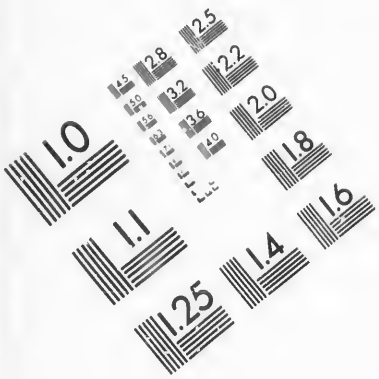

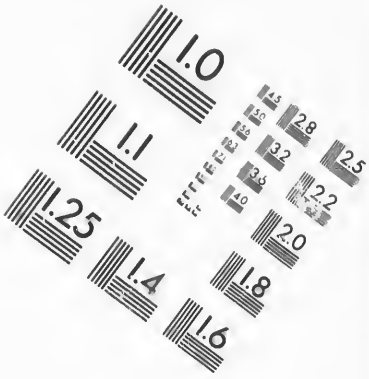

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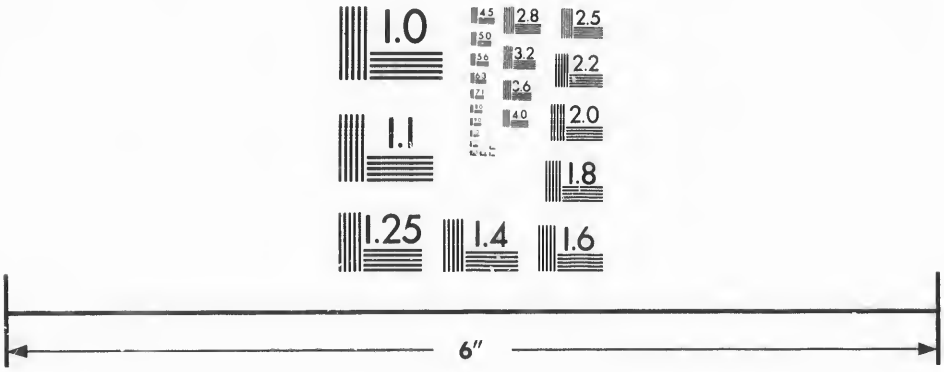

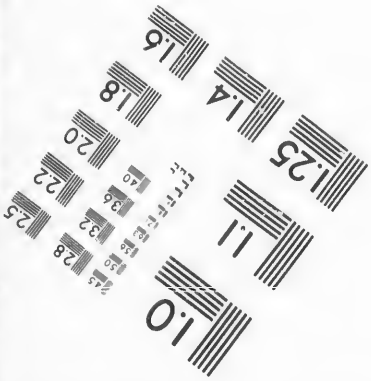

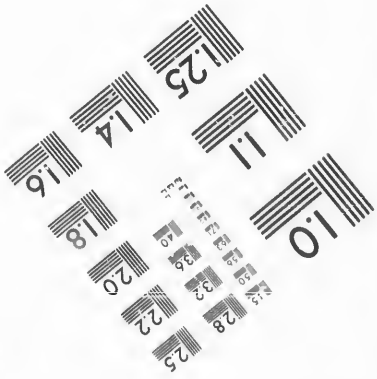

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RULES AND REGULATIONS

OF THE

SOCIETY

OF

ST. VINCENT OF PAUL,

Founded at Quebec, the 12th Nov., 1846

QUEBEC:

Printed by Aug. Côté and Co.

1849.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

It was not till 1846 that the Society of St. Vincent of Paul, which had been established many years before in Paris, became known and appreciated in Quebec. But no sooner had they been made acquainted with the vast services rendered by it in France and other countries of Europe, than several of our citizens, compassionating the miseries of the poor, conceived the design of introducing it among us, and, on the 12th November of that year, established the Conference of Our Lady of Quebec, on the model of those of Paris.

Their example was not long with-

out finding imitators. Already several Conferences exist in the parish of St. Roch and other parts of the city.

It was believed at first that the admirable regulations of the Paris Conferences could be followed throughout. But it was soon discovered that the circumstances not being the same, it was necessary that the rules also should be modified in several respects. This was done, without, however, deviating in any thing from the spirit of the Society.

The regulations of the Society of St. Vincent of Paul established in Quebec, which are here given, are therefore substantially the same as those of the Society established in France. They are an abstract of them, adapted to our usages and wants. The form has been altered, but the substance has been preserved.

May all the generous men who have consented, or will hereafter consent, to form part of this excellent Society,

be thorougly penetrated with the spirit of these regulations, a spirit which is that of christian charity; and may they carry on with fervor and perseverance, the holy work which they have so successfully begun for the relief and consolation of Christ's poor.

Quebec, March, 1847.

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REGULATIONS

OF THE

SOCIETY

OF

ST. VINCENT OF PAUL,

ESTABLISHED IN QUEBEC ON THE 12TH NOVEMBER 1846.

