother House.

96.—It is the right of the Chapter to consider all matters that concern the interests of the Institute. It can make new regulations, change objectionable customs and adopt means for the prevention and correction of abuses; but it cannot change the Constitutions without a dispensation from the Sacred Congregation.

It belongs to the General Chapter to devise means for relieving the Mother House,

when its revenues are insufficient for its requirements, and for this purpose to impose a levy on all the houses of the Institute. It has authority to accept the resignation of the Superior, but only with the approval of the President.

If the majority of the members of the General Council consider that the interests of the Institute demand the removal of the Superior General, they should refer the matter to the Sacred Congregation, and must abide by the decision of that august body.

97.—The Secretary will take down the minutes of each meeting and read them at the succeeding meeting. At the end of the Chapter, but before the election takes place the Secretary enters in the register a statement setting forth the resolutions adopted at the different sessions of the Chapter. This statement should be signed by the President, the Superior General, and Secretary.

Adequate means to give effect to these resolutions should be adopted as soon as possible. The disciplinary and administra-

tive decisions of the Chapter become law; and cannot be abrogated, or even altered, except by the Chapter.

98.—The proceedings of the General Chapter terminate ordinarily with the election of the General Officers.

99.—If there should be grave reasons for it, the Superior General and her Council can convoke a General Chapter at any time. At extraordinary meetings of the Chapter, the reports referred to in Nos. 94 and 95, are not presented.

Section V.—Election of the Superior General, and of the other Six General Officers.

100.—The election will take place every six years.

101.—The General Officers are seven in number, namely:

The Superior General.
The four General Assistants.
The General Secretary.
The General Treasurer.

102.—During the eight days which precede the election, the prayers and good works of the sisters, and of those under their charge in the several houses of the Institute, are to be offered up to procure from Almighty God the appointment of a Superior General, and of her Assistants, in the government of the Institute, who will be according to His own heart.

The *Veni Creator* is to be said at one of the daily spiritual readings.

103.—No sister can be elected Superior General who is under forty years of age, and who has not had ten years of profession. No sister can be elected Superior General for a third term without the permission of the Holy See.

104.—The electors, after serious reflection in the presence of Almighty God, will endeavor to ascertain which member of the Institute is the most regular, the most edifying, the most faithful in observing the Constitutions, and the most zealous in having them respected and enforced by others, and will cast their votes in her favor, as being the most worthy of the high office of Su-

perior General, and most capable of fulfilling its duties.

105.—The General Assistants, Secretary and Treasurer should be thirty-five years of age, and ten years professed, and can be elected as often as the necessities of the Institute may require. The Chapter will select for these different appointments sisters of approved virtue. solid character, prudence, discretion, and such other qualities as are required for the efficient transaction of business, whether with persons of the Institute or with others.

106.—In order to make the best possible selection. the sisters of the Chapter can procure all requisite information about the candidates for election, but this should always be done privately, and without revealing the names of the candidates.

107.—The Superior and her Officers are elected by ballot, a two-third majority of the votes of the sisters present at the Chapter being required for their election. The President examines the ballots with his chaplains. If the first scrutiny of the votes does not reveal the requisite majority in

favor of any sister, announcement is made to that effect by the President, and another election will be proceeded with, and, if necessary, a third one. If after the third election it is found that a two-third majority of the votes has not been secured, then the right to appoint the Superior will devolve upon the Sacred Congregation, to which a report of the elections will be forwarded by the President of the Chapter. For the other General Officers, if the election is found to be void through the absence of the required majority, the President of the Chapter, as Apostolic Delegate, will appoint those who have a relative majority of votes to their offices.

108.—If the Superior General-elect be absent, the Secretary of the Chapter will apprise her of her election, and request her to present herself at the Mother House as soon as possible.

109.—The act of election will be entered in the register and signed by the President, the retiring Superior General, the General Secretary, and the scrutineers.

110.—In the case of the decease, the voluntary resignation, or the removal from office of the Superior General, the first Assistant will summon the Chapter to meet on an appointed day within six months of the event.

111.—As the term of office of the General Officers ends with the retirement from office of the Superior General, at every election of the Superior General, new General Officers have to be elected.

112.—As the assemblies, which are held every six years, generaly take place in the month of July, the Officers elected as in No. 111, will date their term of office from the month of July of the year in which they received their appointment.

The sisters are bound to accept the result of the elections and the decision of the Chapter, with entire and respectful submission—without complaint or murmur.

The Superior General and General Council.

CHAPTER III.

Section I.—Composition and Meetings of the Council.

113.—The private Council of the Superior General is composed of the General Assistants. The General Secretary and the General Treasurer cannot assist at the meetings of the Council, except on business relating to their respective offices. They have no voice whatever in the affairs of the civil corporation, or in the naming of the General Officers, or in deciding as to the necessity of convoking the General Chapter. The Mistress of Novices may attend the meetings of the Council to give an account of her subjects, but she has only a consultative voice. No resolution of the General Council is valid that is not supported by a majority of that body.

114.—If the Superior General with her Council should decide upon the withdrawal from office of any of the General officers, such

a decision cannot be put into effect without the authority of the Ordinary.

115.—Twice a month the Superior General will call her Councillors together to consult with them on the condition of the houses of the Institute, and the means to be taken to promote fervor and good order therein. She is at liberty to consult with them either individually or collectively. It is her right to propose the subjects to be considered and discussed and to receive the votes. In case of an equal division of the votes, she has the casting vote.

Section II.—Duties and Prerogatives of the Superior General.

116.—The Superior General is invested with all the authority requisite to enforce the observance of the Constitutions. Her special office is to govern the Institute, exercising her authority for the common good, and for the promotion of the works committed to her. She must also labor for the sanctification of the souls of the sisters, and of all

others under her care. With this in view, she must study the Constitutions thoroughly, and become imbued with their spirit, and exemplify it in her own life – after the model of the Divine Master, Who practiced what He preached.

