

TALKS OF
FATHER FRANCIS MARY OF THE CROSS JORDAN

DOCUMENTA ET STUDIA
SALVATORIANA

TOMUS XXIII

TALKS OF
FATHER FRANCIS MARY OF THE CROSS JORDAN

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Foreword

One of the purposes of the International Historical Commission (IHC) of the Salvatorians is to publish sources concerning our Founder, Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, as well as sources concerning the foundation and development of the Society of the Divine Savior. For almost 30 years the Commission has been realizing this purpose through the publication of its efforts in a series entitled: *Documenta et Studia Salvatoriana (DSS)*. This series has helped us to understand the Founder and his work better and has facilitated the writing of the post-conciliar Constitutions (1983). This volume contains the talks Father Jordan delivered during house chapters and on various occasions. It aims to show “both the spirit of the Venerable Founder and of the Society,”¹ as wrote one of the scholastics who kept a record of the talks. These talks reveal the great concern on the part of Father Jordan for each Salvatorian and each Father, Brother, Sister and Scholastic, as well as for his whole enterprise.

The Chapter of Faults,² held every week, provided a special occasion for speaking to the community. In addition there were also other occasions, such as farewells for departing missionaries, investitures, religious professions and the Founder’s nameday on October 4.

¹ APS.G 11.1., *Vorwort zu den Kapitelansprachen des Diener Gottes* by Fr. Philippus Nerius Katzemich.

² The *Capitulum Culparum* was widely introduced into religious life in the 11th century. *Kapitel* in *LThK* (Freiburg) 1960 (2nd ed.), vol. V, p. 1205 and in *LThK* (Freiburg) 1996 (3rd ed.), vol. V, p. 1214-1215.

I. Chapter talks of the Founder

The coming together of confreres at weekly chapters was an essential element of religious life. “Holding chapters has been known since the beginning of religious life.”³ However, chapters have not been held in the form of Chapter of Faults since the very beginning of religious life. At first it was merely a community meeting with the purpose of reflecting on religious life. During such meetings a superior spoke and gave advice concerning community life. In the course of time such meetings acquired the form of a penitential service called a Chapter of Faults. It was introduced as such into the Society by Father Jordan. There it was practiced in much the same way as it was in other religious institutes. Up until 1884 the Chapter of Faults had not been mentioned in the Rule of the Catholic Teaching Society. Only after the Society received diocesan approval on June 5, 1886, was a description of the Chapter of Faults, entitled *De capitulo culparum*,⁴ to be found in chapter 9 of the Constitutions published in the same year. For many years Father Jordan was not only the Superior General of the Society of the Divine Savior but also the superior of the Motherhouse community. As superior he presided over house chapters every week – usually on Fridays.

No talks were preserved from the first years after introducing this practice. We have only one Jordan manuscript containing 60 drafts and thoughts for chapter talks dating from September 19, 1890 to July 8, 1892.⁵ Father Jordan did not write out full texts of

³ Cf., *Folia Salvatoriana*, II, 1966, Nr. 4, 105-110.

⁴ DSS I, 65-68. From this edition of the Constitutions (1886) up until the edition from the year 1951 this form of the Chapter of Faults was always found.

⁵ APS. G 6.1.

his talks. We also have one notebook with Jordan’s notes for chapter talks from February 17 to March 20, 1899,⁶ as well as a set of 22 loose drafts comprising thoughts for talks and other remarks.⁷

According to the *Normae* of the Holy See of June 28, 1901, the Constitutions of our Society were revised and published in 1902. As a result of this revision, a local superior of the Motherhouse was appointed, who was responsible for holding the Chapter of Faults. Dividing the offices of superior general and house superior was not easy for Father Jordan to accept because it deprived him of the possibility to speak to the community during the Chapter of Faults. Later on Father Pancratius Pfeiffer, SDS referred to this in the *Annales SDS* and wrote that Venerable Father had told him, “There is a division between the people and myself. They were separated from me and I can no longer have any influence over them.”⁸ It appears from the Chronicle of the Scholasticate that Father Jordan increasingly found occasions to speak to the philosophy and theology students. The themes of these talks and longer quotations can be found in the chronicle.⁹

II. Preserved texts of Jordan’s talks

Talks which Father Jordan gave during Chapters of Faults gained interest among those who listened to him. Preserved notebooks of the confreres¹⁰ who wrote down the Founder’s words,

⁶ APS. G 6.2.

⁷ APS. G 6.3.

⁸ *Annales SDS*, III, 1919, Nr. 3, 244.

⁹ AGS. C-0.14.4.10.

¹⁰ As an example the three little notebooks of Fr. Alfred M. Zacharzowski in the archives of the Polish Province (APSK).

first of all for their own needs, can attest to that. “Since June 1896 usually two or three professed members from among them with the best intention, care and great esteem for these words wrote the talks in shorthand and immediately afterwards met to compare their notes.” As regards those written texts it was noticed that they contain “dotted spaces, words in parentheses, hyphens, question marks as well as deformed and grammatically incorrect sentences.” The reason for those defects was that Father Jordan did not work out his whole talk but only itemized what he was going to speak about. He “left the rest to the course of his thoughts and to the power of his inner, personal conviction. His words did not have the form of an official sermon but they were encouragement, advice, guidelines and indications of a father for his children, who represented his whole spiritual family. He was concerned with how to hand over his spirit to them; he did not pay too much attention to the external form of his talks.”¹¹

Fr. John Capistran Schärfl, SDS compiled various preserved manuscripts in one volume. He wrote: “Father Bonaventure and Father Paul directed me to put everything together.”¹² Today there is a large collection of talks¹³ in the Postulation Archives. These were compiled by Schärfl from his notes and from the notes of others. This collection comprises mainly chapter talks from the years 1894 to 1901. It also includes talks given on the occasion of the departure of missionaries for Assam in the years 1890, 1891 and 1895 and on the occasion of the departure of the Salvatorians

¹¹ Cf. Katzemich, *Vorwort*.

¹² APS. I 95, *Erinnerungen an den Ehrwürdigen Vater und die frühe Zeit der Gesellschaft* by Fr. Capistran Schärfl SDS.

¹³ APS. G 11.7. *Capitula Reverendissimi Patris et Fundatoris Societatis Divini Salvatoris*. Joan Capistrano.

for North America in 1892, as well as Jordan’s talks on the anniversary of the Society’s foundation in 1893 (December 8) and on the Founder’s nameday (1892-1901).

Talks compiled by cleric Philip Neri Katzemich, entitled “*Capitula Reverendissimi Nostri Patris*,”¹⁴ cover the period from March 23, 1894 to January 29, 1897. All of these talks are also in the collection of Fr. Schärfl. This collection also includes talks given on January 17, 1890, December 8, 1893, and December 29, 1895.

Fr. Seraphin Krause, SDS left three notebooks.¹⁵ At the end of the first one, which includes chapter talks and other talks from October 4, 1896 to December 31, 1898, we can also find one talk given in Tivoli on August 18, 1898. The second of his notebooks comprises talks from January 7, 1898 to December 31, 1898, though Krause himself wrote February 8, 1899 as the date of the last entry.

The first part of the third notebook (up to page 147) comprises notes of Krause’s personal meditations and retreats. On page 148 begins: “*Pars II. Kapitel unseres Ehrw. Vaters vom Jahre 1899*.” This part ends with the talk given on the occasion of the Founder’s name day on October 4, 1899. At the beginning of Krause’s collection, in the first notebook, Fr. Dorotheus Brugger, SDS wrote: “All the chapters and talks are in the second collection (i.e., Schärfl). Checked on June 21, 1940.”

Fr. Wolfgang Rusch, SDS left two notebooks entitled “*Kapitula Revmi nostri Patris et fundatoris*.”¹⁶ They comprise chapter talks

¹⁴ APS G.11.2.

¹⁵ APS G 11.3-5.

¹⁶ APS G 11.6.

from December 2, 1898 to July 14, 1899, and are followed by talks from the years 1894 to 1897, always with the exact date indicated. This collection also includes other talks and circular letters. Fr. Dorotheus Brugger wrote on the cover on June 21, 1940: “All chapters and talks are in the large collection” (i.e., Schärfl). Moreover, there is a copy in Rome with the same handwriting and the same cover “*Kapitula Revmi nostri Patris et fundatoris.*”¹⁷ The date of September 3, 1896, written at the beginning of the document is without a doubt the personal note of the author. The contents of the first talk are exactly the same as the talk of June 5, 1896 (cf., Schärfl). The next talks are placed chronologically and have various dates from the years 1894 to 1899. Other talks can be found in the *Annales SDS* published in 1899. These are selected fragments in Latin, written thematically with dates when the talks were given.¹⁸

Talks that are included in the above mentioned collections were occasionally published in the periodicals *Der Missionär*, *Apostelkalender* and *Salvatorianische Mitteilungen*. Some talks or fragments of them can be also found in other sources, such as *Scholasticus*,¹⁹ the Scholastics’ Chronicle in Rome²⁰ and the Salvatorian Sisters’ Chronicle also in Rome.²¹ Some talks to the sisters have also been found.

Furthermore, there are places listed in the Appendix which

¹⁷ APS G 11.8.

¹⁸ *Annales SDS* 1899, pp. 52-54, 77-81.

¹⁹ APS. F 31.2. (Photocopy).

²⁰ AGS. C-0.14.4.10. *Chronica SDS*. 1900-1901. *Chronica Scholasticorum Theologi* 1903- 1910, *Philosophi* 1903-1912.

²¹ *Chronik des Mutterhauses der Salvatorianerinnen in Rom*. Part 4, p. 98, (3.1.1913).

show that Father Jordan spoke on other various occasions.²² In some cases a summary of the talk is given, as well as sources, which can be found in various periodicals or chronicles but above all in the notebook of Blessed Mary of the Apostles.

III. Those who transcribed the talks

Schärfl, Father John Capistran (Aloisius), born: June 5, 1875, in St. Christoph, Archdiocese of München-Freising; entered: November 15, 1895; professed: December 9, 1896; ordained: June 9, 1900; died: December 4, 1963, in Hamberg. “As a scholastic he wrote chapter talks of the Venerable Father in shorthand.”²³

Katzemich, Father Philip Neri (Joseph), born: June 27, 1877, in Neuss, Archdiocese of Cologne; entered: 1895; professed: May 27, 1896; ordained: June 9, 1900; died: August 23, 1904, in Meran. In his personal file there is a memoir²⁴ by Father K. Becker with no mention that he transcribed Jordan’s talks.

Krause, Father Seraphin, born: March 2, 1874, in Bärwalde (Niedzwiednik), Diocese of Wroclaw; entered: March 2, 1894; professed: October 4, 1896; ordained: June 9, 1900; died: September 3, 1923, in Neuhaus near Paderborn. There is no mention in his necrology²⁵ of transcribing talks.

²² *M. Maria Chroniknotizen* part III, p. 44; APS. I. 103-104; *Chronik der Salvatorianerinnen des Mutterhauses in Rom*, part IV, p. 98; *Salvator Mundi Quarterly* (English) VI, 1959, Nr. 3-4, 13-15; *Salvator Mundi Quarterly* (German) VII, Nr. 1, 1960, 53-55; *Salvator Mundi Quarterly* (Italian) VII, 1960, Nr. 1, 28-30.

²³ Cf., *Annales SDS* VII, 1964, Nr. 9, 404-405.

²⁴ AGS. *Personalakten: Katzemich*.

²⁵ *Annales SDS II*, 1924, Nr. 5, 32-33.

Rusch, Father Wolfgang, born: April 13, 1866, in Ingolstadt, Diocese of Eichstätt; entered: November 19, 1891; professed: September 8, 1895; ordained: July 29, 1900; died: July 21, 1935, in Gurk. There is no mention in his necrology²⁶ that he transcribed Jordan's talks.

Apart from personal notes of the above four mentioned Salvatorians that we have, there are also seven entries from Mathew Rauscher (1878-1916) and one from Evarist Mader (1881-1949) in Schärfl's collection.

Other texts, coming from Salvatorian Sisters are also included in this publication: one from Blessed Mary of the Apostles (1833-1907); one from Sr. Bonaventure Zenker (1863-1949); two texts from Sr. Dominica Vieregg (1870-1946); as well as a collection of nine texts from Sr. Adelgundis Acker (1874-1956).

IV. Previous editions

To further Salvatorians' knowledge of the Founder's spirit, it was decided to publish the talks he gave at the chapters of faults. To accomplish this, Father Pancratius Pfeiffer called to Rome Father Guericus Bürger, SDS in 1936.²⁷ He selected some texts from the extensive collection of Fr. Schärfl and divided them into 46 thematic groups. These are shorter or longer fragments of talks from various years. Father Willibrord Menke, SDS assumed the task of preparing this collection for publication. In 1938 the book

²⁶ *Annales SDS IV*, 1936, Nr. 4, 179.

²⁷ *Cf., Annales SDS IV*, 1938, Nr. 6, 317.

Worte und Ermahnungen unseres Ehrwürdigen Vaters und Gründers P. Franziskus Maria vom Kreuze Jordan (259 pages) was published in Berlin by the Publishing House *Salvator*.

This book was translated into various languages in many provinces of the Society. In 1939 the English translation "Exhortations and Admonitions of our Venerable Father and Founder Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan" was prepared by Father Winfried Herbst, SDS who also oversaw the second and third editions (1946 and 1963 respectively). The fourth edition, prepared by Fathers Joseph Henn, SDS and Alex McAllister, SDS was published on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Father Jordan's birth (1998). In 1953 the Portuguese translation *Palavras e Exortações. De nosso Venerável Pai e Fundador Pe. Francisco Maria da Cruz Jordan* was published with the foreword by Father Paulo de Sá Gurgel, SDS. The Italian edition, *La Voce di Padre Jordan. Parole e esortazioni del nostro Padre Fondatore* was prepared by Father Sebastiano Caparella, SDS, published in 1964, and reprinted in 1993. The Spanish translation *Palabras y Exhortaciones. Francisco Maria de la Cruz Jordan* was prepared by Father Luiz Munilla in 1981. The French edition *Paroles et Exhortations de notre Vénérable Père et Fondateur des Salvatoriens François Marie de la Croix Jordan* (Kolwezi, 1992) was prepared for the mission in Zaire (now, Democratic Republic of Congo). The Polish Province prepared its first translation in 1960, but for political reasons it could not be published and remained in typescript. A new translation was prepared by Father Paweł Stanoszek, SDS and published in Kraków in 1996 under the title *Zachęty i upomnienia. Konferencje ascetyczne Sługi Bożego Ojca Franciszka Marii od Krzyża Jordana*. On the occasion of the Society's centenary in Poland a new edition of this translation was published in a different format (Kraków, 2000).