Extract from the regulations published at Paris in December 1835.

HERE at last is the beginning of that written organisation which was the object of our wishes. It has been long delayed, for it is now several years since our little association was commenced. But was it not necessary to ascertain whether it was the will of God that it should live, before it was impressed with a definite form of existence? Was it not neces-

sary that it should have settled upon its basis, that it should know what Heaven required of it, that it might judge of what it could do by what it had done, before it gave rules and prescribed duties to itself? Now we have only had, as it were, to translate into regulations practices that had already been followed and cherished. This is a sure garantee that our regulations will be universally well received and will not fall into oblivion.

Our little congregation was at first styled *the Conference of charity of St. Vincent of Paul.* It so called itself because it wasunder this name it had commenced, and that it might not forget the circumstances of its origin, which no one in particular can refer to himself. It occurred to some of us, while defending religious dogmas in the stormy debates of literary societies, that it was not enough to speak, that it was also necessary to act; hence the works of cha-

rity to which they devoted themselves; hence *the Conference of charity.*

Having greatly increased in numbers, and being obliged to divide ourselves into sections, several of us wishing, besides, to re-unite in other cities where it was their lot to reside in future, each of these sections, which are all comprised under the common denomination of *The Society of St. Vincent of Paul*, continued to be called a *Conference.*

We shall ever avoid giving our association the name of any of its members, whatever services he may be considered to have rendered it, or of any of the places in which it may hold its meetings, lest we should accustom ourselves to look upon it as the work of man: works of christian charity belong to God alone, the author of all that is good.

It was a movement of christian piety that brought us together; it is therefore that we do not seek elsewhere

but in the spirit of religion, the examples and precepts of Our Lord, the teachings of the Church and the Lives of the Saints, for the rules of our conduct; it is therefore that we have placed ourselves under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin and St. Vincent of Paul, to whom we pay particular honor, and in whose footsteps we endeavor to walk.

Christ began by practising what he was afterwards to teach mankind: *cœpit facere et docere*: our desire is to imitate, as far as our weakness will permit us, this divine model. The objects of the Conference are therefore; 1. to maintain its members, by mutual example and counsel, in the practice of a christian life; 2. to visit the poor at their own dwellings, bring them assistance in kind, and give them also religious consolations, remembering these words of our master: *Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth*

of God; 3. to apply ourselves, according to our abilities and the time we can dispose of, to the elementary and christian instruction of poor children, whether free or in prison; what we shall have done for the least of our brethren, Christ has promised that he will hold as done to himself; 4. to circulate moral and religious books; 5. to assist in all such other works of charity, within the limits of our means, and not inconsistent with the primary object of the Society, for which our co-operation may be claimed by it on the proposal of its directors.

The charitable association consists of active members, and others who cannot attend to the works to which it applies itself. These latter aid at least the former with their influence and interest; they make up, by their donations and prayers, for the active co-operation which they are unable to give.

The charitable association must en-

deavor to acquire and practise every virtue: but there are some virtues more peculiarly becoming its members, for the accomplishment of the duties of charity which they take upon themselves; among these are to be numbered self-denial, christian prudence, an effective love of our neighbor, zeal for the salvation of souls, meekness of heart and speech, and above all the spirit of brotherhood. They ought consequently to meditate on the Gospel maxims that inculcate these virtues, and to make them the rules of their lives. Wherefore it is proper to notice here these maxims and give some explanations of them as applicable to our Society.

1. By *self-denial* is to be understood that willingness to defer to the judgment of others, without which no association can last. He who is enamoured with his own ideas will treat those of others with disdain. Contempt of one's brethren, instead of union, be-

gets division. We shall therefore readily yield to the opinions of others, and will not take it amiss that our proposals are not agreed to by them. Mutual good-will amongst us will be hearty and unbounded. We shall avoid all spirit of contention with our brethren, and shall not take offence at an opinion expressed by any one of ourselves. We shall equally avoid all spirit of contention with the poor; shall not be offended if they do not yield to our advice, and shall not attempt to force it upon them authoritatively, but content ourselves with proposing what is right, and strenuously exhorting to its practice, leaving it to God to make our words fructify, if it so please him.

2. Among the poor, some have the happiness to be christians, others are indifferent, many are infidels. We ought not, even in this last case, to turn them away, but we must suit out language to the dispositions of those or

whom it is addressed, remembering that Christ recommends his disciples to unite the prudence of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove. Beneficence opens the door of the soul to confidence: it is, then, by corporal that we prepare the way for spiritual alms. St. Vincent of Paul often recommended that the latter should only be tried after the former had been liberally bestowed. The poor, again, are of different sexes. The charitable Society consisting principally of young men, they must never forget that it is no duty of theirs to visit persons of the other sex, if young, lest, while seeking the salvation of others, they should come by their own ruin. We ought, besides, to shun even the appearance of evil, and any thing that might scandalise the weak.