117.—She must devote herself to mental prayer and all other spiritual exercises with constancy and fervor. It is in her communications with God that she will acquire that supernatural light, strength and courage whereby she will be enabled to govern the Institute according to His holy will.

118.—As the care of the poor and sick is the principal object of the Institute, she will direct all her thought and energy accordingly, and deem it her duty, either through herself or her sisters, to impart relief wherever the claims of human distress make themselves heard.

119.—She should never cease impressing upon her sisters the obligation they are under to be charitable, grave, modest and courageous to meet the dangers that threaten the virtue of religious unfortunately so often when exposed in the world.

120.—The Superior will consider it her most important duty to labor, and see that her sisters labor, for the salvation of the souls of those confided to their care.

121.—Fully understanding these grave obligations, and fortified by the grace that God always grants to those who trust in Him, the Superior General will be able to exercise with efficiency, and advantage to herself personally, the powers invested in her.

122.—She must see that no point of the Constitutions shall fall into disuse, and must maintain good order throughout the Institute; this she promised at her appointment as Superior General. She will give the sisters salutary advice, enforce the observance of the rule, and punish any voluntary violation thereof by administering such penances, either public or private, as she may judge, before God, will conduce to the welfare of the delinquent, and to the general edification of the members of the Institute.

123.—She will always receive her sisters with cordiality, affection and charity; will console them in their trials and help

them to bear their afflictions. She will take special care of the bodily health of her sisters. Should any one of them become seriously ill, she will have her at once placed in the infirmary. Should a sister die, the Superior General will give notice of her demise to all the houses of the Institute. When the institute is divided into Provinces, the regulations indicated in No. 40, page 26, will be followed.

124.—She will give her Monitrix full liberty to admonish her of her faults, and will even urge her to perform this duty of charity.

125.—She will examine the applicants for admission to the Novitiate, and obtain whatever information she prudently can, regarding their antecedents. She may admit those to the preparatory Novitiate in whom she discovers an aptitude for the works of the Institute.

126.—She will watch over the Novitiate attentively, in order to assure herself that the novices are being well formed, and that none are admitted therein who are not worthy. She will visit the Novitiate, or

have one of her Assistants do so, four times a year to examine the Postulants and Novices so as to satisfy herself of their being properly trained in the Christian virtues, and well instructed on the obligations of the religious state, and the duties attached to the works of the Institute. She will have the Novices brought before the Council every three months, and will see that those accepted by the Council for their profession or for the habit, present them to the Ordinary for Canonical Examination at least one month before they take the habit or pronounce their vows.

127.—Once a year she will visit all the houses of the Institute, or appoint a sister to do so, so as better to know her subjects and the condition of the houses.

128.—She may delegate her authority as Superior General to any particular sister for a specified time, but is at liberty to confirm or annul what is done by virtue of such delegation. With the consent of her Council she can even annul or confirm decisions emanating from the Councils of Provinces.

129.—Every year she will issue circulars

to all the houses of the Institute, and set forth whatever important events may have occurred, together with what she considers may tend to the glory of God, and an increase of zeal for the promotion of the works of the Institute.

130.—She may dispense from the rule in cases where her conscience tells her a dispensation is necessary or proper.

131.—She will designate the houses in which the annual retreats are to be made by the sisters who cannot come to the Mother House. She will always be present and preside at the annual retreats. She will give the Novices their names in religion.

132.—Should a sister be obliged to go from home, it is to the Superior General she has to apply for the requisite permission.

133.—She will ascertain by careful examination the financial condition of the Mother House, and sign the accounts presented to her by the General Treasurer every three months.

134.—The General Council will determine the amount of money to be dispensed in alms by the Superior General. The latter

may spend in good works whatever she may receive as a gift from personal friends.

135.—Every three years the Superior General will report to the Holy See the condition of the Institute with respect to its works, its houses, its finances and its subjects. She will address her report to the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. She will not fail to inspire the sisters with a sentiment of deep veneration for the Holy See, and have them pray frequently and fervently for the Sovereign Pontiff, especially in time of calamity to the Church. She will designate the prayers to be said at the death of a benefactor of the Institute.

Section III.—Duties and Prerogatives of the Superior General and Her Council.

136.—The Superior General must have the deliberative vote of her Councillors for:

The entrance, reception and profession of subjects; for the administration of the funds

of the general cash-box; for constructing new buildings, or improving old ones; for negotiating a loan, or incurring any extraordinary expense; for the approbation or verification of the annual accounts of each establishment of the Institute; for entering into contracts of purchase or sale; for general administration of the property of the Institute; for authority to enter or pursue a lawsuit; for founding, transferring or selling, a house; for an extraordinary visit of an establishment; for the interpretation of doubtful points of the Constitutions; for the nomination of Mistresses of Novices, sub-Mistresses, Provincial Superiors and Local Superiors of the houses of the Institute, and Assistants, Councillors and Bursars of Provinces; for the nomination of Assistants, Councillors, Bursars, Secretaries, Directresses of retreats for seculars, Almoners of the poor, visiting sisters, Directresses of studies, the Mistresses of classes and Directresses of the the Third Order of Servites in houses not within the Province. In changing sisters from one Province to another, or from one house to another, in

exceptional cases and for particular reasons, she may act of her own accord without consulting the Community.

She will have recourse to the Ordinary when there is question of accepting a new establishment, engaging in a lawsuit or selling or mortgaging property valued at more than one thousand dollars.

She must have recourse to the Holy See in the following cases:

1st, when there is question of borrowing an amount in excess of four thousand dollars; 2nd, for changing the site of the Mother House, or suppressing any house of the Institute; 3rd, to obtain a dispensation from their vows in favor of sisters who are an object of scandal in the Institute; 4th, for the creation of new Provinces or Novitiates. In this case she will send to the Sacred Congregation testimonial letters of her own Bishop, and of the Bishop of the diocese where the new Novitiate is to be established.