The most recent translation to date was brought to completion by Fr. Carl Gleason, SDS. It is the Kiswahili translation, *Mafundisho na Mawaidha*, published in Tanzania by Ndanda Mission Press in 2001.

Another book prepared by Fr. Bernward Meisterjahn, SDS, *Der Geist des Gründers. Zitate aus den Kapitelansprachen P. Jordans* on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the death of Father Jordan was a different form of publishing chapter talks. The author selected 43 themes, giving the date of the chapter and the page in Schärfl's collection with each passage. There is also a Spanish translation of the entire Schärfl's collection by Fr. L. Munilla under the title *El Espiritu del Fundador. Citas de las Alocuciones Capitulares del P. Jordan* (Logroño, 1983). We should also mention a Portuguese translation of the Schärfl's collection made many years ago and published by the Brazilian province in 1995 under the title *Pe. Francisco Maria de Cruz Jordan. Palavras e Exortações*. This translation was prepared by Frs. Armando Spohr, SDS and José Wild.

Between 1984 and 1985 some of the talks were also published by Fr. Timotheus Edwein, SDS in his work *Franziskus Maria vom Kreuze Jordan (Johann Baptist)*, in DSS XV (p. 743-790) and DSS XVI (p. 365-400).

V. The current edition

Although various editions of the Founder's chapter talks published until now did not comprise all the available texts, they were a great help in understanding the spirit of the Founder. However, the wish to publish the whole collection of the Founder's

talks given at the Chapters of Faults and on other occasions has been expressed repeatedly. Therefore, the International Historical Commission took upon itself this task and decided to publish the talks in a volume of the *Documenta et Studia Salvatoriana* series.

Fr. J. C. Schärfl's manuscript of 803 pages *Capitula Reverendissimi Patris et Fundatoris Societatis Divini Salvatoris. Joan. Capistrano*²⁸ had already been typewritten. At the request of Father Peter van Meijl, SDS this typescript was entered into computer by Sr. Ulrike Musick, SDS a member of the Austrian Province. Then Fr. Josef Brauchle, SDS, Clemens Brodkorb and Fr. Michał Piela, SDS undertook the laborious task of correcting the typed text conforming it with the original. Fr. Stephan Horn, SDS corrected orthographical and grammatical errors in the transcription. To make reading easier, the text was divided into parts.

In addition to the chapter talks, other texts collected by the International Historical Commission have been included in the current edition of *DSS XXIII*. These are manuscripts of Father Jordan that have been put in the Appendix. Sources were also sought in which Jordan's talks are only referred to, without the full text. The current edition also includes a list of dates and sources as well as a subject index,²⁹ which lists the main themes. In addition, occasions and dates of particular talks have been indicated in the headings, while sources of the respective talks are given in the footnotes. Fr. Schärfl's manuscript has been used as the basic source text, and other authors are only mentioned.

²⁸ APS. G 11.7.

²⁹ In the Schärfl-edition Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer had attached a keyword in the margin in Latin and made notes at the end of the volume, which for the modern day reader is of little use.

May the current edition not remain a historical document only; may the spirit present in Father Jordan's texts enliven all Salvatorians and all the Christian faithful. Despite the passage of time these texts remain a rich heritage which has been entrusted to us.

Rome, 2nd February 2001

The following members of the International Historical Commission took part in publishing this volume: Fr. Josef Brauchle SDS, Clemens Brodkorb, Sr. Aquin Gilles SDS, Fr. Antoni Kiełbasa SDS, Johan Moris, Fr. Daniel Pekarske SDS, Fr. Michał Piela SDS, Fr. David Restrepo SDS, and Fr. Adam Teneta SDS.

Foreword to the English Edition

I first heard about the existence of these Chapter Talks of the Founder from Fr. Jerome Schommer SDS over 20 years ago. He was eager for us to collaborate on an English translation, which unlike "Exhortations and Admonitions" would be complete, fresh and clear. His experience in Tanzania had made him especially sensitive to the formation needs of our missions where most of the young sisters and confreres are not native English speakers. Having convinced me of the usefulness of such a book and knowing how enjoyable it would be to work together on it, we began our project with great zeal. Sadly, after translating just a few talks Fr. Jerome died quite unexpectedly and our work came to an abrupt halt.

The 2002 publication of the Chapter Talks as DSS Volume XXIII rekindled my long dormant interest in completing this project. Much had changed in the intervening years. Now I was a member of the International Historical Commission with a deeper appreciation for the history of our Society. Now I myself was working in formation in the missions and saw firsthand the great need for better English language formation materials. And now computer technology had advanced enough to make this project believable as a solo effort. So I decided to try. Here are the results of my efforts.

This translation makes no claim to technical precision. It is certainly not meant to take the place of the DSS XXIII for anyone interested in serious research. Three principles guided this translation: to produce something readable, clear and simple; to keep it free from cumbersome, unnecessary or intimidating technical footnotes, etc; to get it finished and into circulation quickly. The audience I had in mind was primarily young men and

women in Salvatorian formation communities throughout the world, many of whom have only a basic grasp of English.

Hence, this text is what my old high school Latin teacher, Fr. Eugene Brochtrup SDS, would playfully (or despairingly) have characterized as a “free, Midwestern, idiomatic translation.” Long, complicated German sentences have been shortened and simplified. Archaic expressions have been colloquialized, but always with the intention of letting the spirit of the Founder shine more clearly through the text.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Fr. Bart Murphy SJ, professor of history at Salvatorian Institute of Philosophy and Theology in Morogoro, Tanzania for assisting me with the knottiest German sentences, and to Fr. Aloysius McDonagh SDS for his assistance with the Latin sections (*presented here in italics*). I also thank Fr. Joe Henn SDS for his technical help, and Mark and Mary Jo Verke SDS for proofreading the draft text while “vacationing” in Morogoro. As I write this I do not know who will finally publish the text or foot the bill. But I sincerely thank them here in advance.

Of course, in the end all of the mistakes, barbarism and infelicities found here are completely my own. I admit that in my eagerness to get something into circulation I may have sacrificed precision for speed, but I make no apologies. *Amor urget nos*.

I wish to dedicate my work to the memory of my teacher, friend, confrere, fellow formator and Tanzanian missionary, Fr. Jerome Schommer SDS, who first suggested this project to me. Now that it is finished may he rest more serenely in peace.

Fr. Daniel Pekarske SDS

CHAPTER TALKS

*Ad maiorem Dei gloriam et ad salutem animarum!
For the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls!*

1890/01/17

**Address of our Reverend Father at the Departure
of the First Missionaries (Fr. Otto, etc.)**

Two feelings fill our hearts today: pain and joy. It is painful when we think of our dear confreres leaving us. But we are filled with joy when we remember that they are leaving to announce in Asia, the cradle of civilization, Christ crucified. Through our confreres, the first to be sent on mission by our Society, the peace, the good news of the gospel will be brought to these people. This joy must far outweigh our pain!

So march into the fierce battle that awaits you! Yes, your fight will be hard! You will have to wrestle with humanity's worst enemies: the world and the devil! But I give you a weapon through which you will always be victorious – a weapon at whose sight hell trembles!

As Emperor Constantine advanced against Maxentius, he saw a sign in the heavens together with the words: *In hoc signo vinces*. "In this sign you will conquer." This sign was the cross. In this sign you also will conquer nations and hell itself! With the cross, the Divine Savior preceded us. As a child he embraced the cross. His whole life was the cross. His goal was the cross! He clung to it until, under the most dreadful sufferings, he finally surrendered his spirit into the hands of his heavenly Father. Thus, he defeated the world! You too will be victorious through the cross and suffering! Yes, you will have to endure much. Don't expect anything

else! I tell you, the greater your sufferings the greater will be your success! To the degree the apostolic man suffers, to that degree he achieves the salvation of souls! God's work flourishes only in the shadow of the cross. Through work, effort, sweat, yes maybe even through shedding your blood, you must rescue souls!

And when it is sometimes difficult for you, just look at your Divine Master as he hung on the cross between heaven and earth, abandoned by God and by all! And when the blustery waves of dejection threaten to engulf you, when you seem about to go under, then look up again to the cross and you will be renewed to fight and suffer anew! Yes, persevere! Trust until the end! I say it again: the greater the sufferings, the greater the success. And if Providence wills that you shed your blood as martyrs, look upon the cross, and even that [sacrifice] will not be difficult!

But success will also come! And even if you will not be there to see it, be confident that God will bless your work for your spiritual descendants!

So then, go in God's name! Always remain united with us your brothers until we greet one another again in eternal joy and bliss above!

1890/12/12
Sending of Missionaries to Assam

Again the solemn moment has arrived when we see some leaving our midst who have decided to take the glad message of salvation to those who still wander in the shadow of unbelief and error. From my heart there is so much I would like to give you. I cannot give you earthly treasures, money or property. But as your spiritual father what I can give you, what I want to give you, are three precepts. I firmly believe these will lead you safely through all the trials and sufferings of your apostolic calling. These precepts are the triple fidelity by which you and all the members of the Teaching Society should particularly distinguish themselves.

First, hold unshakably to the apostolic chair, to the head of our holy church [the pope]. Always be ready should it be necessary to give up your lives, even the last drop of your blood, for the teachings of Christ. Don't deviate one iota from this divine teaching established on the solid rock of Peter.

Second, venerate the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen of the Apostles and our mother with childlike love and devotion. She has stood by the side of our Society from the very first moment of its inception with her mighty protection and sweet help. Therefore, every child of our Society should render Mary deep veneration and tender love. Wherever the footsteps of our Society fall, Mary's praise and honor should resound.

Third, finally I tell you: stand faithfully by your superior, your spiritual father. If God promises blessings and a long life to children who honor their natural parents, how much more will God reward

those who honor their spiritual father, loving and obeying unto death the one who gives them birth into a higher life?

This is the triple fidelity, the heavenly precepts I wanted to impart to you. If you observe them exactly, I can promise you true peace here on earth and success in your efforts. No sorrow, no cross will be too heavy for you. Whatever may close in over you, you will stand firm and not waiver. This spiritual bond, this triple fidelity, will connect us even when we are physically far apart. This thought should cheer us. Our members may live on the Himalayas, in Africa, America, or Europe; but wherever they are this bond will unite us. And it is my firm conviction that no one from our ranks shall be missing at our reunion in heaven.

1891/12/25
Sending of Missionaries to Assam

So then, go to preach Christ crucified! But to do this effectively and successfully you must remain in the deepest union with Christ crucified. You must become another Christ – even crucified yourself. Then you will have the strength to expose the snares of hell and the deceptions of the world; to scatter the gloom; to dispel the illusions of hell; to preach poverty, sufferings, and defiance; to preach the Crucified. You must strive against the devil, the world, and hell, and against their weapons: wealth, honors, and pleasures.

Therefore, at this solemn moment let me firmly impress upon you the need to become true disciples of Christ. Carry Christ, manifested in you, over the ocean, over the seas, into the dark abyss of paganism, so that light may shine on that poor forsaken wasteland. Therefore, today I give you a cross – the sign of constant union with that same crucified Christ whom you must preach; a cross to which as his imitators, followers and disciples you should be crucified. Don't let yourselves be deceived by the appearances of the world. Don't believe that you will lead souls to heaven in any other way than Jesus, the Eternal Wisdom. Therefore, if you want to lead immortal souls to heaven, you too must walk this divine path. Be followers and disciples of the Crucified. Carry him in your hearts. Manifest him in all your thoughts, works, and actions so that it is no longer you who work, but Christ in you. And whenever you look at the cross remember that you preach the Crucified and that you must expressly oppose the principles of this sad world. If you don't, you too will be snatched away. Above all, therefore, be permeated with the spirit of the Crucified and success will not elude you.

[Reverend Father distributed the crosses with the words:]
Whoever wants to be my disciple, denies himself, takes up his cross and follows me.

[He continued:] Now then, go in peace and remain in deep union with us! For my part, I assure you that you remain inscribed on my heart. Always remain united with us so that we may form throughout the world a single, unified, strong family, and may find ourselves reunited one day in our eternal home.

1892/06/27
Sending of Missionaries to North America

Armed and strengthened with the blessing of the Vicar of Christ, the gloriously reigning Pope Leo XIII, and of the episcopal chief shepherd, the cardinal vicar of His Holiness, as well as with your spiritual father's blessing, you start your apostolic journey today. You set out for a place on earth which is farthest away from us, farther than any of your spiritual brothers were yet sent, as you become our antipodes.

Our separation, therefore, is a great one. On the other hand, our sense of peace is great because your confreres and I are confident the outcome will be good. This is greatly supported by the fact that, although we know human weakness well, we also know you are truly children of your spiritual father and true brothers of your confreres. What I said at a former departure I say again here: remain constantly connected with your Motherhouse as with the pope. Oh, if you stray from it, history will record that you founded a second Babylon. But I know you. You are good children. So I trust the outcome will be good. To the solace of your confreres I can say that the Vicar of Jesus Christ and the cardinal vicar, with the eyes of a prophet, immediately recognized you as good children. You see how well such representatives of God know their children. Therefore, we are at peace although our separation is great.