3. *Love of our neighbor and zeal for the salvation of souls*, is the whole Conference of Charity: whoever is not ac-

tuated by this double feeling, which, in a christian, is but one and the same, ought not to be a member of it. We shall never complain of the pains, fatigues or even repulses to which we may be condemned in the practice of charity. We have exposed ourselves to all these by associating for the service of our neighbor. Neither shall we regret the pecuniary sacrifices we shall have made for the purposes o the association, esteeming ourselves happy to offer something to Christ in the persons of the poor; to have it in our power to procure some relief to his suffering members. These sacrifices we shall make without any reserve, and shall not consider the poor whom we have adopted as entitled to any preference in the distribution of relief, because we may have contributed more than others to the common fund.

4. Our divine model was meek and humble of heart: *Discite a me quia mi-*

tis sum et humilis corde; and our Patron, St. Vincent of Paul, had nothing more at heart than meekness and humility, which are inseparable from each other. We shall be kind and obliging among ourselves, and equally so towards the poor whom we visit. It is by kindness alone that power is exercised over the souls of men; accordingly, all blessings are promised to those who follow this course: *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land*. It is particularly in giving advice, in exhorting to shun evil and do good, that the spirit of meekness and humility is requisite. Without it, zeal for the salvation of souls is a ship without sails.

5. The *spirit of brotherhood* will complete the benefits to be derived from the charitable association by its own members, and the edification of which it may be productive to others. Mindful of the recommendations of our divine master and of his favorite apos-

tle, we shall love each other. Now and always, near and afar off, from one to another Conference, from one to another city, from one to another country, we shall love and befriend each other. This friendship will make it easy for us to bear with each other's faults; it will only be with regret, and when we cannot resist the evidence of facts, that we shall believe any thing ill of our brethren. Then, in compliance with the will of him who has committed to each of us the guardianship of his neighbor, *unicuique mandavit Deus de proximo suo*; then, in a spirit of charity, and with all the effusions of sincere friendship, we shall admonish, or cause to be admonished, our wavering or fallen brother; we shall help him to stand up, or to rise from his fall. If any member of the Conference be sick, his brother members shall visit, shall nurse him if required, shall relieve the tedium of his convalescence; if the sickness be dan-

gerous, they shall take care that he receive the sacraments of the Church; in a word, the sorrows and joys of each of us will be common to all, according to the advice of the apostle, who tells us to weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice. The union among the members of the Conference of charity of St. Vincent of Paul will be cited as a model of christian friendship, a friendship stronger than death: for we shall often remember before God those of our brethren whom we have lost.

This feeling, which among us will make of all hearts but one heart, of all souls but one soul, *cor unum et anima una*, will endear to us our little fraternal Society; we shall bless it on account of the good, how little soever, it has enabled us to do; we shall love it tenderly, and with more affection even than any other association of the kind, not because of its excellence, or from pride, but as well-bred children

love a poor and deformed mother above all other persons of her sex, however rich or graceful.

Some other consequences deduced from the foregoing Maxims.

Envy is one of the vices most opposed to christian charity and humility. We shall beware of it, not only amongst ourselves, but also with regard to other societies having, like our own, the relief of our neighbor for their object. We shall pray for, and rejoice at their prosperity and the good they may do; we shall be glad if new brethren join us, if existing societies unite with us, because of the greater good that will result therefrom; but we shall see without jealousy christian friends associate with others, or other societies do the work of God in their own way, and independently of us. Our only desire will be that all may co-operate in doing

good and relieving those who suffer: *quis tribuat ut omnis populus prophetet?* More than this; although we love our little association better, we shall deem it less excellent than other societies; we shall look upon it as one formed, as it is in reality, nobody knows by whom or how, born of yesterday, and which may die to-morrow.

The same spirit will make us always see with greater pleasure, the offices of the Society conferred upon others than upon ourselves.

We shall constantly bear in mind that we are but lay people, and for the most part young men, not commissioned to teach others. We shall therefore, in this and all other respects, have the greatest deference for the counsels we may receive from the Society and its heads; above all, we shall follow with implicit docility the directions which ecclesiastical superiors may think proper to give us. St. Vincent of Paul would not have his dis-

ciples undertake any good without having first secured the assent and received the blessing of the local pastors. Nor shall we do any thing new and important, within the limits of an ecclesiastical jurisdiction, without taking the advice of him who is invested with it. We shall do nothing against the will of the spiritual authority, considering as an evil the good we might thus attempt to do. This deference we shall, to a certain degree, extend to the Sisters and even to lay persons who may have offices of charity to perform towards those whom we also wish to assist, looking upon it as an honor to be esteemed the least among our brethren, to be only the servants and instruments of others in attending upon the poor. Finally, the younger among us will act with deference towards the older, the newly admitted members towards those of longer standing in the Society.