The Superior, when on a visitation, can regulate all matters in which the well-being

of the Province is concerned, with the advice of the Provincial Council.

137.—The Mother House is under the immediate supervision of the Superior General, and she governs it as a Local house through one of the Assistants, or any other sister named by the Council.

CHAPTER IV.

General Assistants.

138.—The General Assistants should be of one heart and mind with the Superior General; ever moved by her spirit, her views and her rules of action, so as to be an especial help and comfort to her in the labors and trials that necessarily accompany her extensive administration.

139.—Their principal duty is to uphold the authority of the Superior General over the members of the Institute.

140.—Should a sister consult an Assistant about her personal difficulties or troubles, the latter will receive her with gentleness and affection, and be particularly careful

always to defend the authority of the Superior General should any disaffection against her be manifested.

141.—In the absence of the Superior General, they may according to their rank of precedence, treat with seculars on pressing business matters; but they will postpone any final action until the Superior General is consulted. If the business is such as to require immediate settlement, the Assistants can in that case settle it, after consultation with each other.

142.—During the Superior General's absence, the sister who represents her authority should communicate with her frequently and keep her informed as to the condition of the house and the decisions of the Council. She will work in harmony with the other Assistants. She will follow the spirit and carry out the intentions of the Superior General, and be particular not to make any unnecessary innovations or changes.

CHAPTER V.

General Secretary.

143.—The General Secretary's duty is to assist the Superior General in writing or copying documents, etc. She has charge of the Corporation seal, and will be careful to have it affixed to all documents emanating from the general administration, and will see that such documents are recorded in the register or catalogue.

144.—When a meeting of the Chapter is to be held she will prepare a list of the vocal sisters of each house, and of the sisters who are eligible to the office of Deputy. In the Provinces this list will be prepared by the Provincial Secretary.

The General Secretary will also draw up a list of the sisters who are eligible to the offices of Superior General, General Assistants, General Secretary and General Treasurer, placing the age and the number of years in religion of each sister after her name.

145.—She will carefully preserve in the

secretary or archives, all documents which the Superior General may entrust to her; and it will be her duty to supply copies of such documents when required to do so, and to certify to their correctness over her own signature.

146.—She will prepare a rough draft of the minutes of the Council, which she will have approved before entering in the register. The same will be done in regard to the business of the General Chapter. The reports of the meetings of the Council, and of the General Chapter will be signed by the Superior General, or, in her absence, by the First General Assistant, and by the General Secretary. The act of the election of the General Officers should be signed by the two scrutineers.

CHAPTER VI.

General Treasurer.

147.—The General Treasurer has, under the Superior General, the administration

and management of the temporal affairs of the Institute. She is charged with the safe, and all the funds of the Community.

148.—She has power to receive foundations, enter into business transactions, engage in necessary lawsuits, etc., with the approval of the Council of the Superior General.

149.—She will see that bequests made in favor of the Community are discharged with as little delay as possible.

150.—The accounts should be settled once a month, and submitted to the Superior General for her approval every three months.

The General Treasurer will present a report to the General Chapter of the financial condition of the houses of the Institute every six years.

151.—If new buildings have to be constructed, or old buildings repaired at the expense of the Institute, it is the business of the General Treasurer to see after all such work.

CHAPTER VII.

Provinces.

152.—A Province is made up of a number of houses which are under the Supervision of a Provincial Superior, but subject to the authority of the Superior General.

It is for the Superior General and her Council to determine how many houses there are to be in each Province.

153.—The administration of the affairs of a Province belongs to the Provincial Superior, whose term of office is for three years, but who may be elected a second or a third term. She will be assisted in her administration by four Councillors, of whom two at least should reside with her.

The Provincial Superior will reside in a house assigned her by the Superior General, and she will be Local Superior in her place of residence.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Provincial Superior.

154.—The Provincial Superior being invested with a share of the authority of the Superior General wiil have but one heart and one mind with her; so that all the sisters, may be governed by the same principles and be united closely together in the practice of the virtues of the religious state.

She should adopt the policy of the Mother House in the government of the Province.

155.—She is to promote the spirit of the Institute in all the houses of her Province. She will receive with kindness and gratitude the admonitions of her monitrix, so that the latter may not be backward in notifying her of her faults.

156.—Once a month she will convoke a meeting of her Councillors to decide upon admissions, receptions, or professions of subjects, to deliberate on the spiritual and temporal affairs of the houses of the Province, to take means to promote fervor and good

order among them, also to make appointments, etc.

157.—She cannot establish new houses, nor can she authorize the construction or reparation of buildings to the amount of more than five hundred dollars. She cannot engage in any undertaking of more than ordinary importance without the consent of her Council, and the permission of the Superior General.

158.—Once a year she will convoke a meeting of her Councillors to verify the accounts of the houses, to confer with them on the best means to be used for the promotion of the various works of the Institute. She will draft a report of the deliberations of each meeting and send it to the Superior General.

159.—She cannot engage in a lawsuit without the permission of the Superior General and her Council.

160.—She will write to the Superior General every three months, and give an account of her administration, and of the conduct of the sisters.

161.—She will verify and sign the quar-

terly statement of accounts when submitted to her by the Bursar.

162.—She will visit the houses of her Province once a year, unless dispensed by the Superior General.

163.—Should a sister of her Province die, she will notify the Superior General and the sisters of the Province of her death.

164.—In Provinces where Novitiates exist the Provincial Superior is obliged, every three months, to give an account of the Novices under her guidance to the Superior General. Before accepting a Novice for profession, the approbation of the Superior General and her Council must be procured. The Provincial Superior cannot present the Novices to the Ordinary for canonical examination without authority from the Superior General and Council.