Furthermore, it will comfort and gladden us to remember that you leave to spread God's honor and Mary's praise, and to rescue souls. Oh yes! *Quam speciosi pedes evangelizantium pacem!* "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of peace!" Carry peace! If you are at peace with God, with your spiritual father, and

with your confreres, then you can bring this peace to others. If not, you will bring not peace but its opposite. It is also comforting what I must reveal to your confreres here, that you all accepted this posting without the least difficulty, without the least objection. We can, therefore, part company with tranquil hearts since we are united in spirit. We remain of one mind. And to our great solace and with hearts grateful to God we must also confess that recently our spiritual family gained significant inner solidity.

So go now, supported by the blessing of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, who gave you an especially fatherly farewell! Remain true to your mission because your enemies never rest. I warn you to be on your guard against the deceptions of the devil. Remain loyal, true children so that you may be a joy to the church and to your superiors. Go in the Lord's name! You leave your true brothers as true brothers. You leave your loving father as true children. So from the fullness of my heart, and in the name of the Trinity, I wish for your apostolic work all that a father can wish his children both in time and in eternity.

1892/10/04
Nameday of Rev. Father

[Before the profession of vows:] You are prepared to profess your holy vows before the Blessed Trinity and the whole heavenly court. But consider carefully whether you want to take this step. You are still free. No one is forcing you. You can still retreat unhindered. Whoever is not completely determined to remain faithful in the Society until his last breath, should not dare to take this step. It is better not to vow than to break these promises, these sacred vows. So think carefully. No one forces you. You are quite free.

[The Profession Crosses are presented with these words:] *Qui vult venire post me, abneget semetipsum, tollat crucem suam et sequatur me.* "Whoever desires to follow me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me."

[Address in the refectory:] This is certainly a joyful day for you and me, though as you know there is no complete joy here on earth. Thus, today I am deeply preoccupied with something that to the world may seem the opposite of joy: the cross. We are happy today; we are happy in the Lord. And you should be happy. But this joy is muted when we consider the cross. I think of Mount Tabor where immediately after the Lord revealed his glory he started to speak of his favorite theme: the cross. I would like to remind you all today that we too must suffer much, but it is precisely the cross that prepares our crown. I admonish you who made your vows today not to choose any other way than the cross. Therefore, when you look at the cross think where we want to go, and which path we must take! At the start of today's Mass the church itself called to

us: *Mihi autem absit gloriari nisi in Cruce Domini Nostri Jesus Christi, per quem mihi mundus crucifixus est et ego mundo.* “Let me never glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world.” Let us not be self-deceived. We stand in contradiction to the world because it is an enemy of the cross. Today, because I love you, I cannot impress upon you with sufficient urgency this teaching of the cross. And because I love you so dearly I want only your eternal welfare.

Nameday of Rev. Father
October 4, 1893

[The final words of the talk.] Hold firm to your superior, and no one will be able to snatch away your promised crown!

1893/12/08
**Address to the Community before Solemn Renewal
of Vows on the 12th Anniversary of the Foundation
of the Society**

Our celebration today is above all a thanksgiving in which we express the deepest gratitude for innumerable benefits. We cannot list all of the many favors that have been showered on our family these past 12 years. We hardly know them all! We can only describe a few.

At about this time [9:00] twelve years ago, three of us were gathered in the room where St. Brigitta died. There our work had its concrete beginning. Twelve years is certainly a short time. But what abundant graces, what abundant benefits the Lord has sent to our family even in these materialistic and corrupt times!

From the “three” twelve years ago, today “three hundred” belong to our spiritual family. From the one small room in which St. Brigitta died, the Society has already spread over three continents!

But if you knew all the attacks hell launched against our work to destroy it entirely, you would be amazed at the strength we received from above! Always the cross and sufferings; persecution from within and without threatened to bring down the Society. Yes, during these twelve short years the storms, the secret temptations were so great that if God’s hand had not held them, the chosen ones who were steadfastly dedicated to this holy work would have been shipwrecked!

Many storms engulfed this holy work so that it would have perished had it not been called into being and preserved from above! Despite all storms, despite all temptations, even though others were ready to toll our death knell, we nevertheless advanced; because the caring hands of God never dropped us. And even when he let us suffer, he never let us fall or sink! Whoever has eyes to see ... let him see!

Who should we thank for all this? Is it somehow our own work, our effort, our success? Certainly not!

In particular we must give the Holy Trinity our deepest thanks, and then that exalted, spotless virgin who trampled Lucifer's head. She guarded our Society against all attacks, extending her protective mantle and shielding us from all dangers within and without. The Queen of the Apostles proved to be our mother. She defended our welfare, protected and preserved our work! This is the story of these past twelve years! Therefore, today we thank the blessed, Immaculate Virgin! Deepest thanks! Let us be grateful! Let us not forget! Only in eternity will we realize what graces we have received from God and his dear mother! Let us recall that the promise, *Fulgunt sicut stellae*, "They shall shine like stars," was not made only to a few who live in God's will, but even here and now in this "school of apostles" we are called to multiply immeasurably this very same reality – what a grace to be called to this! Think about it always. And let us strive to become true children of Mary and repent for our failings. Oh, how often the heavenly mother helped us when heavy loads weighed us down! How clearly she helped us! So thank her by living a holy life in accordance with your holy calling!

Furthermore, I would like to thank particularly those who

cooperated with God's grace, who took up God's service with complete disregard of their own will and accepted spiritual martyrdom. Through self-forgetfulness they devoted themselves to the general welfare of the Society.

I thank all those who helped to strengthen our discipline through strict observance. You are all God's co-workers and your reward will be great! I thank all those who work and suffer for the firm unity of our spiritual family and who endure hardship and trouble striving to build up and to contribute to the salvation of souls, particularly through good example.

How great your reward will be!!

Everyone can collaborate. Therefore, each one should do as much as possible, above all to master himself. Oh, that you would triumph! That you would learn to sacrifice your own interests. Believe that the Lord will repay you *secundum magnitudinem suam*, "according to his greatness!"

Today let us offer ourselves in a very special way as children of God's dear mother! Let us give ourselves completely to her! Let us go to our mother and plead at her feet, to extend her protective mantle over us from now on. And let us promise that we will never leave her like disloyal children! Ah, what we will prepare for ourselves in eternity if we persevere to the end!

To thousands upon thousand we shall shine in eternal glory! The dear Mother of God wants to help us toward this goal; she proved this these past twelve years. Who has eyes to see, let him see!

Therefore, let us offer ourselves completely to the dear Mother of God with joy! Whatever we give to her returns to us! Ah! what joy, what solace if you can say: "I belong completely to God's mother!" If you dedicated yourself completely to God and to Mary through the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience! What joy at the moment of death, when hell wagers everything to win you for itself! For then, if you have lived for her, Mary will spread her protective mantle over you! So do it with joy! Then your soul will be suffused with such bliss and heavenly peace!

May the Lord give the Society another twelve years, which will pass as quickly, to strengthen itself more and more both inside and out with a zealous and unremitting quest for perfection! May all of you, especially those who feel their human weakness more than others, look to Mary the mother of mercy! Because she is mighty; she is the dispenser of grace!

Therefore, everyone should collaborate according to one's capacity! No one has any excuse! Mary is your mother, the mother of our family! Flee to her in humility in all your needs and she will attain grace for you!

1894/03/23

Today, Good Friday, forcefully reminds us of our duty as people vowed to holy obedience. You know that the God-man became obedient in all things, from first to last, and that he even obeyed his executioners. He desired to complete his mission, the work God had assigned him: "I must finish what you, my Father, have given me." He wanted to drink the cup his heavenly Father had given him to drink. Everywhere obedience and the cross! Oh, look at the Divine Savior on Golgotha! The means by which Eternal Wisdom chose to rescue us! The way of obedience and humiliation! If obedience is such a sacred thing, how can we as vowed religious excuse ourselves or not wish to be obedient? Especially since the Lord of heaven and earth, the Divine Savior whom we have promised to follow, blazed such a trail? Through the disobedience of one person sin came into the world; so through the obedience of one person it is overcome!

But what a holy thing is obedience! When difficulties arise, if only each person in each situation would think about the Crucified who was obedient unto death! Oh, how happy is that religious who completes in obedience the work heaven sets before him. He has only to be obedient from the day he enters the Society until his last breath. Then he can say: *Consummatum est!* "It is accomplished!" He has remained obedient unto death. Then the Lord will raise you up and make your name great! How many sought to do their own will until it was too late, all because they didn't recognize the greatness of obedience, because they didn't look at the Divine Savior's life and penetrate the mystery of obedience! Oh, how I wish to God that everyone would let himself be led by his superiors, even when these are so weak!

This day which recalls the great mystery of the God-man's death should always strongly remind you of holy obedience. Listen neither to flesh and blood, nor to any other consideration from hell. Instead, concentrate on the way of Eternal Wisdom: the one who *factus est obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis!* "became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." This truth will be of more use to you than a thousand sermons!

Therefore, enter into the Divine Savior's suffering. Go up to Golgotha and to the Mount of Olives. Pray until the Lord sends an angel to strengthen you! Go to God to strengthen you in your need so that it can be said of each of you: He was obedient until death – and *in pace erit memoria eius*, "he shall be remembered in peace."

1894/03/30

When the evil one sees anyone determined to serve God zealously and strive for holiness, he does everything he can to make him fall. He works harder against this person than against those who have already fallen. You already know the various, many-sided attacks hell makes against each person, and we cannot call enough attention to them for you to recognize them adequately.

Apart from the attacks against the commandments of God there are attacks which are even more dangerous in another way. At the beginning they do not appear harmful but they lead to the most disastrous consequences.

First there is despondency, the most severe attack of hell. It may appear in a whole group. In certain nations where the evil one seeks to inspire hatred against the holy church and against those in charge, faith will be weakened and many will fall away. It is the same in a religious community. There the devil makes every effort to wear away trust in the Institute and in the superiors because he knows that then things will soon decline. Be careful to resist all despondency whether it comes from our lack of talent or lack of progress in studies, from attacks on the Institute, or from faults which burden us – our own faults or those of our confreres. Don't let yourselves become despondent. "The tree is known by its fruits." The fruits of despondency are thoroughly evil.

As the holy rule stipulates, always have great trust in God and in our holy patrons, and fear the wicked enemy who wants to steal you all! Then go to prayer. And when you pray your hope and trust will return. How many have been lost to religious life and to eternal

life because of dejection and lack of trust. Where did failure come from? Wasn't it from a general lack of trust? Help will come to whomever perseveres in his place and hopes in the Lord. *In te Domine speravi, non confundar in aeternum*. "In you Lord have I hoped, do not put me off forever."

Other attacks mounted by the evil one are directed more against those who have good will and strive after perfection. He paints their faults and those of others in the darkest colors. Then the person thinks: "That can't be. This can't be God's work if so many mistakes are made." You know how the wily enemy brings this about. So watch yourselves! You don't have to answer for anybody else! You have only to account for your own failures, not for those of others. So be gentle in your judgments. And if you are not obliged to do so by your office, never judge at all. Never judge harshly or unkindly, but rather with love. Then you will be spared many dangers. But if you judge your confreres uncharitably, then you are on the brink of falling. That is a well-known fact both in religious life and in the world.

There are many other attacks. For example, there is no progress here or there, or we have this or that difficulty to overcome, just as the evil one paints them. Look to the holy rule! You need no more security than that. The devil will obscure many things for you; he will blind you. Your support is trust in God, in prayer, in following the holy rule. If the apostles themselves lost trust in the Lord after witnessing so many wonders, do you believe the devil cannot blind you and lead you to a fall? Keep the commandments and the holy rule and you will go on to perfection and holiness. You will have peace. Don't worry about the future. "I hope in the Lord. He will lead me on the right path."

There are so many attacks I cannot count them all! Another is "the superiors don't trust me." Here the devil will also catch his prey. So what if it's true? But isn't it often the case that whoever has childlike trust in his superiors will regain their trust? Look at the fruits to see if you are zealous in all the virtues, and you will soon know the tree. This is such a good criterion that you will not easily go astray.

In connection with this, if you want to deflect the attacks of hell you must be open with your superiors and tell them your difficulties as soon as possible. Be open. Be childlike. If you do you will see that no one will stumble, no one will fall, no one will be deprived of that great grace, the grace of vocation. You will give peace to your confreres and to your superiors. So hold fast to the holy rule! Have great trust in the Lord! Say to yourself, "Come what may, I will obey my superiors unto death. That is God's will. My crown will be waiting."

1894/04/20

How little attention we pay to this truth: we must be holy. In his great mercy the Divine Savior has called us to be conformed to his image; he called us to be like him as much as possible: to be holy. He has called us so that already here [on earth], through holiness, our work everywhere may be accompanied by blessings, happiness and salvation, and one day we may enjoy the glory of the saints in heaven. You are called to be holy. Your task, your duty – the most sacred duty of your state in life – is to strive for holiness. What an exalted and holy vocation! Everything has been arranged with a view to making you saints – the highest vocation you can have in heaven or on earth. Let us never forget these thoughts, this calling, this admonition, this duty.

What good will everything else be if we do not strive for holiness? One holy person will do more than thousands and thousands of others. Indeed, Divine Providence has showered such graces upon one holy person and his work, and has blessed him in such a way that he has influenced the history of entire nations.

Become holy! Tell yourself over and over, “I must become holy! If I do not strive for holiness I am in danger of falling to the ground. It is my duty to strive unceasingly for holiness.” What use are other ideas and undertakings if we do not strive for holiness?

How happy you are if you understand this truth. Let this be your guiding principle: “I must be like my divine model.” Never let yourself regret it, whatever the cost, “I must be holy. Let people despise me. Let people think I am inferior. Let people mock me, as long as I please God, if only I become holy. I do not count the

cost.” Let us remember our great and our special obligation – how the eternity of so many depends upon us fulfilling this duty. Just have confidence and the Lord will gladly give us this grace. What we will enjoy for all eternity if we become holy! What we will do for many thousands and thousands of souls if we become holy!