We are the dispensers of the gifts of God, the common father of mankind,

who makes his sun to shine upon all. We shall therefore love our neighbor without acception of persons; the title of the poor to our commiseration will be their poverty itself; we shall not enquire to what party they belong, or if they belong to any party. Christ came to deliver and save all men, the Greek as well as the Jew, the Barbarian as well as the Roman. We shall not distinguish any more than he does between those who are visited by suffering and misery. St. Paul, however, recommends christians to come first to the aid of their brethren in the faith: *ad domesticos fidei*. We shall therefore manifest an especial concern for those who have the happiness to be christians, and who honor that title by practising the virtues which religion commands.

The spirit of charity, as christian prudence, will induce us to banish for ever, from our general or particular meetings, political discussions, and as well as all personal difficulties

or quarrels. St. Vincent of Paul would not have his priests even take up, as a subject of conversation, the differences which arm princes against each other, the motives of rivalry by which nations are divided. Much more ought they who would be united, and exercise a ministry of charity, to abstain from indulging those political affections which array parties against each other, or agitating among themselves those irritating questions which divide the world. Our Society is one all of charity; it has nothing to do with politics.

Another effectual means of preserving union among us, and perpetuating that christian friendship on which it is founded, and from which it derives its charms, is to present no candidates for admission into the Society but such as are worthy of the confidence and affection of our brethren. It might do good to some one to share in our charitable exercises; but it would perhaps do the Society no good to have him for one of

its members. Before, then, we get a friend admitted into our ranks, we shall examine whether he is likely to strengthen the bonds which unite us, whether his mildness and christian manners will give double value to what little relief he may be intrusted with imparting to the unfortunate, whether his steadiness of character is an earnest that he will persevere in his generous resolves. The choice of new members is a matter of great importance; we have had, we have still, and shall always have defections to deplore ; such is human weakness ! Yet the Society will inspire confidence and be enabled to do good, in so far only as its members will commend it by the whole tenor of their lives, and particularly by the constant practice of the works of charity to which they devote themselves.

Another point not less deserving of our attention is the discreetness which ought to accompany zeal for the sal-

vation of souls. All ardor is not holy, is not approved of God. All moments are not favorable for instilling new and christian precepts into the heart; we must await God's appointed time; we must be patient as he is; we must often wait for whole weeks before we can place with profit a word of morality or edification; we must, above all, never make ourselves importunate in this respect: we are not accountable for the good we cannot do. On the other hand, we must not be discouraged by the want of apparent results of our mission: it is perhaps not the will of God that we should witness the happy effects which our efforts and sacrifices will have ultimately produced. Our charity would be less meritorious, and would expose us to vain glory, did we always see it crowned with success.

Christian prudence ought never to forsake us while ministering to the wants of the poor. Unfortunately, and

this is peculiarly the case in large cities, the poor are sometimes industrious in disguising the resources they are possessed of, and thus drawing towards themselves the attention and assistance which ought to be shared with others. We should therefore be circumspect, without injuriously mistrusting them. It is unwise to believe implicitly their first declarations: wherefore it is a custom with us, and we shall continue it, to enquire into the circumstances of our poor, by applying to the Sisters of Charity, the Parochial Clergy, and such other persons as may be able to give us correct information. We must be provident for the poor, who are seldom so themselves, if we would be truly their providence. We shall therefore hold out to them an existence supported by charity as a very precarious one; we shall exhort them to endeavor to earn a livelihood for themselves; we shall point out, and help them to obtain the means of

earning it by their labor. If sick or unable to work, we shall aid them in gaining admission into the asylums provided for aged, infirm and sick persons.

Finally, we shall not be ashamed of giving small alms: what is small in the eyes of the rich, is large in the eyes of those who have nothing. Small alms are one of the conditions of our existence: we have no other ordinary resources but the voluntary offerings of each of us; they would soon be exhausted by large alms. Our tender concern, even our attentions will give our succours a value which they have not of themselves.

It is time now to lay down some rules, to relate some usages already followed by us. Other usages will be added to these; other rules will become necessary. But the present rules and usages will be sufficient to light our future march.

GENERAL DISPOSITIONS.

ARTICLE 1.—All persons, of whatever country, who desire to participate in the prayers and good works of the Society of St. Vincent of Paul, will be cheerfully received as Members of this Sacred Society.

2.—Although the principal object of the Society be the visiting of the poor, the other different works of charity are also practised. Thus, the Members of the Society embrace the opportunity of giving consolation to the sick and prisoners, of instructing poor, abandoned or imprisoned children, and of bearing religious aid to those who in the hour of death are in need thereof.

3—.When a certain number of persons become members of this Society, in a town, they assemble together in order mutually to practise virtue. This re-union takes the name of *Conference*, under which name the Society began to exist.

4.—When many Conferences are established in a town, they are distinguished by the name of the different localities in which they exist. They are united by a particular Council, which takes the name of the city in which it is established.