CHAPTER IX.

The Councillors.

165.—The Councillors should be strongly imbued with the spirit of the Constitutions,

and be guided by it in their intercourse with the sisters, especially with respect to the counsels which they may be called upon to give them from time to time.

166.—When the Councillors are invited to give their opinions in Council, the youngest member speaks first; for the voting, which is done by ballot, the order is reversed.

167.—At these meetings the Councillors will humbly and frankly state whatever they may think will conduce to the greater good of the Institute and to the greater glory of Almighty God. They will discuss the questions proposed to them in a spirit of gentleness and charity. Should the Superior General decide any matter, they will always deferentially accept and abide by her decision; except it is in manifest violation of the Constitution. Matters of importance will not be decided on the day they are submitted to the Council, time must be taken to consider them fully and to obtain light from heaven through prayer.

168.—The sisters are bound to secrecy with regard to the subjects discussed at the

meetings of the Council and other communications with the Superior General.

169.—If the Councillors, whether Provincial or Local, should experience a difficulty in dealing with certain cases, they should make it known to the Superior General.

170.—The Provincial Councillors should write once a year to the Superior General and inform her of the condition of their respective Provinces. They will not show each other their letters, or copies of them. Each sister must express her own individual opinion, and must not allow her judgment to be biased by the opinions of others. When a subject is to be admitted to profession, the Councillors will make known her character, dispositions, etc, to the Superior General.

171.—The meetings of the Councillors always commence with the *Veni Sancte*, which is followed by the *Ave Maria*, the invocations of our Lady of Seven Dolors, of Saint Joseph, of Saint Vincent de Paul, of Saint Elizabeth and of Saint Genevieve, and terminate with the *Sub Tuum*.

CHAPTER X.

Local Superiors.

172.—Each house of the Institute is governed by a Local Superior and two Councillors. In houses where there are less than seven sisters the Superior will have her Assistant for Councillor

173.—The Local Superior will govern her sisters and others in her charge according to the rules of the Constitutions with gentleness, prudence and firmness. Since she is officially bound to promote the true spirit of the Institute among her sisters, she should fail in nothing that can possibly conduce towards that end.

174.—She should be a model to all in her observance of the rules and customs of the Institute and the ordinances of the Superior General. She should preserve all circular letters received from the Superior General, and have them read to the sisters occasionally.

175.—She will always exercise her authority with humility, so that the sisters may

obey her purely from motives of Divine love.

She will impose a penance, either public or private, for the wilful violation of the rules, in accordance with the customs of the Institute. She will never reprove the sisters before seculars, nor even before the Community unless for the purpose of giving edification. If any one apprise her of the fault of a sister she will try to defend the delinquent. She will never speak of the faults of her sisters except when impelled by motives of charity to do so.

176.—The work she cannot personally perform will be done by her Assistant. Except in case of necessity the Superior and her Assistant will not be absent from the house at the same time. One or other of them must be always present to maintain good order, and attend to the wants of the sisters. She will see that the personal effects of the sisters are according to rule.

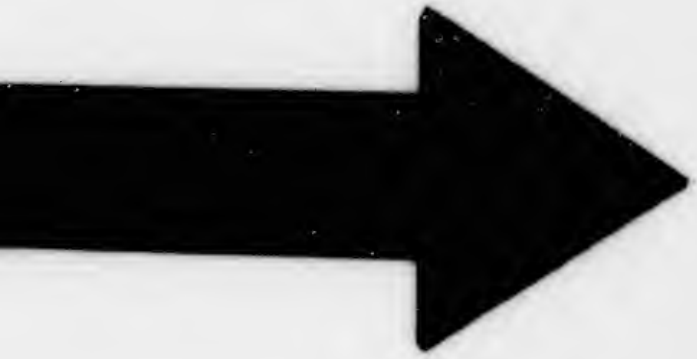
177.—She will take care of the health of the sisters; and should any of them die or be taken ill, she will forthwith notify the Superior General thereof and await her instructions.

178.—She will visit the offices frequently, to see that they are in good order that the works of the Institute are performed with all possible care and diligence, that the poor are treated with charity, and supplied with good food as far as the resources of the house will permit; that the sisters do all in their power to make them happy. She will see that no branches of study are taught in the schools which not sanctioned by the Superior General

179.—She will try to induce those who have means to be generous towards the poor, and on the other hand, will inspire the poor with sentiments of gratitude towards their benefactors.

180.—She may exempt a sister from a point of the rule when prudence, charity or necessity requires it, as in sickness, or when any special work demands the attention of a sister, etc. A dispensation must never be contrary to the spirit of the Institute.

181.—The Local Superior will do nothing of importance without the advice of her Councillors, whom she will assemble from



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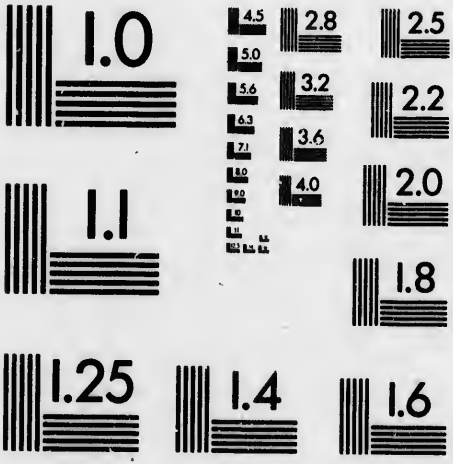

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time to time to confer with her on the observance of the Constitutions and the temporal affairs of the house, etc.; and whose decisions must always be submitted to the Superior General, or in the Provinces, to the Provincial Superior. In all serious or doubtful cases, the Local Superior should consult the Superior General.

182.—She will pay the current expenses of her house, and see that the buildings, outhouses, etc., are kept in a good condition. For extraordinary repairs she must have recourse to the Superior General.