Certainly it is not easy to strive for holiness heedless of the cost. And it is definitely difficult for those who drag themselves along, who at one moment want to and at the next moment don't, who are tepid in their duties. For these it will not be easy. But whoever really strives for holiness no matter what the cost already knows this.

We should become holy, all of us without exception. The Lord gladly gives us his grace. On the other hand, we must be convinced that as a rule holiness is not acquired all at once. It will only be gained through long striving and struggle. Holiness is connected with many small failures and imperfections and even with small venial sins. But don't be discouraged! Say to yourself, “I must be holy whatever the cost! I trust in the Lord. He will give me strength and I surely hope that I will be holy.” But if you want to become holy you must become like the divine model. You have already taken a big step in that direction: you have vowed poverty, chastity and obedience. How close to holiness you already are if you behave as your position [as religious] requires. In addition you must be men of sorrow, men of mortification, men held in contempt, men derided, men of suffering.

But seek this in the right way: not in spiritual fancies but through suffering, through obedience, poverty, exact religious observance. Do you think you will become holy if you fail to fulfill your duty, if

you disregard this or that rule, if you are careless? Do you think that will make you holy? Remember what you have bound yourselves to do. Do you think you will become holy if you do not observe silence? What good will all the rest be (suffering, work, plans and intentions, converting people) if you are not holy? One holy person will do more than a thousand others.

Be holy. Over and over again I exhort you, “Be holy whatever the cost.” Do whatever you must to attain it. You must travel the road that leads to it. You are already standing on that road because of your status [as religious]. You must walk the same road as Jesus our model: the road of a holy religious – the road of exact observance. What will happen to a religious who neglects his duty? Will he have rest, will he find peace and happiness, will he have blessing in his apostolic works, will he come to a degree of perfection? Do you think the Lord will lead an unfaithful servant to perfection? The lukewarm never become saints. On the contrary, these will slip little by little and finally fall.

Because it is my duty to care for you I repeat it once again: Become holy! Because I love you so much and because I am ready to die for you, I want you to become holy. If you have not begun, begin today. Let storms come from within or without. Even if all hell and the whole world should judge against you, say to yourselves, “I must be holy, whatever the cost.”

1894/04/27

I would like to leave you a special inheritance: great trust in God. It is very distressing these days to see how little trust there is in the Lord; how humanity wriggles on like a tangle of vermin; how they have forgotten the power of heaven. They do not look up, where our help, power and strength come from. Oh, if people only knew what the Lord has given them through confidence. Only in eternity will you see what you could have accomplished if you had trusted. How poor and needy you were all because you did not build upon the Lord and depend on him for everything.

It is distressing these days to see how faith has decayed. That is all the more reason why here we must progress by good example and words no less than in deeds, to live, act, and bring about this faith and confidence. You know what the Holy Spirit enjoins in the Gospel and what the Savior himself says: *Fides tua te salvum fecit*. “Your faith has saved you.” He says this so often, and yet we place so much faith and confidence in our own status, works and undertakings. How much we show off our own skill and human reckoning, never considering the Source of all our help!

St. Bernard says: *Habete sollicitudinem in Deum*. ... “Cast your cares on the Lord.” The great saint also says: “Nothing makes the great power of God more clear than the fact that he makes those powerful who build with his help.” Whoever trusts in the Lord will never sink or fall. Whoever has the Lord for his strength will never fall unless it pleases the Lord, and that will never please him. May you always be animated by a great, strong trust in the Lord. Without it you are in for hard times. If you only trust your own skill, the future will teach you differently. I tell you again and again, “put

your trust in the Lord.” In all your struggles and sorrows, works, deeds and conduct I say to you: “Our help comes from above!” Your motto in all your works and undertakings should be: *In te Domine speravi, non confundar in aeternum*. “I trust in you O Lord, do not confound me forever.” How shameful it is to shrink from every difficulty when all human help seems lost. Then you must trust in God all the more.

How can anyone say he trusts in God when in all his needs and sorrows and works, when all seems lost, he loses heart? Precisely there confidence in God needs to be established. “When he hopes in me, I will save him.” Hold fast to this trust in God. Live as much as possible according to the will of God; have great, great trust in God in all you do. You will see that each of you, like the Society itself, will become all-powerful. In our wretchedness we build on what people think is laughable. This is how you will build everything. But the Lord is our help; nothing can shame us, even if all hell arrays itself against us. In all your struggles, in all the attacks against you, cry out: *Quis ut Deus*, “Who is like God?” Live in the conviction that trust in God crushes the hellish fiend.

I beg you to take note of this for your entire life; then you will have a power and strength nothing can overcome. Live this trust so the Society itself will become all-powerful, and no power of hell, no worldly power will be able to overcome it.

1894/05/11

Filii tenebrarum prudentiores sunt in sua generatione quam filii lucis. “The children of darkness in their generation are more enterprising than the children of light.” We can also apply this to ourselves! It is true. Evil ones, children of darkness, are more cunning than we children of light. In the apostolate, just take a glance at the many sects. With what zeal, with what sacrifice they go to the ends of the earth, even to places no Catholic priest has ever been. If we could survey the whole earth at a glance and see how zealously the various religions and sects work for their perverse purposes, we would be surprised indeed.

It is very shameful for us who have been called and chosen by God in a special way to save souls, to stand up for truth, to do battle and to struggle, if we allow God’s enemy and ours to surpass us. Indeed if we do not fulfill our duty our punishment will not be small. Therefore, we should use this exalted office, this great grace which is our lot through our vocation, as the holy rule prescribes: to work, to suffer, to struggle, to fight and to die for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. We cannot fail to appreciate that each one in his place can already do a great deal through prayer, strict observance, and through using all his strength to remain united. In this way each one, as far as his position allows, spreads light and warmth everywhere. Let each of us use every opportunity to spread fire – apostolic fire – for the one who is on fire enkindles fire everywhere: in writing letters, in relationships, in other opportunities. And if you do not want to lose your vocation it is your duty to work for the interests of the Society. You already know how much each can do in his seemingly confined situation. You yourself know how a soldier should stand and fight only where

he is deployed. He should and must fight only in *his* place. How much one can do if he is filled with the Holy Spirit! He spreads blessings everywhere.

This zeal must be accompanied by wisdom. Since most of you are still young and inexperienced, wisdom is doubly necessary. Zeal without wisdom wreaks havoc. We must be led by true wisdom, not by the wisdom of the world. Since wisdom is a virtue related to humility it demands that you do not labor according to your own ideas. Providence has arranged it so that no one person knows everything. Whoever works on his own makes many mistakes, even big ones. It is also important that you do not work anxiously but conscientiously. Ask your superiors for advice or at least always keep them informed insofar as possible. If you proceed according to your own ideas without listening to others, you can make great mistakes and inflict serious injury. One who has many years of experience prevents harm. If, on the contrary, you work on your own you can bring about serious trouble.

This is so very important because most of you, like the Society itself, are so young. It has yet to establish its own customs and procedures. Clearly after several years experience will teach the Society and it will establish its own laws and norms. Now some may think that this or that could be better. Superiors must endure these punches. But hold together in humility and support one another. I can't go into particulars here, but practically everyone can fail here, beginning with myself. Here is an example from our economic life. A book is ordered. You could go around to the superior who knows a better source for the book, where you could save perhaps 50 lire. Had you asked for advice and not acted on your own judgment this mistake could have been avoided.

Everywhere we make a new foundation I hear this. The difficulty everywhere is lack of experience. But this comes only with time.

Be zealous! Don't let yourselves be shamed by our enemy! You know that the whole world and so many souls have no assistance. We could help them if we all strove for holiness and were of one mind and one heart; if we renounced our own rights and always had the welfare of the community in mind. If we held firmly together and observed the rules strictly and truly strove for holiness. Then you would see fire enkindled in us and in others. And you would see what blessings God would prepare for you. Let us not be shamed, I beg you again. How sad it is to see so many sects and false prophets spreading their false teachings to everyone everywhere. I cannot understand how anyone who has faith, who is permeated with the love of God and souls can be indifferent here. You know how the saints say that every soul in the state of grace is so beautiful that you cannot look at it without admiration – without dying of love; and that they would travel the whole world to win one soul. Let us, first to last without exception, bear in mind our great responsibility.

1894/06/02

Quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum! “How good and pleasant to have brothers living together in unity!” It is truly good and noble when brothers of one heart live together; when united with God they set for themselves one of the highest goals: to lead people, to lead humanity, to its highest blessing: eternal salvation. Who would not rejoice over such an exalted unity! *Quam bonum et jucundum habitare fratres in unum!* United in strength, they seek first to be holy themselves and then to sanctify others, to support each other in body and in spirit. What a joy! What a happiness! What a wonderful undertaking! What a paradise on earth!

May you always be drawn by this spirit. May you always do whatever is necessary to insure this unity. But what is necessary for this unity? Above all, strive for holiness and for the salvation of souls. In a word, pursue the purpose of the Society. Then pursue what is so necessary for your own holiness: to drink in the spirit of the Society; to be zealous for it; to suffer for it. If you neglect your responsibilities, your exalted mission, if you do not possess the spirit of the Society, how can you say you will be holy? Show me one holy person who has not done all this.

Remember, you must have love, zeal and enthusiasm for your Society! It is your great task to gain these through prayer and meditation. I beg you to use every defense against the enemy, which can steal this love, this unity from you. This will enable you to receive this love, this unity.

Remember well how easily the evil one tries to weaken this spirit – these “wings” with which you and others progress. And he

will weaken you if you do not resist. If you no longer resist him, progress ceases. And if the devil tries to persuade you, remember that sufferings are everywhere. You must suffer. Just think of how it is in the world. How many homes are so beautiful, so magnificent on the outside; but inside there is misery, the cross, suffering, and sorrow. You should be like this. If your heart is heavy within you, then on the outside you should show joy in bearing your cross. Some suffering must come.

But now, here [in the Motherhouse] God gives you many graces: the help of so many Holy Masses, mutual support, good example, the grace of your vocation. So it is easier to carry the cross here. You must carry the cross whether you want to or not. We must all carry the cross. Since we all share in Adam’s sin we are sentenced to carry it. We carry it with patience and we offer it for the Society.

If you cannot work in the apostolate, then at least you can suffer for the Society. Perhaps in this way you will be doing more than if you were working [in the apostolate]. Be convinced of this when the evil one seeks you out (and he will): you must become holy. If many crosses come to you, then you must bear them patiently if you want to save many souls. Do not be afraid of the cross. It is a sign God loves you! Through steadfast unity and holy harmony seek to suffer willingly. Seek to preserve peace wherever you are – peace of heart and external peace. But you will not preserve this peace unless you are willing to suffer, unless you make sacrifices, unless you suffer unjustly. Then we will live together joyfully. And if here in our Motherhouse we can say: *quam bonum et jucundum habitare fratres in unum*, then what will it be like in heaven where we are united in eternal love with the Divine Savior! Amen.

1894/06/15

If we want to accomplish great things, then we must also have great trust. Human frailty is so great that we can do nothing without the grace of God. If we are separated from divine help, if we have little or no trust, then what poor creatures we are, we who cannot even pronounce the name of Jesus without God's grace? Then how much less will we be able to accomplish great things for his glory! We are convinced that we hope for everything from God. Therefore, we must have great, unshakable trust in God. Oh, how powerful religious are even when they are weak and frail! How powerful religious are if they have great trust!

You surely know, the greater the trust the more one will receive from God. In all our poverty we look to God from whom we seek our help. Seek your help from God alone. *Maledicti qui confidunt in hominibus*. "Cursed be those who put their trust in men [and women]." *Bonum est sperare in Domino quam sperare in principibus*. "It is better to hope in the Lord than to trust in princes." Watch out if the public, princes, and influential people support you. Do not count on them! Today they support us and tomorrow they are against us. Let us trust in the Lord in all circumstances, whether it brings us joy or sorrow, good fortune or bad. *In te Domine speravi, non confundar in aeternum*. "In you Lord I have hoped, do not put me off forever." Protected by this trust we work diligently and untiringly.

Let me impress two points upon you: *Pietas* and *Scientia*, "devotion and knowledge": to be holy, to strive for perfection, to really become pious, to arm ourselves through a scholarship that corresponds to our talents. *Pietas et Scientia*. Take this last point to heart. I really want you to know how necessary it is, and not to

misunderstand it. We only learn through hard work. Divine Providence ordained it so.

Especially you young people cannot understand how important it is to apply yourselves. But if you heed the command of your superiors you will not regret having studied hard. If you do what is prescribed for you, then you will gradually acquire an orderly and suitable scholarship. Use your time well! Do not be superficial in your knowledge! That is sometimes a more serious failing than knowing nothing at all.

I especially recommend Latin to you. It is such an important foundation for a proper education; do not neglect it. Whether you are first year philosophers or soon to be ordained priests, always have your grammar book at hand; it is essential for a good education. Without knowledge of Latin you cannot be truly educated. Do not neglect it!

Time is precious! The more you prepare yourselves and your weapons of knowledge, the more skillfully you will fight. Then, when you enter this academic battlefield, you will not be ashamed. If you did your duty at the proper time, if you have a good grasp of scholarship, then you will not be afraid to go out in public. If this is not the case, you will not be able to accomplish as much as you would otherwise.

Holiness, suitable knowledge, and what pertains to the essence of being an educated person is proper for you. Philosophy and theology are very important parts of your studies. How terribly you can go astray, how much you can compromise the holy church if you are not well grounded in them. Think of your serious responsibility!

1894/06/22

The Divine Savior says, *Qui vult venire post me, abneget semetipsum et tollat crucem suam et sequatur me*. “Whoever would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.” We must do this daily. How easily we forget our task: as followers and imitators of the Divine Model we must carry our cross daily, we must take up our cross daily and follow our Divine Teacher.