5.—The different *Conferences* of the Society are united by a *General Council*.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE CONFERENCES.

6.—The Conferences assemble on the appointed days and hours.

7.—The members of each Conference will correspond together in order to edify one another, and to recommend to each other, the members of the Society, other young persons, or the poor families who often change their residence.

SECTION I.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCES.

8.—Each Conference has a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer who form the board of the Conference.

Each Conference has also an *Honorary* President, one or more Honorary Vice-Presidents, an Assistant-Secretary, an Assistant-Treasurer, a Keeper of the Records, a Keeper of the Register, a Librarian, a Patron of Schools, Trustees or Overseers of Sales, a Keeper of the Vestry, a Physician, Keepers of Provisions or Stores, Collectors and Porters, or any other officers that may be required.

9.—The President is elected by the Conference. The other officers are name by the President, with the advice of the board. However, as it is said hereafter, in the Cities where a Council of direction exists, the President

and vice-Presidents of the particular Conferences, are named by the President of the Council, and the admission of the members who compose them is sanctioned by the said Council.

10.—The President directs the Conference, receives and presents the propositions, calls the meetings if neeessary, and superintends the execution of the rules and decisions of the Society.

In case of absence, his place is taken by one of the Vice-President.

11.—The Secretary keeps the minutes of the meetings. He keeps a register of the names, professions and abodes of the members, the date of their reception, and the names of the persons by whom they had been presented. He keeps a list indicating the names of the families who receive aid, their abodes, the names of the persons who visit them, the quantity and nature of assistance given to each them.

He keeps note of the changes which take place in the families, and in those who visit them.

12.—The Treasurer has the keeping of the money, at each meeting he takes an account of the receipts and expenses.

13.—The Keeper of the records has the care of the different papers belonging to the Conference.

14.—The Keeper of the register inscribes the names of the poor who have no employment, in a register indicating the age, trade and abode of these persons. He also keeps note of their placement, and of the persons who receive them, the register is at the disposal of the Conference.

15.—The Librarian collects instructive books which he lends to the poor assisted by the Conference, keeping a correct account of those books.

16.—The Patron of shools receives from the Secretary the names of the children patronised, visits weekly their

schools, reports on their conduct to the Conference and distributes the rewards granted to them.

17.—The Trustees or Overseers of sales, have the care of the different donations made to the Conference, for the profit of which the articles are sold by auction or disposed of otherwise.

18.—The Keeper of the vestry collects the clothing for the use of the poor and keeps a list of them.

19.—The Keepers of provisions or stores distribute the different articles they are intrusted with. They transmit to the Treasurer the tickets they receive, which they cannot keep more than eight days.

20.—The Collectors keep a list of the subscribers, receive their offerings, at the fixed periods, and transmit them to the Treasurer.

21.—The porters have orders not to admit to the Conference any person who

is not a member of the Society, except when introduced by a member.

SEC. II.

ORDER OF THE MEETINGS.

22.—At the opening of each Meeting, the President recites the prayer: "*Come! O Holy Spirit,*" followed by the orison and an invocation to St. Vincent of Paul. After which, there is some pious book read: each member is invited to read in his turn.

23.—The Secretary reads the minutes of the preceding meeting. Each member can make observations on these minutes.

24.—The Treasurer publishes the amount of the collection of the preceeding meeting, in order that the demands for aid may be proportioned to the funds of each Conference.

25.—If new members are to be received, the President proclaims the admission of candidates presented and announced at the three preceding meetings: it is the secretary's duty to apprize them of their admission.

26.—If new candidates are presented for admission, the President publishes their names. The members who have any observations to make on the candidates, transmit them by writting, or *viva voce* to the President before the time which precedes the meeting at which they are to be admitted elapses. If no observations be made, the candidates are received at the last meeting.

27.—If the person who is presented as candidate belongs to any secret Society, or any other society condemned by the Church, he cannot, by any means, be received as member of the Conference. And if any member, after being received, join any of the Societies condemned by the Church, the Secretary

will be obliged to write to any such member an official letter, admonishing him to send in his resignation, and if he do not resign within a certain time, the Secretary will he obliged to give information thereof to the Conference.

28.—A person not having means to contribute to the common funds, cannot be admitted as a member.

29.—A member of the Society cannot, under any pretext or circumstance whatever, receive aid from its funds.

30.—When a person desires to become a member of the Society, he must be presented by two members. No candidate can be admitted into the Society without being announced at the Conference to which he desires to be admitted, during three meetings, he will be received only at the fourth. Each member will therefore take care to introduce into the Society only those persons who are capable of edifying its members, and who are disposed to

love their colleagues and the poor, as their brothers.

31.—The President reads afterwards the reports on the families proposed at the preceding meeting before the vote of the Conference : each member may make any observation he thinks useful on the presentation.

32.—When the reports are read, the President publishes the families who demand help : he then selects two of the eldest members to visit and examine each proposed family.