183.—Should she borrow money from the General Treasury, she will be at liberty to refund it at any time.

184.—She will follow Nos. 160 and 161 of the rules of the Provincial Superior, page 73.

185.—She will neither go on a journey herself, nor permit a sister to do so, without the permission of the Superior General.

186.—Every three months she will give an account of her house and of her sisters to the Superior General.

187.—The Superior of a succursal is re-

sponsible for its temporal management to the Superior of the house on which the succursal depends. She will exercise authority over her sisters and all others in the house, in accordance with the spirit of the Constitutions.

188.—Superiors of houses not comprised in Provinces will apply to the Superior General in their difficulties regarding their administration, etc. Superiors in the Provinces will apply to the Provincial Superior in such cases.

CHAPTER XI.

Provincial and Local Assistants.

189.—The Assistant in every local house of the Institute is officially the Councillor and Monitrix of the Superior, with whom there should be a good understanding, and whom she should treat with great respect and veneration.

190.—In the absence of the Superior the Assistant will attend to the business of the

house, but must not decide upon anything outside of the ordinary routine of business without her knowledge and consent.

191.—She will be frank in the expression of her views to the Superior, and show in her manner much simplicity and charity. In fine, she will be diligent in putting the intentions of the Superior into effect, laboring in union with her to maintain good order everywhere.

CHAPTER XII.

Foundations.

192.—The Community will consider the founding of a house a matter of grave importance, and will not undertake it without serious deliberation and fervent prayer.

193.—The Community can accept an establishment either as proprietor or as lessee thereof, but it will not assume the obligation of sustaining it. It must see, however, that adequate provision is made for the support of the subjects whom it sends

there, and for their absolute freedom to observe the rules and Constitutions.

194.—The sisters will proceed with as little delay as possible to their place of residence, and commence at once to do their allotted work—visiting the sick, instructing the ignorant and relieving the poor.

195.—No matter where the sisters may be located, they will ever keep present in their minds that they are members of the Institute, which holds towards them the relation of a tender mother to her children.

They will be faithful in observing the Constitutions, customs and traditions of the Mother House, and thereby strengthen the ties which bind them to the home wherein they received their first lessons in the religious life.

196.—As the Institute has been established to serve the Church everywhere it can reach, the sisters will be careful not to allow the subject of nationality to cause dissensions to exist amongst them.

197.—Each house of the Institute will have a Saint for patron, and will bear the designation of House of Providence, or Asylum,

or Hospital, or Orphan Asylum, or Residence, as the Superior General may decide.

198.—All Foundations or Establishments are under the absolute control of the mother house.

199.—The Superior General is the Superior of all the houses of the Institute, and governs them with the same authority as she governs the mother house. The sisters are all subordinate to her with respect to the temporal as well as the spiritual affairs of the Institute.

CHAPTER XIII.

Visits and Contributions.

200.—A tax will be levied on every local house at the rate of twenty-five dollars per annum for each resident sister, to defray the expenses of the general administration, etc. Each house in a Province will contribute half of the above amount to the Provincial House and the balance to the Mother House. These annuities constitute the General Treasury, which is further augmented by

various revenues, viz., dowries, legacies and gifts made to the Institute.

201.—The funds of the General Treasury may be used to help new foundations and houses in need of assistance.

202.—In the Provinces expenses, attending the visits of the Superior General, the Provincial Superior, or their respective delegates will be defrayed by the houses of the Province, each contributing in proportion to its annual revenue,—except in the case of very poor houses which may be exempted by permission of the Superior General. The Provincial Superior's expenses, while in attendance at the Chapter, will be defrayed out of the same fund.

203.—Every house not comprised in a Province will defray the expenses incurred by the Superior General or her delegate, in their annual visits to it.

204.—When a sister is called to the Mother House or Provincial House on account of illness, or on business connected with the house where she resides, that house pays the expenses of her journey.

PART THIRD.

The Novitiate.

CHAPTER I.

Admission of Subjects.

205.—Only persons of respectable parentage, who are irreproachable in their moral character, are blessed with such a measure of health of body and mind as to enable them to bear the labors and fulfil the duties of the different offices of the Institute, have a suitable education, are free from debt, and possess the other qualities required for the religious life, can be received as Postulants.

206.—Widows, illegitimate children, and persons over twenty-five years of age, cannot be admitted without a dispensation from the Ordinary.

207.—On entering the Novitiate each subject must be provided with the necessary clothing, bedding, etc., unless dispensed therefrom by the Superior General.

208.—Every Postulant must be provided with a certificate of character, her certificate of baptism and confirmation, before being received into the Institute.

209.—After their entrance the Postulants will be trained in the works of the Institute, and the duties of a Christian and religious life. After having spent one year in the preparatory Novitiate, and given satisfaction to their superiors, they will receive the holy habit.

210.—The Novitiate should last one entire year, and date from the day on which the Novices receive the holy habit. It is not permitted to the Superior General to extend the term for more than six months beyond that time without the permission of the Ordinary. The Novices, during their Novitiate, should

be separated from the professed sisters, except in the choir and refectory. They are under the immediate supervision of the Mistress of Novices, and should be taught the duties of the various offices and trained to them. They will occupy themselves in the study of the religious life, and with the exercises proper to the Novitiate.

211.—Aptitude for the works of the Institute, purity of intention, docility of spirit, frankness of character, openness of heart, and, above all, a sincere desire for their personal sanctification in the service of the poor and sick, will be considered positive marks of vocation.

212.—Persons will not be admitted to profession who, through some serious defect of character or an evident incapacity for the work of the Institute, or impaired health are likely to become a burden to the Institute.

213.—If any sister should fail to pay her dowry or the cost of her trousseau, the amounts thereof will be deducted from any inheritance which may afterwards come to her.