In another place the Holy Spirit urges us: *nisi poenitentiam egeritis, omnes simili modo peribitis*, “unless you do penance, you will all likewise perish.” How easily we religiously forget we must do penance. How sweet penance is! How sanctifying! How peace-giving! True penance brings such peace to our hearts. Oh, I tell you, when you are dissatisfied, when you feel down and out, look for a spirit of penance. And you will see what heavenly balm will be poured on your soul; what sweet peace will come to your inmost being; what temptations, immobilized, will fall away from you! Look at the innumerable saints! Look at those who only sinned in a small degree! Then look at what penance they have done, what spirit of penance they have. Do you think you can be holy without penance, without mortification? Do you think you can arrive at perfection without penance?

Let me admonish you earnestly. Everyone, whatever your station, be filled with the true spirit of penance! The Lord does not demand unusual penances of you. The Lord does not insist that you ruin your physical health. There are other kinds of penance you can do.

You have many opportunities to suffer, each one at his own

post. Accept everything in the spirit of penance. Humble yourselves before the Lord and say: *Bonum est mihi quia humiliasti me*, “It is good for me that you have humbled me,” it is good that you give me suffering. I will take it in the spirit of penance out of love for you, Oh Lord, in the spirit of penance and humility. You will soon see what peace, what power, what vigor penance will bring you. What help will all your good resolutions, all your fine advances in sanctity be if you are not drawn on by this truth, if you do not travel the way of deep humility in the spirit of penance? You will advance but go through setbacks as well. Be true men of penance!

Like the great saints, walk in the spirit of suffering and the cross. There is no other road to heaven. Did the Lord not have to enter his glory through suffering? So why do we look for joys in this world where our road is penance and the cross? We will find no rest and no joy if we stray from this spirit. And we will encounter great dangers. You Salvatorians are founded in the spirit of humility and the cross; so live in this spirit. In this way you arm yourself against the enemy of your salvation.

The spirit of prayer accompanies the spirit of penance. Without penance and without prayer you will never be holy. The two belong together. You will soon see exactly what your situation is: whether you have the spirit of penance and prayer or not. Without this spirit things will be like a desert wasteland. You will be overcome by the various enemies who dazzle you with all sorts of pleasures. Oh, what danger awaits the hand stretched out to forbidden fruit!

So be men of penance, humility, contrition, and prayer. If this is your spirit then you will also have the spirit of perseverance – try it if you don’t believe it! You will carry the cross in the spirit of

penance and will say: "Still more, Lord, if it is your will." The world flees from the cross. But the spirit of the cross will be your touchstone, however, wherever, whatever you are or do. Think about that your entire life. You should not be pleased by any day when you enjoyed good fortune, where everything went as you wanted. Rather, you should be pleased with the days of suffering and of the cross. These are the days of your salvation.

1894/12/08
13th Anniversary Foundation Day Celebration

For us today is a joyful day, a day of jubilation. Heaven too rejoices, and together with the holy angels we can shout: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum*, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord!" The memories this day evokes in us are so great, so wonderful that they must certainly produce jubilation in each sincere heart aflame with divine love. For on this very day heaven inaugurated our work on which depends the salvation of so many thousands of immortal souls, and so much honor to God and to the Blessed Virgin. Who can grasp what joy abounds in heaven, what bliss the holy guardian angels must feel for the souls entrusted to them! Because ours is a work begun through God's grace to insure the bliss of many immortal souls, a single one of which is much more precious than all the world. Ah, what joy to whomever grasps the meaning of St. Catherine's words: one would die a hundred times to rescue a single soul. ...

Certainly on this day it is right and just for us to thank God, to unite with the heavenly choirs, with the holy guardian angels. Steep yourselves in these thoughts today and your gratitude will consist in this: you will be so grateful for this great heavenly favor that you will bring all you have to the loving God who has been so good to us, and to God's dear mother who took such maternal care of us all, so that we may consecrate ourselves completely to God and give ourselves to him as on the day of our holy profession, and that we devote ourselves completely to the holy purpose of the Society. ...

If you understood the dignity of this holy dedication you would

die for joy at what the Lord has done for you by choosing you and calling you here.

On this day you should recognize what is for your salvation; you should preserve an ever loyal heart toward the Divine Savior! He has called you out of the world, not for earthly honors, but for greater honor in heaven. He wants to make you happy and make your own crown more exquisite and more beautiful. Oh, don't forget this. And today be more generous towards the Divine Savior and our heavenly mother, and you will see how they themselves will care for us. Abandon yourselves completely into the arms of God and of his heavenly mother, and renew your apostolic spirit today. You are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ as your cornerstone. Therefore, you must walk this special path which the apostles and particularly Christ walked. Take care this apostolic spirit never weakens.

Ah what joy, the day you go forth fearlessly to withstand dangers and persecutions and thus save many souls. About ten years ago an archbishop wrote that he wished the new apostles who come from the north would win the same trophies as the first apostles. Let this touch your hearts. We won't achieve these trophies if we lack the heroism of the holy apostles. Or do you not believe the Divine Savior will be pleased to give us his gifts if we ask him, or that Mary will lead us to victory? If this apostolic spirit blooms again in the present day, then we will conquer the world. The Divine Savior conquered it once; if we want to conquer it again then we must follow him.

Remember, the time of suffering, struggle, and contempt is brief. Don't be afraid. The time is so very short. Fight the good

fight. Persevere in this apostolic calling and protect this jewel in holy fear since it can be lost. Because if Christ himself lost an apostle, why should we who are so weak think we could not lose our calling?

Today, therefore, is a day of jubilation, in fact a day of joy and bliss with the heavenly spirits who rejoice with you today. I would like to speak in union with those confreres who have already received their crown. Ah, when you penetrate that spirit what joy and bliss are yours, what new bliss for heaven, and what happiness for the future! Perhaps the salvation of thousands and thousands of souls depends on you, on how you live, pray, and work. So fear nothing, and put your resolutions into the hands of God's dear mother so that she may help you carry them out, that she may support you against hell and all opposition.

Then you will see what you can do – not you but the Lord working through you. Because God strengthens the weakest. If you insist on relying on your own power you will accomplish nothing. But if you trust, then you have a share in God's omnipotence. Just one of you completely filled with God's spirit is enough to convert a whole nation. And if a single one suffices, how much the whole Society will be able to do if one day it possesses hundreds and thousands of members filled with God's spirit. The future and the salvation of so many souls depend on you. Therefore, come before the throne of God to beg for this spirit. First, thank God and our heavenly mother, and then rededicate yourselves completely and implore the most Blessed Virgin to accept this offering.

1895/02/01

Pietas et scientia, “devotion and knowledge.” More than anything else these two things are required from us. However, the first is always more important because if this is missing, everything else will collapse. In fact even knowledge can become pernicious! Therefore, it is necessary again and again to resolve with all our strength to strive for holiness by fulfilling our duties and tasks, particularly prayer. The common experience of the centuries and millennia proves exactly this. We know that beginning with Adam everyone fell, so why should this not endanger us as well? We also know that even we fall, all of us to a greater or lesser extent.

If we could review history and see all those who fell in the sanctuary as vowed people we would be startled at such human baseness! No place and no religious order are too sacred to be violated, even at the start of an order when graces are generally assumed to be greater. Still you find examples of how easily human beings fall. Start with the Divine Teacher! Even St. Peter denied him, and “one of them betrayed him.”

Look at the beginnings of the old religious orders. Can you find a single one without scandal!

Furthermore, I would like to tell everyone: *Orate et vigilate, ut non intretis in tentationem*. “Watch and pray that you not be led into temptation.” Ah, pray! Pray often, pray with devotion! Whether it is the holy prayer of the church, or Holy Mass, or Divine Office, perform it with the utmost devotion!

Maybe one [confrere] or the other is quite happy and believes

he is safe from hell and from the passions. Oh, but we know how many started so well and finished badly! Think of what St. Peter said: “Even if I had to die with you, I will never deny you!” So pray and carry out your religious exercises well! A time will come when serious temptations close in on you, on which your vocation, yes your very salvation depends. I can only tell you: pray! Pray so that you may store up a treasury of graces, so that at that moment you do not sink and fall, or at least if you do fall, you will rise again!

Therefore, pray! Pray often, and thus lay a good foundation for your persistence! When religious fall they fall hard! Pray, therefore, and be humble! Be confident! If you are humble you will persevere! The Lord will give you light if you pray eagerly! If you don’t, however, then you will become tepid!

Therefore, pray! Pray, and preserve a pure heart so that you can discern God’s spirit from the spirit of darkness. Through prayer you come to understand the holy rule, and you also receive light by meditating on the rules! Prayer, purity of heart, deep piety! Therefore, piety, holiness! I beseech you again and again: pray! Pray everyday so that you are always protected, especially when the Lord tests you – and these moments will surely come. In general, life is like a test that one must pass. And if you have not passed it when you are young, you must do so when you are old. Sooner or later almost everyone goes through a struggle! You will certainly be attacked, particularly in your sacred vocation!

Therefore, pray that you will not fall. Pray that if temptation should come, even in old age or on your deathbed, you will persevere both in virtue and in your holy vocation.

1895/03/29

The vocation we received from God, the vocation to religious life and priesthood, is so exalted we cannot comprehend it! However, we must return to it again and again in order to focus somewhat on this one concept and so come to recognize its obligations.

First, the vocation of the priest. What an exalted vocation! St. Ambrose exclaims: “You priests, you steady the tottering world.” When one speaks of a priest he speaks of a “god-man.”

How much of its grandeur would have to be spelled out in order to recognize its exalted dignity even a little – that exalted calling to which priests are summoned!

But for us what follows from this? The greater the vocation, the heavier the obligation. It is certain that the salvation of the world depends on priests! But when the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the pit. It is the same with priests! How easily one undoes the very souls he is meant to rescue. Salvation comes from priests, and undoing as well! As the priest, so the people!

The exalted dignity of the priesthood demands that we shine outwardly through our holiness! We should become holy, manifesting this dignity outwardly, and not diminishing it through how we live! The more exalted the dignity, the greater the responsibility! Oh, that you would cherish this gift as holy and protect it!

You know what the Divine Savior says of priests: they are “the

salt of the earth and the light of the world,” and that if this salt spoils it is thrown out! A dreadful threat! To be thrown out and trampled if you fail at your duty as a priest. To the extent you strive for holiness, you are effective; and to the extent you become careless, you become like *sal infatuatum* “insipid salt.” This inexpressible dignity is also an indescribable burden. Hence, it is especially necessary for us to remain holy priests inside and out; and above all that both inside and out you avoid whatever does not comport with this dignity.

The duty for us as religious is even greater. The Lord called you to this life. He precisely wants religious priests to be salt of the earth. If you don’t live up to this vocation there is a great danger that sooner or later you will fall. So endeavor to become holy; then you will comprehend first that your dignity is a divine dignity; then you will see how exalted is the dignity which God entrusts to you!

I would like to make a special remark about the studies required by the church, particularly moral theology. Remember, some day you [scholastics] will be appointed as judges! Therefore, study moral theology and remember that you are called to lead many souls to heaven, to direct them. So you must know the laws.

Contemplate the greatness of your vocation from time to time and consider its implications: how many souls you will lead into heaven along with yourself if you follow it; and if you do the opposite how many souls you will cast into hell along with yourself! And if you are not holy, how can you lead others certainly and rightly!

Therefore, respect and esteem the dignity within yourself and others. Particularly here [in the Motherhouse] where this dignity

is in danger of appearing mundane, we must live up to our dignity. Otherwise you become *sal infatuatum*! Oh, that all the members of the Society would desire to become “salt of the earth” and “light of the world,” and never *sal infatuatum*.

1895/10/04¹
Reverend Father's Nameday

[Fr. Jordan next expressed his joy over the love and affection shown by the confreres.] On the one hand I see here optimism for a great future for the Society; on the other hand I must admit that in this, more or less, its happiness is founded.

[Then he impressed two things on us.] Love, without you we are nothing, and [unity] through which we will be powerful against the enemy and unconquerable. [Without unity] what the one has built will be destroyed by the other.

¹ In the original edition of DSS XXIII, this talk is on pp. 570-571.

1895/10/12

Obedience is your task – the main concern of the religious. Obedience comes first. If I am obedient all will go smoothly. Without obedience you are no religious and quite useless. Not only are you useless, you are a worthless member, always at war with your superiors. A mere straw lifted in response to obedience, St. Theresa says, is more precious than miracles performed following one's own will. This gives you the key, and if you hold to it you won't go wrong. There are people who dismiss whatever doesn't suit their own will, while on the other hand they have no trouble remembering what they themselves desire. These things they look for and find. The devil does the same: "See, you could accomplish so much that would be more to God's honor!" And so it goes until the devil has you on a leash! You no longer see that you would have done better to be obedient. Whoever does not want to obey should leave us. And if there is anyone like this among you, may God see to it that he quits soon!

As I have often said, this obedience entails unity. It is the same unity in every house where we shall ever be. I will always urge it and work for it, since the danger is so great. I myself saw during a visitation what endurance one must have in order to persevere. If you are not steadfast you will certainly fall, because hundreds and thousands of opinions come. And where shall you go if you don't follow obedience? Finally, lacking strictness, soon there would be as many different congregations as there are houses! Thus, I desire and I won't relent until all [our] houses enjoy the unity found here in the Motherhouse. And notice, if one wants to build on his own ideas, it will be torn down again.

1895/11/29

In our daily routine, instead of joy some may start to feel an aversion to prayer. This often happens because we don't pray or because we don't pray properly. This can also be due to temptations or to other reasons. But mainly it comes when we are lax toward the rule. Our spirits become dull and this affects our prayer – such prayers by the way are rarely heard! Strict observance of the rule and good prayer go hand in hand. Where there is good prayer there is good observance; where observance is good so is prayer. We cannot fulfill our vocations without much prayer.

First of all it calls for our own holiness – we should become salt of the earth and light of the world. If people in the world need prayer, how much more will we need it – we with such an exalted vocation! Therefore, let us pursue our own holiness and our apostolate and not become "a sounding gong." What does it profit us if we are not men of prayer? What will we accomplish? Nothing! If someone tells me how he prays and how often, I can tell him who he is. Everyone should ask himself these questions, and he will be led to self-knowledge!