33.—Tickets are then given representing the help granted to each family, which is changeable according to the wants of the poor. The Secretary calls the visitors, and points out the assistance which is granted to each family.

The President requests the members to give information regarding the families they were charged to visit.

Assistance ought to be invariably given to the poor during the interval

between each meeting. The time, the number, the manner of these visits, are left to the prudence of each member, as well as the means to be adopted In order to introduce into families the iove of religion and the practice of their duties.

Those who request rules of conduct, or advice in difficult circumstances, ought to be heard with attention and kindness, and the President, or any other member, answers according as his experience and his charity may dictate.

34.—If assistance in money, in clothes or in books be requested, the motives of such requests ought to be developped, and the Conference votes accordingly.

When it is impossible to avoid an allocation in money, by giving its equivalent in another form, the member who has received this money, should watch as closely as possible, over the use which is made of it.

35.—After fixing on the nature of the assistance about to be given, appointments to be made, steps to be taken for the benefit of the poor, and such other interesting affairs, occupy the attention of the conference.

No new family is received without having been visited by two members named by the President; if the family is adopted, it is confided to the care of two other visitors; a member who recommends a family cannot be named to visit it, a ticket for one small loaf is given to the family thus visited.

36.—Members who have left for a time or for ever the Conference they belong to, inform the President thereof, who confides to others the business with which they were charged.

37.—The Conference then takes into deliberation such observations as may tend to its support, its growth, and the proper distribution of its funds.

38.—If a poor person dies, his death is announced at the next Meeting, and

the President invites the Conference to assist at a Mass for the repose of his soul, which is said on the first convenient day; at the end of the Meeting the *De Profundis* is said.

39. Before prayers, the Treasurer, or whoever is charged with taking up the collection, to which each Member contributes according to his means, but always secretly, goes through the Meeting for the purpose of doing so.

Those who cannot sacrifice their time in serving the poor, endeavor to make up the defect by a greater pecuniary contribution.

The produce of the collection is destined to meet the wants of such poor families as have been visited; but the members should not neglect any other means which may present itself for increasing the funds.

40.—The meeting closes by the "*Prayer to St. Vincent of Paul*," the prayer "*For Benefactors*," and "*We fly to thy Patronage, &c.*"

CHAPTER II.

OF PARTICULAR COUNCILS.

41.—The Particular Council of a city is composed of a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, one or more Assistant-Secretaries, a Treasurer, one or more Assistant-Treasurers, one or more honorary Presidents, one or more honorary Vice-Presidents, of all the Presidents and Vice-Presidents, both active and honorary, of the different Conferences of the city, and the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of such special objects of Charity as may interest them all.

42.—The Particular Council occupies itself with those important measures of ways and means which interest all the Conferences of the city.

43.—The Council decides in what manner the common funds are to be employed.

This fund is supported by charitable gifts from without, by collections made

at the general meetings in the city, and by the offerings which, at each Council, the Presidents bring in the name of their Conferences.

It is destined to meet the general calls and to assist the poorest Conferences.

44.—The President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer form an ordinary Council to which belongs the direction of the usual business.

45.—The members of the Particnlar Council are named by the President, with the advice of this Council.—The President is named by the Council, with the advice of the Conferences. The first time, he is named by the united Conferences.

46.—The President of the Particular Council directs its operations, receives and presents the propositions, calls the meetings together, if necessary. He presides over the general assemblies of the locality.

47.—The Secretary takes down the minutes of the sittings of the Council.

He keeps a Register of the names, professions, places of abode of all the Members of the different Conferences of the city, of the date of their reception, and of the names of those who presented them.

48.—The Treasurer takes care of the common Funds of the city.

49.—The active and honorary Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Conferences represent their Conferences in the particular Council. The Presidents of special objects of Charity attend there to defend the interests of these objects of Charity. The one and the other make reports when they are invited to do so by the President of the Council.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL.

50.—The General Council is composed of a President, a Vice-President-a Secretary, and a Treasurer, with many Councillors.

51—The General Council is the link which binds together all the conferences, it maintains the unity of the Society. It supersedes all that may tend to promote its prosperity. It puts into operation the decisions at which it arrives for that purpose.

52.—It decides on the use to be made of the central fund.

This fund is supported by extraordinary presents made to the Society, by the collections made at the general meetings of the Society, and by the offerings which each Conference or each Council sends to defray the general expenses of the Society.

53.—The members of the general Council, are named by the President with the advice of the Council.

54.—When there is occasion to name a general President of the Society, the general Council is convoked by the Vice-President. This meeting, which is preparatory, is devoted to the taking into consideration the persons who

might be charged with this important office. The former President, if living, is requested to point out some person whom he may think worthy of being elected.

After maturely reflecting on the choice of one or more persons, the Meeting adjourns for two months. In the interval, advice is given of this preliminary Meeting to the Presidents of particular Councils, who consult their colleagues, and to those of the Conferences, who consult their Officers, or even the Conferences they direct; they all transmit their opinions to the General Council; from those opinions the election is closed, of which exact minutes are taken.