214.—Each sister, before making profession, is to give to the Community as her dowry the sum of $300. The moneys accruing from this source are to be deposited in the bank. No sister's dowry can be expended without the permission of the Archbishop until after her death.

215.—The dowry provided by a novice belongs to the house in which she makes profession.

216.—A sister, whether professed or not, cannot claim anything for her services while employed in the Institute. Her dowry only can be claimed.

217.—The vows of the Institute are simple vows. After two years they become perpetual vows. The formula is as follows :

In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I, N.N., wishing to consecrate myself to God, and to become a servant of the poor, do freely promise and cheerfully make to His Divine Majesty, the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience for the remainder of my life, according to the rules and Constitutions of this Institute, and under the absolute direction of my Ecclesi-

astical Superior, the Archbishop of Kingston. I humbly implore the Divine mercy through the infinite merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, the intercession of His holy Mother and the prayers of the holy patrons of this Institute, to graciously receive these promises, and to give me grace to be faithful to them unto the end. Amen.

218.—When a Novice is in danger of death she may be allowed to make her vows if permitted by the Archbishop. Should she recover her health she will continue her Novitiate and pronounce her vows at the ordinary time.

CHAPTER II.

Mistress of Novices and Sub-Mistresses.

219.—The Mistress of Novices should be at least thirty-five years of age and ten years professed. She will be exclusively occupied with the care of the Novices, and cannot be appointed to any other office. On her, the

future welfare of the Institute depends; her responsibility is then very great.

220.—In order to acquit herself of her obligations, she will labor to become spiritual and to acquire the dispositions necessary for the proper discharge of the important work with which she is entrusted.

221.—She will diligently study the New Testament, so as to know our Lord more intimately, that she may be able to love and imitate Him better, for it is in the school of the Divine Master that she will learn to become a good Mistress. As our Lord formed His Apostles to all the virtues she will learn from Him how to lead her Novices to religious perfection. She will also read other good books and particularly "The Imitation of Christ" and have them frequently read to the Novices.

222.—One of her most essential obligations is to initiate the Novices into the knowledge and practice of a Christian and religious life and the spirit of the Constitutions. She will make them practice simplicity, humility, charity and obedience and inspire them with a great love for those virtues by show-

ing them the precious advantages which result from their practice. Several times in the year she will read the Constitutions in the Novitiate and suggest the means of reducing them to practice. She will instruct her Novices on the obligations which their vows impose.

223.—She will teach them catechism, and will instruct them on the method of teaching it to others. This is a sure and speedy means of giving them a good religious education, whereby they may be enabled later to successfully labor for the salvation of the souls of those who may come under their charge, while ministering to the relief of their bodily ailments.

224.—She will explain to them the methods of meditation and general and particular examens. Every night she will prepare the subject of meditation for the following day, or request a Novice to do so. This exercise should occupy a quarter of an hour.

225.—She will form her Novices according to the rules of religious modesty and good breeding, will correct in them all singularity of manner, and not allow particular friend-

ships. She will also instruct them in the works of the Institute. She will prepare those who she thinks have the ability to teach in the schools of the Institute. She will instil into the minds of her Novices sentiments of deep respect for the Community sisters, and particlarly for the Superior General. She will warn them of the dangers to be encountered in the parlor, and allow them to go there as seldom as possible; she will also read all the letters that they write or receive.

226.—A portion of the time set apart for the exercises of the Novitiate can be employed by the Mistress in catechising the Novices to ascertain the progress they are making towards perfection. By this means she can inform herself as to the spiritual profit they derive from the means of sanctification given them. She will also avail herself of this time to make comments on their conduct, etc. In order to maintain proper discipline in the Novitiate, she will not hesitate to impose penances when necessary.

227.—She will be careful to foster in the

hearts of the Novices a love for the devotions proper to the Institute, and not permit the introduction of any new religious practices. She will always bear in mind that it is through the protection of the holy patrons of the Institute that her subjects will be imbued with that real charity which will make them true servants of the poor.

228.—She will take care of the health of the Novices, be especially kind to the timid among them and prudently provide for all their wants. She will train them to habits of neatness, order and economy. She will do nothing unusual in her government of the Novices without permission of the Superior General.

229.—Should the Mistress be informed of any fault committed by a Novice, she will, receive the information with thankfulness, and without allowing her informant to know her opinion of the delinquent. She will, from time to time, make such inquiries as will enable her to obtain a satisfactory knowledge of all that concerns the Novitiate.

230.—Some time before the Novices finish

their Novitiate, the Mistress will advise them as to their course of conduct for the remainder of their lives.

231.—The authority of the Mistress is immediately dependent upon that of the Superior General. She will be faithful to inform the latter once a month of the conduct of the Novices, and consult her as to the proper means to employ for their advancement in perfection. She will request her to have the Novices brought before the Council every three months. She will instruct the Novices as to the account they have to give of themselves to the Superior General or her delegate in the visits to the Novitiate.

232.—Though it is desirable for the sake of perfect uniformity of sentiment and action that the Mistress alone should have charge of the Novitiate, the Superior General may, when her multiplied duties make it necessary, appoint one or more sub-Mistresses to assist her in certain circumstances. One at least should be thirty years of age.

It is proper that the sub-Mistresses act in accordance with the wishes of their Superior officer and should promote confidence

and respect in the Novices towards their first Mistress; as the latter should cultivate in the sub-Mistresses confidence and respect for the Superior General, whom she represents in the Novitiate.

233.—The sub-Mistresses are bound to exercise a careful surveillance over the Novices everywhere, and faithfully report to the Mistress whatever they consider she should know about them.

234.—In the Novitiate of a Province, the Mistress will render an account of the state of the Novitiate to the Provincial Superior every month, and to the Superior General every three months. When the term of probation of a Novice is closing, the Mistress will render a more precise and detailed account of her dispositions, qualifications and character, in order that the Superior General and the Provincial Superiors may be prepared to form a correct judgment as to whether she should be admitted to profession or not.