We especially need prayer in order to have adequate light so that we, though subject to obedience, won't mistake darkness for light and follow it! How much one can attain through prayer! You have many enemies eager to see your fall. How can you fend off all these attacks if you don't turn to the One who knows the enemies and can destroy them? Many think they have already reached the goal. They don't realize they are standing on the brink of an abyss! We realize more and more that prayer is necessary for the Society and for the spiritual family. We can avoid some things through

prayer – things which neither the superior nor anyone else can recognize. But if the spiritual family returns to the spirit and storms heaven ... with one blow it can silence these attacks!

We need prayer, but good prayer, not superficial prayer which displeases God. Prayer in humility, in self-knowledge, in the realization of the greatness and kindness of God and of our own poverty. Don't neglect to pray earnestly that you may be able to discharge your duty promptly and well; that you may be observant in small things; that you may observe all the rules as far as possible; and overall build up the entire human being and strengthen its spirit. Pray steadfastly, strenuously, the way a serious person does things.

Hold to these two points: observance and prayer. These two are so closely related they cannot be distinguished. Prayer alone is useless if the heart is not pure! Then one is averse to approaching the holiness of the Most Holy. Remember to be quite pure, and adopt this slogan for life: "Today calls for men [and women] of prayer." Those who pray with devotion and piety! The person of prayer never prays less; he prays always and everywhere, even when no one is watching. In short, he follows the Divine Savior's command: "Pray always and without ceasing." If you become such men, then no enemies will harm us; the Lord will destroy them.

1895/12/20 [Part 1]

I see a building which the Almighty in goodness and mercy has decided to call into existence. This building is the joy of heaven, the joy of angels, the joy of the holy church and the salvation of immortal souls! Many work continuously at this building. It is and should be a mighty fortress where the shipwrecked are rescued. Many work at this fortress. Many artisans sent by God work continually with great sacrifices to form of themselves, so to speak, the adornment of this holy fortress.

If we take a closer look at this sanctuary, this building, we find three different crews at work. One crew works only on construction, so that the structure becomes beautiful and solid corresponding to its purpose. A second crew is also at work. But in doing one part this crew tears down the other, or it works according to its own ideas so that when the master builder comes he must tear it down again. The third crew is bent on the complete destruction of this fortress. This crew is hell and the world.

I would like to speak of the second crew whose fault is more often carelessness than malice. Still, no one can doubt these people are not true co-workers. Take any example you want! This or that religious works according to his or her own ideas and seems to do splendid work. But in the end it must all be torn down because it doesn't fit the overall plan. It is the same more or less – this tearing down and rebuilding – with those who fail to observe discipline, who don't observe silence, without which it is generally acknowledged there can be no discipline. They tear down and don't actually build. If the bell rings and someone says, "But there is still this and that to do, and I still have enough time" are they "building"

or “tearing down”? Should you follow their example?

Everyone of you should assess whether you are building up or tearing down and destroying. Consider too what God wants from you, and what will happen to us if we do not follow our call to build up. Surely God will cast us out and withdraw his help from us. Those who don’t build but destroy, he will let those poor souls perish miserably. There is no third possibility: either one builds up or one destroys.

Discipline will point the way: you will either build up or destroy. In fact you will build up or destroy not only yourself but the whole family. The consequence will show!

I take it as my duty to speak earnestly because I fear that if we do not live the holy rule to the letter, then God will withdraw his mercy. Woe to us if we don’t live up to our vocation!

1895/12/20 [Part 2]

Is it not God’s will for us to collaborate well, not only for our own sanctification but especially to build up our Society? Therefore, God wants each one, each according to his strengths, to participate in this building up because each one is a member. You know the purpose for which the Society was founded and what a noble task it has: to lead souls to heaven! You also know that if you collaborate this purpose will be served; but if on the contrary [you do not collaborate], so many souls will never come to heaven. You should always remember, and through your vocation as members of the Society you should do everything to promote the interests of this family, everyone at his place – whether in his office or through his personal efforts, or through looking for outside help. Everyone can do something, and under these circumstances can do very much. The advance of the Society hinges on this: whether or not you collaborate.

A society whose members are not courageous will never flourish. But if on the contrary you hold together it will become a world-class institute for your own salvation and for the salvation of others. You are also called to work together for other reasons I won’t mention here. You know as well that gratitude is an obligation, and you can’t deny this if you consider it properly. This reason alone would have made you zealous to collaborate. Do you believe that if we don’t fulfill the responsibilities of our vocation, if we don’t collaborate, and if at the same time we neglect gratitude, do you believe God won’t punish us? Let us avoid this punishment, and let us seek to use all means. How fast things will advance if we are really industrious. But our industry should not be in pursuit of earthly goods!

There is a still more important reason for working together: you know the Society has grown quite significantly and has become exceedingly diverse in its apostolates.

A third consideration is that capable young men who could be promising members can no longer be admitted. Do we want the charge on our conscience that we hindered progress? Oh, let us be afraid! Everyone will be asked: “Give an account of your stewardship!” And let us tremble if the Lord appointed us to a high office! Oh, let us fear lest the Lord expels us and puts another in our place!

Another point on which we can all collaborate is to avoid useless things, unnecessary expenses. You should be like someone who builds, who saves so that nothing may be lost. ... Let us do our duty! You know well how fields of [apostolic] work are increasingly opening up for us, and how much we could do if we lived up to our holy vocation. Then above all, work together through a holy life. This way we will prevent whatever aggravations could otherwise arise.

1895/12/29

Address to the Missionaries departing for Assam

God calls you into a distant country to save those in the shadow of death! God calls you to go there to aid those people. You are called to India where millions and millions sit in the shadow of death and sin! The holy [guardian] angels of those souls call and await you; hell cowers because it fears you will snatch away its booty. Don't look at other lost souls, but look at the one who is waiting for you and is calling for you. Trust the Divine Savior under whose banner you must now struggle and fight. He will join you in the fight, and by his power you will win. You will fight under the protection of the heavenly queen, the Queen of the Apostles, whose renown you can spread.

So be light of the world and salt of the earth. Oh, never be that salt which is thrown out and trampled! Be the light of the world! Shine on those people through a holy life, through which first of all the holy Roman Catholic faith itself will be manifested. Then those people will recognize that you are not ordinary men, that your belief comes not from earth but from heaven! Therefore, first become light yourselves and then announce to them the faith of the Catholic Church. Become light yourselves so that you never deviate in the least but always remain true light and shine on all those people!

Therefore, shine in the darkness as apostles of the Divine Savior, as men really illuminated by the Holy Spirit! Shine there and become those people's saviors. Just think what shocking numbers of souls are waiting! In Assam alone, 500 to 600 die each day without holy baptism, and that in an area entrusted to *us!* 500

to 600 die there each day without our holy religion! Be glad that the Lord called you to rescue at least some of them! And offer your sufferings to God so that he may call others to draw those souls from darkness and to break the power of hell! So, go in great confidence, not confidence in yourselves but in your general, that Divine Savior for and with whom you fight, and for whom you will win.

1896/05/09

The quest for perfection, religious life, fulfilling the duties of our vocation, nowadays runs the great danger. This is especially true for our Society, which is already exhibiting some of the signs. It is inevitable that if we do not observe the rule strictly, if we make many exceptions, neglect all community exercises, we will perish! God's strict judgment will descend!

All the more in our days when the work is so great and the workers are so few, no one can seriously believe it would be possible to save souls, etc. if we disregard spiritual exercises, disregard the holy rule, forget that we are especially bound to work out our own salvation. Such people who lack inner fire become a *sal infatuatum*, insipid salt that is good for nothing. They believe much in work, but accomplish nothing! I cannot, therefore, stress enough that you must observe the rule and must not seek a dispensation from it lightly because this leads to apathy. ...

A good religious will always be happy; his greatest joy will be observing the rule. Whoever dispenses himself from one rule or the other will stray farther and farther until, in the absence of superiors or guardian angels, he falls. Here religious discipline and human life are the same: the one who never eats wastes away. So in the spiritual life the one who neglects spiritual exercises dies! And what is worse, little by little he becomes blind, until finally he discards everything without scruples! How does it happen that a priest is so easily lost? I believe that blindness leads him to neglect his duties!

Be vigilant so that God's blessing may rest on you the more, by being observant rather than by seeking discipline at every opportunity

(the scourge, etc.)! Be alert lest you grow blind and seek work simply to escape the rule! Do you believe God doesn't see what you're up to?

A religious is a religious insofar as he observes the rule. If he becomes worldly then he is a grotesque creature! Generally, a runaway religious never becomes a good secular priest!

Keep on the lookout for dangers that threaten our Society. Otherwise, as activity becomes more important than contemplation, the latter will come to ruin!

You cannot complain that we have so many exercises! By comparison, all the other congregations have just as many or even more! The Jesuits, although they don't have choral Office, still have more [spiritual exercises] than we. So, observe the exercises we have. If you don't, you will perish.

1896/06/01
Address to the Sisters

Venerable sisters!

We just now celebrated a short but sacred rite – a rite full of deep meaning: professing your holy vows through which you have renewed the bond with your heavenly bridegroom. You were happy the first time, a similarly festive day, to profess your sacred vows while the hand of the priest held the sacred host above your head and you knelt to recite your vows. Jesus stood before you, fully desiring to enter your heart. He waited only for your words, your holy vows. We celebrated this rite here the first time. Holy mother church, enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit, allowed this rite. She knows well that no moment is better or more suited for religious to give themselves completely to God in holy vows than when the Lord of heaven and earth gives himself to them in Holy Communion. Therefore, the church gladly allows religious profession to be celebrated in this way.

What joy, what solace, and what great mercy you receive in this hour. You consecrate and sanctify yourselves through the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. You give yourselves completely to him without reservation. And what does he give you, he before whom the cherubim and seraphim bow deeply in adoration, before whom the angels and saints of heaven cover their faces since the brightness of his glory is so overpowering? What does he give you? He who possesses heaven and earth and all they contain? Nothing less than himself! He gives himself to you, flesh and blood, body and soul, humanity and divinity. Oh, remember often who is with you, who you receive, who lives in your heart as king, and to whom

you have dedicated yourself. This mystery is so deep and exalted you cannot exhaust it in a lifetime.

Truly the Almighty will help you in all your worries and sufferings. He will never abandon you. He will give you courage and strength. God knows how to comfort you, even if there is no one left on earth to whom you can reveal your inmost feelings. Go to Jesus. Share with him all your needs in love, and talk with him about your sufferings. He will be your helper. What further need have you of human help? You belong to the Lord. You gave yourself, consecrated yourself, to the Almighty.

Again I say: go to him, trust him. He will never refuse to help you because he watches over you as over his own possession. Never lose courage, whether you meet with sorrows here or in the mission. The cross will come because we must suffer, and we desire to. But when suffering comes we want to preserve courage and trust. In our pain let us go to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and there let us pour out our hearts. Let us find our refuge in the one who knows the inmost sorrows of our heart. He has the power to support us in life's difficulties and in all sadness. Even if the whole world and all the great ones who live in it should rise against us, we will not be frightened. Almighty God can bring them down with a breath.

Very likely, times of suffering and inner struggle are closing in about us, when we may really believe that God has left us. At those times when we no longer know what to do, hurry to the Savior. No human being can ever love you as he loves you. Amen.

1896/06/03
Talk of Jordan before
Departure for North America

[An incorrect date is given for this talk in the original edition of DSS XXIII; the talk took place on July 3, not June 3, 1896. Its English translation can be found below in 1896/07/03 on pp. 68-69. The Founder departed for North America on July 10, 1896.]

1896/06/05

Unity is so necessary! Especially since we are disciples of Christ. Surely we know what this unity consists of: above all else in exact obedience toward your spiritual father. I would like to impress this on you once more. This is well founded on the words of the Divine Savior, on sacred scripture, as well as on history – church history as well as secular. You know what rewards scripture promises those who honor and obey their parents and superiors – rewards in this life and also in eternity. Conversely you know what horrible penalties await those who do not observe the 4th Commandment: [Honor your father and mother.]

Clearly, you obey me now, and you must be *one* with me, since it was God's will to appoint me, weak as I am, to be the father of this Society.

Should you be called to religious life or to holy orders I will be, through the mercy of God, your spiritual father. What follows is evident: you must be my devoted, true children, my spiritual sons. I want to impress this on you since it is so important in the spiritual life! You know what a dreadful penalty was inflicted on Ham, the son Noah cursed. You know what happened to Absalom who dared to raise his hand against his father. You know from history how badly things went in various orders for those who rose up against their superiors!

I invite you to gather examples from sacred scripture and from history that refer to this, as well as the numerous scripture passages regarding the blessings and curses associated with the 4th Commandment. This will give you solid ground to stand on when

the tempter draws near. You can be sure that one always receives the curse he deserves. I don't know of a single case where anyone persevered who wasn't on good terms with his superiors, even if outwardly he seemed to be. You know world history and the example of the son who carried his old father all the way down to the last step of the stairway where the father exclaimed: "Stop [here] my son; because I carried my father only this far and no further."

That's how it goes! The time will come when the same penalty will catch up with you, the same sorrow you inflicted on your superiors! But if you were always self-effacing, the time will also come when you will enjoy abundant happiness. Ah, such a splendid prize if you always stand together faithfully with your superiors!

Show me one single case where disobedience and discord brought a happy ending. Think about Marius, who sought to oust the founder of his order, St. Joseph Calasanz. He was afflicted with leprosy and died. Heed this! Unity promotes not only our own welfare, but also the welfare of the whole Society and the salvation of many souls! Work enthusiastically in unity everywhere!

With tears I beg you to hold more and more solidly together, like children clinging to their parents. As your spiritual father, as one who wants only your spiritual welfare, as one who is fulfilling his duty, as one who loves you, as one who desires to fulfill God's will, as one who wants to be conformed to the will of the holy church, this is my advice to you.