While the election lasts, all the Members of the Society, either in private or at their Meetings, address a prayer to God, viz.: the "*Veni Creator*," in order that His holy Spirit may enlighten them in the choice they are about to make.

55.—The General President if necessary call extraordinary Meetings: he presides over these Meetings, also over the General Council.

56.—The General Secretary keeps an account of the names, professions, and places of residence of the Members, together with the date of their admission; he also keeps an account of the formation of the Boards of Councils or Conferences, and of the places, days and hours of their Meetings.

He prepares the minutes of the sittings of the General Council and of the General Meetings.

He edits the annual report on the state of the Society's proceedings.

He has charge of the general correspondence, with the particular Presidents, or Secretaries of the particular Councils or Conferences.

He keeps the Records of the Society.

57.—The General Treasurer keeps the funds. He puts in order the receipts and expenses, and submits his accounts to the General Council.

58.—A member of the General Council is charged by the General President with the Presidency of the Council, if he cannot preside over it himself, another from among them is named by him, on the proposition of the General Secretary, to fill the function of Vice-Secretary.

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL MEETINGS.

59.—The General Meetings are held each year, on the 8th of December the feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin, the first Sunday in Lent, the Sunday of the Good Shepherd, the Anniversary of the Translation of the Relics of St. Vincent of Paul, the 19th of July, being the Feast of this holy Patron.

The President can, besides, convoke extraordinary General Meetings.

60.—The General Meetings commence, as the Conferences, by the prayer and a spiritual reading.

61.—After having read the minutes of the last meeting, the Secretary calls over the names of members received since the last general meeting, which names have been transmitted to him by the different Presidents.

62.—The President then gives a summary statement of the transactions of the Societyand addresses, or invites one of the members to address a short allocution to the meeting.

63.—One of the Vice-Secretaries then reads a report on the state of the Conferences.

An extract of the report, pointing out the movements of members, of poor families, the amount of the receipts as also of the expenses, is placed in the hands of the Secretary.

64.—The President then makes known the decisions which the Council of Direction has come to in matters connected with the welfare of the Society, and consults, if necessary, the meeting itself.

The Society deems itself happy when persons recommendable by their character, their virtue, their learning, have the kindness, on the invitation of the President, to assist at the general meeting, and terminate it, as has been said, by some edifying remarks.

65.—After the usual collection and prayers the meeting separates.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE DIFFERENT MEMBERS OF THE SOC.

66.—Besides the ordinary Members who form part of the Conferences, and take an active part therein, the Society has corresponding members, honorary members and subscribers.

67.—When a Member of the Society changes his residence, if there is no Conference in the city or place to which he goes, he does not, on that account, cease to be a Member, but takes the title of corresponding Member, he en-

ters into communication with the Conference, or Conferences of the city near of which he resides, and corresponds with the Secretary of the Council, or Conference of this town. When there is no Conference in the Diocese, he corresponds with the General Secretary.

He receives each year a report on the objects of Charity of the Society, and remains in community with it, not only of prayers, but also of its good works, in accomplishing around him works of charity, and in making himself useful to the Society whenever the circumstance presents itself.

68.—The honorary Members can assist at the Conferences, but they have no deliberative votes, with the exception of the honorary Presidents and Vice-Presidents. They ought to send each year a particular offering to the Treasurer of the Council, or of the Conference of their city.

The reception of honorary Members is done in the same manner as that of

ordinary Members: it is done by the particular Council in the towns where many Conferences are established.

69.—Each Conference can have likewise Subscribers.

Subscribers are not Members of the Society, but they have a claim on the prayers in their quality of benefactors.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE FEASTS OF THE SOCIETY.

70.—The Society celebrates the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, and the Feast of St. Vincent of Paul, its Patron.

The Conferences then assist in a body at Mass, the 8th December and the 19th July, and also the Anniversary Day of the Translation of the Relics of St. Vincent of Paul.

On these days, the Members pray for the prosperity of the Catholic faith, for the increase of charity among men,

in order to bring down the benediction of God upon their works.

If any Member cannot attend, he unites himself at least in intention with his brethren, he prays for them as they pray for him.

71.—The day after the General Assembly of Lent, all the Members of the Society assist in a body at a *Requiem* Mass, which is celebrated in the city for the repose of the souls of Members who died belonging to the Society.

OBSERVATIONS.

72.—None of the obligations imposed by these Rules, are binding on conscience. But the Society confides their accomplishment to the zeal of its members, and to their love of God and of their neighbours.

More over, it will be remarked that there is question only of young men: since, persons advanced in age have joined the Conferences. Besides, they

cannot remain separate from those of other members who are advanced in age; therefore there is a mixture in the business, and one that is usefnl for the interest of the poor and the stability of the Conferences. However, in certain districts of Paris, and in the provincial towns which possess the opportunity, they remain entirely composed of young men.