235.—The sister charged with the direction of the Novices will study to form them according to the spirit of the Institute, so

that no matter where they may make their Novitiate, they will always and everywhere be recognized as true Sisters of Charity. No new custom can be introduced into any of the houses of the Institute without the approbation of the Superior General and her Council.

CHAPTER III.

The Novitiate.

236.—The Novitiate is a true solitude, in which the Novices take refuge from the dangerous pursuits of a seductive world, the spirit and maxims of which are opposed to the Gospel of Christ.

237.—To profit of the graces which await them in this blessed resort they should devote themselves zealously and fervently to its pious exercises, so that when leaving it they may be disposed to renounce all worldly affections and all attachments foreign to Divine love, and be so changed in their habits of life as to be no longer recognized as the same person.

238.—The Novices should bring into religion a right spirit and a good will, and they should neglect nothing to augment this precious treasure in their hearts, after the example of our Lord, who grew in wisdom and grace before God and men. A right spirit makes known the way of perfection, and a good will gives courage to walk in it.

239.—They must expect trials, and prepare for them; for the world, the flesh and the devil will not fail to assail them. They will be subjected to interior trials through their separation from their parents, their change of habits, the difficulties they meet with in making their spiritual exercises, and especially that of their mental prayer, their public avowal of faults committed, etc. Let them arm themselves with courage to conquer these dread enemies of their happiness. Let each one say to herself frequently with Saint Bernard "Wherefore have I come here?" It is to conquer corrupt nature, by abstaining from what it craves, and doing what it rebels against. This practice faithfully observed will soon enable them to acquire the religious virtues, even though

they should have entered the Novitiate burdened with many faults.

240.—They will make a meditation twice a day and do all in their power to become familiar with the practice of it. In this way they will conquer self-love and regulate their lives unrestrained by disorderly affections. They must understand that they can do nothing of themselves, but can do all with the help of God.

241.—They will make unceasing efforts to acquire the virtues of simplicity, humility, charity and obedience, those virtues being the spiritual foundation of the Institute. They will devote themselves with cheerfulness to humiliating labors and exercises, and rejoice in being rebuked, maltreated and contemned, even when they feel they are innocent. Animated by a spirit of faith they will thank God for these trials which make them bear some resemblance to their Divine Master, taking them as evidences of His Infinite mercy. He will be glorified by them according as they become mean and contemptible in their own eyes.

They will love the practices of Com-

munity life and avoid all singularity. If they are simple, charitable and obedient Novices, they will become good Sisters of Charity.

The decisions and advice of their confessor they will accept with full confidence as the great means whereby to guard against the illusions of the evil one, who, in the religious life, often transforms himself into an angel of light. They will make known to him with simplicity and candor their troubles of conscience.

242.—The Novices will practice the devotions of the Institute as prescribed by the Constitutions. Let them apply themselves to acquire the habit and spirit of prayer, which will make them practice recollection of spirit in the most distracting occupations. "Short prayers but well performed," must be a maxim with them. Their exercises of piety will be made at the hours appointed by the rule.

243.—The Novices will receive Communion every Sunday and holyday; the Postulants every second Sunday. They will observe the Constitutions with joy, love and fidelity,

and obey their Mistress in all simplicity and humility. They will not absent themselves from the Novitiate without her permission or that of the sub-Mistress.

244.—They will listen to instructions on their religious obligation with an earnest desire to profit by them. They will make their meditation aloud, and render an account of the instructions they receive whenever the Mistress requires it. Let their chief study be to learn the catechism well, so as to be able to instruct others in the truths of religion.

245.—Let the Novices understand well that they are obliged, after their profession, to go wherever the Superior General may send them.

246.—Postulants who desire to receive the habit, and Novices who wish to make profession will, at the instance of their confessor and Mistress, ask these respective privileges of the Superior General, in writing, some time before the end of their probation, and their whole term in the Novitiate will be considered a season of preparation for these, the most important events of their lives.

247.—In order the better to purify their consciences, if the confessor permit it, they will make a general confession during their retreat, and they will cherish an ardent desire to consecrate themselves to God with all the dispositions so great a sacrifice requires. The day of their reception or profession being one of the most beautiful and holy of their lives, will be passed in thanksgiving. They will be allowed to see their relatives, to thank them for any sacrifices made in their regard and to testify to the love they bear them.

248.—In order to obtain additional grace and to testify to our Lord her happiness in becoming His spouse, every sister will feel pleasure in repeating the formula of her vows after each holy Communion. She will call to mind, from time to time, that the formula of her vows, signed by herself, will be placed in her hands, when her body is laid out for the grave, and that on the obligations imposed by her vows she shall be judged.

249.—She will esteem herself happy when the Mistress punishes her for neglect of

duty. She will labor to atone for her faults by overcoming her natural tepidity, and always cherish a spirit of ardent devotion. By this means she will dispose herself to enter upon the way of solid perfection for which she prepared herself before entering the Community.

250.—On the day she leaves the Novitiate, she will ask pardon on her knees of her Mistress and companions for the faults she may have committed against them; will beg them to continue to pray for her, and give them the kiss of peace. She will then present herself before the Superior General, and make the customary promises.

CHAPTER IV.

Summary of the Principal Means of Preserving the Spirit of the Institute.

251.—The frequent reading of the Constitutions, the faithful observance of the practices and usages of the Institute.

252.—Reference to the Superior General and her Council, and to no other, whenever a doubt occurs about the interpretation of a point of the Constitutions. No sister should take it upon herself to make a change in the rule.

253.—Regular meetings of the General Chapter, whose main purpose is to maintain regularity and prevent laxity.

254.—Having the smallest number possible of separate Novitiates, in order that all the subjects of the Institute be formed to the same spirit.