Listen! Don't grow weary! A blessed crown awaits you! It is impossible that the promised blessing will elude you. I already said earlier that we will spread across the whole earth and that many

enemies will rise against us. How happy you will be if for the sake of Christ, [standing] solidly and steadfastly together in one accord, you will be persecuted! What joy! What peace! But also what confusion if unity, firm cohesion, is missing! Hold firmly together until the end of time!

Unity is God's will! Jesus Christ himself is the example of unity with his heavenly Father: "Father, I want them to be one as we are one." "I will bless those you bless and curse those you curse!" Heed carefully what scripture says: with disobedience comes pride! Therefore, gather the relevant examples of penance beginning with St. Benedict, who someone wanted to poison, down to our present time.

1896/06/12

If you heard someone had discovered something through which you could obtain everything, how diligently would you search for it? How much would you give to possess this good fortune? Nevertheless, we have this good fortune; it is prayer which God himself gave us! Oh, if only we realized what we could obtain through prayer and through trust!

God himself will show us on the day of judgment. He will ask, "Why didn't you pray, since I promised to give you everything if you asked me!" Solemnly, the Divine Savior says: "Whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you." "For those who believe, everything is possible." "Your faith has healed you." How often we see in sacred scripture the power of prayer. Nevertheless, we pray so seldom! Prayer is the coin minted in heaven which alone can purchase paradise. Ah, you will see in the hereafter what you could have obtained here below through prayer. How happy you would be then if you could once again have the opportunity to pray!

And if you are in hell, God forbid, how awful it must be to contemplate, forever to have hovering before your eyes all the things you could have obtained through prayer but neglected. How awful it must be, to be forced to regret for all eternity our paltry zeal for prayer through which we could have acquired heaven and won golden crowns for so very many souls!

And who cannot pray? We can all pray! Even if we are sick or struck speechless, we can and must pray! Always, at all times we must pray and never let up, as I have so often said before! Become men of prayer! Whoever is not a person of prayer will achieve nothing!

When you pray put all your trust in God! Don't trust your works, your skill, or your learning! If they are not made fruitful by God's blessing, beware! All your works and spiritual progress which sprang up so fast will wither just as quickly! Our salvation comes from above! Believe it: prayer is absolutely necessary! You must pray much if you want to accomplish much! Oh, deepen in yourself this eternal truth!

If however, you no longer desire to pray, that too is a sign that you are starting to stagger and to become heartsick. Do you have temptations, difficulties in observing the rule? Then pray for help! If you pray earnestly before you start something, success is guaranteed! If not, don't expect it. What starts so marvelously may bloom. But if the ground lacks water from heaven, then I fear things will soon wither! Ah, how much you can accomplish if only you pray. But pray with trust, desiring only that God's will be done! Do not desire simply to force your own will. For then how can you pray? How can you aspire to come before God?

First of all, you yourself must endeavor to fulfill God's holy will in everything; then if you commit human mistakes you have nothing to fear! If however, you do not desire God's will but turn instead to other things, then of course you must fear!

So, when worldly things, and hell, and whatever else want to pull you away from God, just go and pray! If you persevere in prayer the work of hell will quickly vanish. Then you will see what prayer is and what it can do. I would like to say that when you start to pray, you enter an audience with the Lord of heaven and earth. In order to obtain what you have come for, carry in your hand that note on which is written the Lord's own promise to you: "Ask and

you shall receive." This is what it promises! Show him! Or do you think the Lord won't keep his word?

Pray, always pray! Pray without ceasing! Then you will see the happiness you will share. Pray always! Trust in prayer not in your own work, your accomplishments, your learning – what good are these? Pray in your apostolate! Pray! Because it is better to rescue one single soul with prayer than to convert a whole mission in some other way. Ah, these are quickly converted; but they quickly fall away again! Imagine a mission area that is converted quickly and then is swept away in a single night! So pray! If you want to do something for God then you must pray and pray! Stand before God and say: "I don't have this and this! Give it to me if you like!" Pray first that God's will be done in all things! Pray for yourself. Pray for the Society and the needs of the Society: that the mission God willed for it is fulfilled! I must say that only through prayer will the Society accomplish anything in its apostolate. If prayer will relax, the Society will certainly not attain its goal, and it will perish!

I say again to the end: pray, always pray! Use this means.

1896/06/26

St. James calls the tongue a member that cannot be tamed. Animals, birds, even snakes can be tamed, but not the tongue. It is a poisonous, lethal organ. It is frightening to recall that the tongue metes out both life and death. A quick look at both ordinary people and religious houses clearly reveals how easily transgressions occur. This rashness and thoughtlessness must surprise us; otherwise we could never explain how some can indulge in calumny and slander with hardly any conscience. Think about how much you have heard in your life, reports about this and that. And consider what it is called: defamation and slander, running down someone's good name! I assert and I also believe that a religious who masters his tongue is perfect because doing so also brings under control the remaining passions. What would you say about a confrere who intended to harm his fellows bodily or endanger their lives, or somebody in the world who stole another's belongings?

Now think, which is a greater evil, inflicting bodily injuries that endanger your life, or dishonoring you and stealing your good name? But it happens so often! Any mistake one notices must be immediately reported. But unintentionally your report could be a serious sin that inflicts terrible damage on another!

Slander is worse if the mistakes of others are simply reported as they happen without knowing the circumstances; one simply reports the facts. Take this to heart so that you don't destroy each other over it or appear to be at odds with each other in the apostolate! Slander is one of those sins to which you can be blind! But you can recognize how far you have come in self-denial if you cannot tame your tongue. And remember, the one who commits

slander has the most serious obligation to make amends.

The second point is criticism leveled at confreres, and even more, criticism leveled at the orders given by superiors. Apart from the fact that our holy rule forbids us to do this, it is also done for the most part without sufficient grounds. Often, because the superior cannot divulge his reasons, it can seem to the critic that his command is issued for no good reason. Keep an eye on this because it is so displeasing to God and ruins community peace and harmony! Love among the brothers and love towards the superiors is only strengthened where slander and criticism are absent and stay away. Criticism destroys good order and everything else. Because where order is missing, everything soon grinds to a halt!

Furthermore, I would like to remind you about separating philosophers from theologians. It is detrimental for the young to hang on to those who are older. This segregation is necessary if we want to progress in discipline. We know from the past that violating this injunction is the biggest disaster, because everyone who became unfaithful was undone through forbidden exchanges with confreres. You will recognize the damage completely only in eternity! On the basis of these characteristics I will recognize the ones I am talking about.

If we want to build solidly we must become much stricter, and individuals must be split up even more. Exchanges between scholastics and priests are very detrimental because these seminarians raise themselves to the level of priests and lose mutual respect. Therefore, remember this yourselves and address it.

1896/07/03**Chapter Talk before Departure for America**

As our Society grows it receives so many graces from God. Still it needs even greater help both spiritually and materially. [This is true] for individuals as much as for the whole group. I would like to remind you of completely trusting, humble prayer. Oh, that you would all desire to become men of prayer! That you would all long to kneel before the Lord of heaven and earth and ask him to help us, and that he might help us to fulfill our mission for ourselves and for the good of others. Always, always the call resounds: pray, sigh before the Lord! But consider what prayer really is! Think of Moses and how he raised his hands to heaven and attained help! How much misfortune, disaster, and danger have been averted through prayer and humility!

All of you, therefore, go before the Father with hearts as pure and as confident as possible. Lay your concerns before him. Beg and plead without ceasing! If only you knew the advantages of prayer! If you pray properly you are transformed. I assure you, your strength, your bodies are spiritualized; your baser passions are suppressed little by little and subside, and another spirit takes over!

Pray! Pray more and more! Everyone can do this all the time. All of you should pray especially for the needs of the Society. It's not a good sign if you don't pray, or if you don't pray for the Society. But if you all come before God together, you will accomplish great things and you yourselves, detached from earthly things, will feed on God himself! You will be surprised what graces will rain down upon you and on the Society! Pray also for the material needs of

the Society. God has sufficient resources and he always proves this! One example: we had no money for this trip to America and today three thousand marks arrived from Germany from an unnamed person, "For the trip"!

It certainly is striking how much comes in from so many quarters – how Divine Providence helped us so that almost our whole entourage can now depart for America. Nothing happens by chance! And this is the surest sign that it comes from above! Therefore, pray and pray, again and again! We get everything through our prayer! Pray especially when you are alone. Go to the Savior with your "promissory note." He promised! He wants to and will help us! He gave his word!

Next week I will embark. Pray for me. Pray for the Society too, that God may help it, and that you yourself along with the others will hold tightly together. In this way the many dangers that can come from within and without will be mercifully turned away.

Finally, I would like to alert you to one particular danger: the most dreadful storm clouds are drawing near and hell is threatening! Remember, therefore, I beg and implore you to pray particularly regarding this matter, so that God will discredit these dangers, known or unknown, and will vanquish our enemies.

(After the chapter meeting some confreres said that during these last words Rev. Father seemed to be wrestling with higher powers in an almost unendurable battle.)

1896/09/25

Each religious has the sacred duty to carry out precisely what the vows require, and to behave properly. He must do his duty! Even if he errs through ignorance, even if the mistakes are not so big, their consequences are enormous. They silence his conscience. And so the error goes on and on, the problem grows, and later, either it becomes hard to return to the right track, or it [i.e., the error itself] becomes the greatest impediment to discipline. It is a fact, a sad fact, that big mistakes occur here.

Indeed, moral theologians are so clear and the rules of the holy church are so certain that you would think errors would be impossible, yet they occur. You only need look through the holy rule. There you will find that through your holy vows you have given up the right to dispose of your possessions; but ignorance can easily creep in here. For example, if somebody gets money he has no right to dispose of it. He must leave that up to the will of his superiors. He has transferred his rights to them. In this way, provided he has good will, his vow of poverty eliminates any basis for mistakes. This is equally applicable to the house and everywhere else: no one can take anything from another's drawer or table, etc., without permission. Some permissions are given; but where they are not, it is a violation of the vow to use such objects.

In reference to holy poverty I would like to say more. Sometimes even in religious life, some good religious put less emphasis on caring for objects and on thrift than people do in the outside world. If you behaved this way in the world you would be summarily dismissed, relieved of your office, or demoted. When you compare this with a religious house you must admit: the children of the world

are more clever than the children of light! They do all this not for the sake of God but for wages – for the sake of money. How thrifty people in the world are, and how annoyed they become if something is broken not merely through foolishness but through carelessness: how for example the master scolds his apprentice for such carelessness. But in a religious house a quite different [even greater] obligation exists. You can be sure that a cancer on holy poverty leads to destruction.

Whoever is careless in small things will gradually fail in big things! We are all human; but whoever out of ignorance, etc., despises and neglects small things, that person will go bad! But if he has good will and is striving to keep the vows, one must be patient [with him]. Be very careful, therefore, about holy poverty; follow the holy rule exactly; be on guard lest you become advocates or stand-ins for the devil! What I am saying is this: those who do not themselves observe the holy rule exactly call the others scrupulous or fanatic. But let those who want to assuage their conscience this way reflect on their responsibilities. They will taste the fruits of their actions; the tree falls in the direction it leans. The time will come when God will withdraw his mercies, and then maybe after some years you will hear or read about their fall.

Everyone should search his soul and apply this to himself! Don't copy the example of other religious. That can be totally misleading because they can be completely lax or even fail to share the church's point of view. Let us follow the holy rule, church law, and the vows! I say it once and for all, these degenerates are absolutely contrary to my spirit, and I will never acquiesce to them. Otherwise we would stray far, and pocket money would soon follow, particularly when we came out into the world!

I would like to point out furthermore that you yourselves should struggle to acquire humility and the other virtues. This is the support on which we must rely! First humility, obedience, then the other virtues. And only then learning – which is more dangerous than useful! I am convinced that the virtuous will achieve more than scholars without virtue! Admittedly you should study everywhere and become perfected your whole life long, but only so much as is possible in the assigned time!

We must look more to the spiritual life, to the virtues, and to humility. This will make us strong in our holy vocations, and strong against the world and the devil! Otherwise the devil will come and tempt you with studies, and then what will happen? Lack of humility is the chief danger to your holy vocation! No one loses his vocation through lack of studies or lack of talent, but only through lack of humility! If knowledge is not tempered by humility, obstacles will arise.

Therefore, become holy religious, and be content with the way of the Society. My whole policy is to encourage learning, but not at the expense of the spiritual life. Our Society was not built on learning but on other foundations: on the virtues, on humility. A priest of 22 years disclosed that after the priest in charge of their place died ... he took over without being very scholarly. And now the mission is thriving! You will see, what could not be accomplished one way in the past is offset by virtue!

The humble person is loved by everyone: by his superiors, by God, by his bishop, by the poor. The holy apostles were happily indifferent to learning, but they converted ... the world! Only later did God call St. Paul!

The Society must be based on good elements: on virtue and on humility. But not on learning, because then it will collapse and you along with it. Some day you (or at least your successors) will see their fruits. Others will come and walk in your footsteps and accomplish in other ways the works you could not.

I spoke to three bishops who would like to have our priests, “not such very scholarly ones” but ones that love prayer. Bishops have a singular fear of scholars. If you are humble you will obey the bishops, and they will reach their goal.

First, humility. First, virtue! Knowledge comes on its own. Be confident of this.

1896/10/04**Reverend Father's Nameday**

I thank you heartily for your good wishes. I know they come from the heart! I would like to take this opportunity, when you are so well disposed, to put before you my deepest wish – a wish so important to the dear Savior, and to the honor of God to whom all honor is due, to the salvation of so many souls, and to your own welfare. Be *one*, unanimously, harmoniously, united with each other in fervent love! *Unum cor unamque animam habeant ad finem societatis assequendum*, “They should have one heart and mind to accomplish the aim of the Society.”

Heed it well since our enemy the devil is eyeing this unity because he rightly sees and fears the damage it inflicts on him. Therefore, he uses every means to destroy this great undertaking and lead us to ruin. Among us brothers and even among the saints, he stirs up discord and enmity. Therefore, confront him united, defeat him through holy unity!