Finally, time has already introduced modifications to the Rules, according to the locality and development of the work, but the foundation remains; each Conference goes as near them as possible; at least the spirit which presided over their primitive foundation, and which dictated these preliminary remarks is in no manner departed from.

By following up these rules, which were hitherto but mere customs, the Christian youth, who form part of the Society, have endeavoured to obtain this double object.

In learning to know and love one another.

In learning to know, love, and assist the poor of Jesus Christ.

The establishment of particular Conferences has not been an obstacle to the accomplishment of this double object; christian intimacy has even become greater between Members of the same section, than it possibly could between all the Members of the Society united together. One is never so much alone as in a crowd, and large Meetings in this respect resemble a crowd, which bustles and passes on, in which we take no interest and which takes no interest in us. Besides, a correspondence is carried on, from time to time, with distant Conferences. Those of the same city meet occasionally together, and these meetings, and letters bind us more closely in the bonds of fraternal charity. Neither distance nor any other obstacle can be impediments to that friendship which is founded on a

community of prayers and other charitable works.

Let us take courage then! United or separated, far or near, let us love one another, let us love and assist th poor. Let us love this little Society which made us known to one another which has opened to us the prospects of a more charitable and Christian life. Let us love our customs, and onr rules; if we observe them faithfully, we may rest assured that they will protect us, and protect our work. "Much evil is committed," said a venerable priest to another charitable society, "let us endeavor to do a little good." Oh! how we shall one day rejoice at not having allowed our youthful years to glide uselessly along? Youth is a field which requires cultivation. Let us not then hurry over it, without indulging in wholesome thoughts of the future; let us cast an eye on every side around us; let us gather with care the ears of corn that lie scattered at our feet;

let us do some good; it will be the sheaf of our provision through life, it will yield as a plentiful harvest before the Lord.

PRAYERS.

AT THE BEGINNING AND END OF THE MEETINGS.

PRAYERS.

At the beginning of the meetings.

In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritûs Sancti. Amen.

V. Veni, Sancte Spiritus;

R. Reple tuorum corda fidelium, et tui amoris in eis ignem accende.

V. Emitte Spiritum tuam, et creabnntur;

R. Et renovabis faciem terræ.

OREMUS.

Deus, qui corda fidelium Sancti Spiritûs illustratione docuisti, da nobis in eodem Spiritu recta sapere, et de ejus semper consolatione gaudere, per Christum Dominum nostrum.

R. Amen.

PRAYERS.

At the beginning of the meetings.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.— AMEN.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of thy love.

V. Send forth thy spirit, and they shall be created.

R. And thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

LET US PRAY.

O God, who hast taught the hearts of the faithful, by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that we may, by the gift of the same spirit, be always truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

V. Sancte Vincenti à Paulo,

R. Ora pro nobis.

In nomine Patris, etc.

At the end of the meetings.

In nomine Patris, etc.

OREMUS.

Clementissime Jesu, qui Beatum Vincentium flagrantissimæ charitatis tuæ apostolum in Ecclesiâ suscitasi, effunde super famulos tuos eumdem charitatis ardorem, ut amore tuo libentissime in pauperes impendant sua, et seipsos super impendant, qui cum Deo Patre vivis et regnas, in unitate Spititûs Sancti, per omnia sæcula sæculorum.

Amen.

V. Saint Vincent of Paul.

R. Pray for us.

In the name of the Father, &c.

At the end of the meetings.

In the name of the Father, &c.

LET US PRAY.

Most merciful Jesus, who hast raised up, in thy Church, in the person of blessed VINCENT OF PAUL, an apostle of thy burning charity, shed the same charitable ardour upon thy servants, in order that they may, with their whole hearts, give what they possess to the poor, and finish by giving themselves, for the love of thee, who with the Father livith and reigeth in unity with the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever.—*Amen.*

PRO BENEFACTORIBUS.

Benefactoribus pauperum gratiam largiri dignare, piissime Jesu, qui impertituris misericordiam in nomine cœleste promisisti.

Amen.

Sub tuum præsidium confugimus, sancta Dei Genitrix: nostras deprecationes ne despicias in necessitatibus; sed à periculis cunctis libera nos semper, Virgo gloriosa et benedicta.

Amen.

Et fidelium animæ per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace.

Amen.

In nomine Patris, etc.

FOR BENEFACTORS.

Vouchsafe, Oh Most pious Jesus, to grant to the benefactors of the poor, thy grace, thou who hast promised a hundred fold, and the kingdom of Heaven, to all who shall do works of mercy in thy name.—*Amen.*

We fly to thy patronage, Oh Holy Mother of God, despise not our prayers in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, Oh ever Glorious and Blessed Virgin.—*Amen.*

And may the Souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God rest in peace.—*Amen.*

In the name of the Father, &c.