255.—The frequent sending of circular letters and the regular visitation of the houses of the Institute.

256.—In order to preserve a holy union with the deceased members of the Institute the sisters will offer up their Communions on the last Sunday of every month for the repose of their souls.

257.—They will offer up their Communions on the third Sunday of every month in the special intention of obtaining the blessings of peace and prosperity for the Institute.

258.—The faithful practice of the Fundamental devotions established in the Institute by our Venerable Founder. Meditation on the Passion of our Lord and the sorrows of His August Mother.

259.—As nothing is dearer to the sisters than the prosperity of their Institute, so nothing should be wanting in them that can contribute to its advancement and permanent existence.

General Remark.

Notwithstanding the importance of exactly observing the rule, the sisters are not bound by it under pain of sin, unless in a matter that is otherwise of precept or ordained by the Superior General in virtue of holy obedience.

DECREE

OF OUR

Most Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII.

(No 19,621.)

As all things human, however good and holy, are by their very nature liable to abuse; laws, no matter how wisely framed, are sometimes so misinterpreted as not only to frustrate their purpose but to produce an effect entirely opposite to the intentions of the legislator.

It is much to be deplored that such has been the case in regard to the laws of many congregations, societies and institutes of women, who take simple or solemn vows and of laymen. For in some instances where constitutions permit a revelation by subjects of their troubles of conscience to their superiors in order to acquire special informa-

tion in regard to the ways that lead to perfection, some superiors have exacted such a revelation of conscience as is exclusively reserved to the Sacrament of Penance.

In like manner, where, according to the Holy Canons, the constitutions of such communities prescribe that sacramental confession shall be made to the ordinary or extraordinary confessor, some superiors have usurped the authority to deny their subjects the privilege of confessing their sins to an extraordinary confessor even in cases where the welfare of their souls made it imperative that they should do so.

Finally, where it was left to the discretion of superiors to impose penances on their subjects some superiors have gone so far in the improper exercise of this permission as to deprive them of the privilege of receiving Holy Communion.

Hence it has come to pass that salutary and wisely enacted regulations, so wholesome for the preservation and increase of peace and concord in communities, and the spiritual advancement of the members thereof, have not unfrequently conduced to worry

of conscience, and disturbance of external peace, as the occasional appeals and complaints of subjects to the Holy See show most conclusively.

Wherefore our Most Holy Father, Leo XIII. by Divine Providence, Pope, through his special solicitude for this chosen portion of his flock, in an audience granted to me, the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, on the 14, of December 1891, after due deliberation, has willed, ordained and decreed as follows:

His Holiness annuls, abrogates and declares void all regulations in the constitutions of pious societies and institutes of women whether with simple or solemn vows, and of laymen, though said constitutions bear the approbation of the Holy See even in that form, which is termed most special, that concern the intimate manifestation of heart or conscience. Hence it is strictly enjoined upon all the superiors of such institutes, congregations and societies to cancel and entirely expunge from their respective constitutions, directories and manuals the aforesaid regulations. He also annuls and

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He positively forbids the said superiors, of what grade soever, to induce their subjects directly or indirectly, either by command, counsel, fear, threat or flattery, to make any such manifestation of conscience to them. On the other hand, he enjoins upon subjects to denounce to superiors the subordinate officers who shall presume to induce them to do such; and if there be question of the Superior General, such denunciation must be made to this Holy Congregation.

This, however, in nowise inhibits subjects from opening their minds freely and of their own accord to their superiors, in order that counsel and guidance for the acquiring of virtue and of progress towards perfection may be received in their doubts and anxieties from their superiors.

Moreover, whilst maintaining in full force whatever has been prescribed by the Holy Council of Trent in relation to the ordinary and extraordinary confessors of communities, as well as what has been established by

Benedict XIV., of holy memory, in the Constitution "Pastoralis Cura," His Holiness admonishes superiors of all ranks not to refuse an extraordinary confessor to their subjects when the latter shall ask for one for the relief of their consciences, and not to inquire into the reasons for such a request on the part of their subjects, much less to show any displeasure. And in order that so judicious a provision shall not be futile, he exhorts the Ordinaries to appoint worthy priests, with requisite faculties, to whom the communities of women, in their several dioceses, may have easy recourse in the Sacrament of Penance.

In the matter of the granting or of the prohibiting of Holy Communion, His Holiness decrees that such permission or prohibition shall appertain exclusively to the ordinary and extraordinary confessors, without the superior having any authority to meddle therein, except in the case where a subject, after his latest sacramental confession shall have become a scandal to the community, or committed an external fault of a serious nature.

Hence all are warned to prepare themselves carefully for Holy Communion, and to receive it on the days fixed by rule; when, however, a confessor shall judge it expedient for persons to receive more frequently, by reason of their fervor or spiritual progress, he shall have authority to permit it. In such cases, whoever shall receive the privilege of more frequent or even daily Communion, must apprise the superior thereof; and if the superior should think that he has just and grave reasons for objecting, he is bound to make them known to the confessor, by whose judgment he must abide absolutely.

His Holiness also commands all general, provincial and local superiors, of the aforesaid institutes, whether of men or women to observe studiously and fully the provisions of this decree, under the penalties "Ipso facto" incurred by all who violate the mandates of the Apostolic See.

Finally, His Holiness orders copies of this present decree to be translated into the vernacular and inserted in the constitutions of the aforesaid pious institutes to be read in a

clear and intelligible tone of voice once a year at a fixed time, in each house, either in the community, refectory, or in a meeting of the chapter especially convened for this purpose. His Holiness so enacts and decrees, all things to the contrary notwithstanding, even though entitled to special or individual mention.

Given at Rome, in the office of the Secretary of said Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, December 17, 1890.

J. CARDINAL VERGA,
PREFECT.

† FATHER ALOYSIUS,
BISHOP OF CALLINICE,
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