If you are united with the highest Lord and united among yourselves, then you will accomplish great things and [the devil] will not be able to harm you! Study church history and the history of individual orders and you will discover what damage the devil inflicted among religious through dissension, yes even among those who lived piously. You will also see what he did to destroy this *concordia* and to spread *discordia*!

Prefer to pray and suffer rather than to make others suffer! Live in unity because you can attain nothing without it. Endure the suffering inflicted on you with patient surrender, and wait until

God relieves you. “It is better to suffer than to cause suffering.” And if you must suffer, reflect and comfort yourself with the thought, “Ah, I am much happier in my sufferings than the one who makes me suffer.”

On the other hand, note well what damage discord causes! Preserve unity! Grant the Divine Savior's wish, because then you will really accomplish great and astonishing things which will make the devil tremble. Pray, go with the Savior before God, and you will learn who you must fight against and how. If you want to fulfill your mission and achieve your purpose then you must preserve unity!

If you wish to attain your salvation, to fulfill the duties of the apostolate, and to save many immortal souls, then you must give good example, esteem brotherly love, and make no distinctions among nationalities! How painful it is if souls perish through our disunity! Unity! Unity! Oh, renew today the bond of unity! Oh believe me, there will be more occasions in the future. And I beg you, stand solidly together and prefer to be silent and humble than to disrupt unity.

1896/10/09

To maintain regimen and discipline, it is especially important to curb your tongue, to observe the holy rule, and not to speak to those with whom it is forbidden. On the other hand, you should speak to those with whom it is allowed, as long as you say nothing forbidden. Breaking this rule always brings great damage! If *silentium*, the first thing, is not observed, discipline is not observed. And the second thing is as pernicious. *Omnino vetitur* “it is totally forbidden.” ... (Here followed a strict prohibition in Latin regarding talk among priests, professed, and oblates which could not be written down. One part at the end was transcribed word for word. It reads:) ... This is the spirit of the holy church, that scholastics should be completely separated from the priests, and the professed from candidates.

Our Society has suffered just such a great curse, and so many have left mainly because the professed were not sufficiently separated from each other and often spoke together. This rule is also found in other institutes. For example the rule of St. Dominic states: “If a professor speaks with his students outside of school, he loses his lectureship, his office, and his right to vote or hold office for four years. ...”

If our Society is to prosper, it is absolutely necessary to separate professed clerics from the rest! Exactly what the holy church stipulates for separating novices from the professed is valid for separating professed from candidates. Otherwise they discuss so much among themselves, even things that are quite unseemly. In this way love and respect for the Society and for our holy vocation is practically strangled in the cradle! Therefore, according to the

spirit of the holy church, and as far as circumstances make it possible or necessary, we must introduce complete separation. As I said before, the greatest damage came about through unguarded speech, through conversations, and particularly through the abuse of speech.

Therefore, I beg you to hold these boundaries fast! You must desire to enter the spirit of the holy church. Then, we can hope that God’s blessing will rest upon us much more. But so far none of you is a complete religious; and what good is it to be only a semi-religious? I think these words of Holy Scripture refer especially to us religious: “You were neither hot nor cold! Because you are lukewarm I want to spit you out of my mouth.”

It is really sad but true that there are people *among us* who always report only bad news. If news appears or a scandal emerges, they seem to think it is their first responsibility to spread it abroad. And due to human frailty they exaggerate it beyond the truth! I know from experience such failings occur in the Society. Even absolutely false claims are made!

Oh, consider the tongue and how it is used. How much damage is done in a house where so many are together! How if anything happens, everyone down to the last candidate already knows the whole thing immediately. And where does this come from?

Mistakes are everywhere. It would be unreasonable to claim there are no mistakes in religious houses. However, broadcasting everything is bad and its fruits are clear to everyone. As long as we are human we will have faults. Therefore, watch what you say. Your responsibility is great, and you can’t retrieve a word once it is spoken.

It is like down feathers released into the wind. How can you ever gather them back once they are scattered? It is just as difficult to call back a spoken word. So hold fast to silence! Do not cling to anything that is improper or against God's will! Some day you will discover that the real saints are the ones who only repeat good things, and that those who root around for news are still very far from holiness.

A second point I must impress upon you: your duty as children of the Society is to work for it! Work mightily for the Society, each according to his position and opportunities. At least do something! Though the number of benefactors is very large, it is never large enough. In addition, out of gratitude you should do everything possible for the welfare of the Society and to relieve its tight situation. God always helps, and always will. But it is our duty to cooperate. If we don't we will be punished with hardships, although in the end God will help us out again.

Therefore, everyone should work for the Society through letters and other means! Love is inventive. Don't just work for your own concerns but for all, for the whole community. Then what blessings will come down on it. You will see! If hundreds work together – this one more, that one less, since not everyone can work the same – if all help together, this helps greatly, and God will bless and help us!

I admonish you all, particularly those in office, and also the lay brothers, to pay attention to everything and don't let things go to ruin. Take care not to pay too much for things! You must consider what responsibility you have because you are not owners but stewards! Therefore, all of you help, each at his own place!

1896/10/16

Experience shows that to form religious in God's spirit, the one year of novitiate required by the church is not enough. Because even if a novice is animated by the greatest zeal during his one-year novitiate, if he is removed from this special setting too early and if he does not continue in this spirit and in this style, he will wilt like a hopeless plant. Plants, which in the garden of the novitiate were initially so full of hope, transplanted into other soil become sick and wither after a few years.

If this is so in nature, how much more in a religious house where the devil stands watch, nursing bitter enmity against us! And if this enemy of all mobilizes his troops against us – his most bitter enemies – to waylay and discourage us from the quest of perfection, how much more necessary is it to work vigorously against him! Experience shows that many holy lives begun in novitiate ended very badly. This is true not only in our order but also in some others.

To counter these dangers, dissipations, and defections from virtue, remain in the spirit of the novitiate on the one hand. On the other hand, rely on the holy rule and on your superiors!

It was for this reason the holy church, the Chair of Peter, enacted a detailed ordinance that religious orders with only *one year* of novitiate should introduce a second novitiate. The ruling further requires that the professed undergo “at least” a two-year novitiate, of course under the guidance of a superior who can fortify them and keep them constant in the virtues they acquired earlier in novitiate. It is obvious that we strive to train apostles, men in love with God to be “light of the world” and “salt of the earth.”

Striving to comply with these regulations and following the wish of the holy church, we must introduce a two-year novitiate, a *Professorium* as the new rules call it.

In addition, proceeding as far as possible with these rules, I am appointing a single superior over the professed. These rules will not be applied in a harsh way, and I hope that for your own good you will comply with the wish of the holy church. And since it is dangerous to associate with those who are not yet professed, [the church] also stipulates that where the professed are not yet separated from the others, a separate novitiate is to be created in a place designated for it!

Therefore, absolute separation! This new rule proves how dangerous association is among the professed themselves; not only dangerous but also harmful to unity and to the common life, because not everyone can handle what others say or know! From now on, therefore, you shall have Fr. Gregorius as superior. Now he lives among you and associates with you; shortly he will relate to you as a novice master to his novices. Regarding confessors you have more freedom, as long as, or until the ruling becomes more clear. For now things remain the same, although it goes without saying one doesn't switch confessors every minute!

So work to comply with this decree! (This includes priests as well.) Teachers should associate with their students only in school. Other ordinances are given: that a second novitiate should be introduced and that stricter discipline should be implemented.

What strides you will make and how happy you will feel if you cooperate with grace! And if not, surely some of you will get lost,

both regarding your holy vocation and in eternity. Wasting a holy calling is a step toward hell, a bold one! Unfortunately it is impossible to avoid these encounters.

We want to strive to implement these new instructions as completely as possible. Because when you act in accord with the wish of the holy church, God's blessing rests on you.

1896/10/23

First of all, we should carry out our apostolate *exemplis* “through example” because anything more is of no use without the first, and because example is our main means for doing good things. Without it you can accomplish nothing good. Our first duty is to give good example, both in and outside the community. You are convinced, or soon will be, that if you give good example and observe the holy rule you will have no need to preach continuously through words.

The good example you give will be a profound sermon everywhere, and will prove the words of St. Bernard: *Vox verbi sonat; vox exempli tonat*. “Words rumble; example thunders.” And very soon you will discover this is true everywhere! Good example leaves behind a sweet aroma everywhere; people remember it for years, even centuries! *In memoria aeterna erit iustus*. “The just will be remembered forever.” Whoever knows the power of good example will feel driven to give good example! St. John Chrysostom speaks even more beautifully of St. Paul: “that he through his example. ...” All of us are to a greater or lesser extent required to go before the people *ut luceat lux vestra*, “to let your light shine!”

I would like to say that all of you are “on top of a bushel” to a greater or lesser degree. Either you will shine through good example and lead people to the light, or the opposite will happen. And what a bad smell an extinguished lamp gives off! Above all else we should work through example in the house and outside, but especially when you enter the apostolate! You will accomplish miracles if you live according to the spirit of the Society! You will be the joy of the church, the joy of bishops, and the joy of superiors!

And now bad example! The damage it inflicts is incalculable. If you realized the damage created through bad example, you would die on the spot. People demand that those who wear the religious habit lead a life that conforms to it; in fact even people who are themselves morally lax regard it as a disgrace if this doesn't happen. I already told you about a certain missionary who had worked long and hard among the people, but all the good he accomplished vanished in time because a priest was a drunkard! A priest!

What is true everywhere else is also true here: bad example destroys everything! “Woe to the world because of scandal!” But woe to him by whom scandal comes! Admittedly, scandals must also come in this order! But woe ... ! Therefore, everyone must be stamped with this holy injunction: through *exemplis* that he truly performs his apostolate and is careful about it; that each stain on his honor and record will be judged and a terrible devastation will occur! ... It is outrageous what a single scandal does! Ah, may this never happen to us!

As soon as you deviate from this holy rule, believing that you are wiser than your superiors and able to do everything, you verge on giving scandal! Either you follow the holy rule or you offend! Everyone knows that a religious has a rule and must live by it! I know of a visitation where one priest was dispensed from sweeping, and an influential man reproached him saying: “With the Jesuits everyone must sweep, even university professors must sweep out their rooms, and this is not the case for you? What is this?...” What does it help if later you give bad example? You will be pushed out and become an object of contempt and poverty!

Now you still have the chance to cultivate virtues and to arm

yourselves for the future. Whoever neglects this and throws himself into activity, you will see: if it doesn't come from God nothing will come of it. Seek to please God; seek to obey him; open yourselves to your superiors and you will reach the place God intends for you. Whoever puffs himself up is in danger of going to ruin, unlike all those who remain at their places, pray, and leave everything to Divine Providence! Then whatever you do will be neither early nor late; and what you should do later is what you should be doing here and now. Through *exemplis*! And again through *exemplis*! Otherwise, you will be a blot!

1896/11/13

What must I do to become a good religious, a good son, a true child of the Society? What must I do to be happy? I say, if you wish to be a good son of the Society, to accomplish much in honor of God and for your salvation, observe these two points: do whatever you possibly can for the Society, collaborate in every way; do whatever you can, however you can. If you observe these two points, surely you will be happy and accomplish great things. If you faithfully and conscientiously observe the holy rule as far as human frailty allows, and if you are active in every possible way, then you will accomplish so much toward your salvation, your good works will acquire so much merit, and wherever you go you will edify, you will prosper!

This is the first of two points – now the second. This is something which is itself well known and which belongs to the nature of the religious state: to work for the Society with all your might, and to love it! The Society is your mother. She brought you up and trained you. You must love her and be grateful! Gratitude is a sacred duty and, apart from other obligations, you must love her! Truly love her so that each and every sacrifice of yours, however big, will be small, and you will work as far as possible for its welfare and progress, for your mother's welfare who is destined to lead you to heaven. Everyone must give an account of every gift, more or less! One cannot judge who does more: however, everyone should work according to his abilities. Admittedly, here nothing can be exactly determined, but in general the criterion will be one's love for the Society. Whoever loves her will use every opportunity to work for her and to promote her advancement as much as possible!

These two points above all I lay upon you. If you follow these

I surely hope that no matter what nation you may have come from or in what continent you will [some day] work, you will bear much, much fruit, not always of course in the same way because of your different circumstances. And if you are good members of the Society you will help build everywhere!

These things are prerequisite! Without one or the other things won't go well! Treat the holy rule as sacred and show your reverence through loyal observance! Make sacrifices to God for the sake of your own soul, for the Society, and for souls!

Through exact observance of the holy rule the Society will become great and bear the fruit required from her! You will also recognize contrary fruits: you won't accomplish much; instead of building anything you will destroy everything. Really, either you are good children of the Society or not, *aut sint aut non sint*, "either yes or no!" If you are good children you will build up; if not, you will destroy!

Therefore, be observant, everywhere and always, out of love for God and for the Society. And care for her! Ah, what peace and joy it will bring the confreres, the superiors, and heaven! What trust you will have from your superiors, confreres, the holy church. Through observance you will acquire everyone's trust! It's quite true what one religious once claimed: you can recognize a religious precisely by his observance.

Again, be observant and work for the Society! *Ex fructibus suis* ... "By its fruits. ..." See to it that you bear these fruits, then nationality will no longer exist among you; you will all be "brothers." Then before God and the people you will be great men and apostles. Be true and active sons of the Society, your own mother!

1896/12/11 Visitation Trip

Today I want to tell you something about my trip. I went away on business for our Society and things went well in Germany, bringing great benefit to the Society and I hope to God's honor! I was very happy with the great goodwill shown me in Vienna. I visited the senior clergy of the city, the Most Rev. Archbishop and his vicar general, the Most Rev. Auxiliary Bishop Schneider and many monsignori. Misunderstandings which had prompted the travel evaporated. The matter was cleared up and now all are very favorably disposed to us.

The Archbishop received me very kindly. I was with him at least two hours and he didn't want me to leave. He himself said that they would gladly accept us; that Salesians were there to establish a house in Vienna, but that he would prefer our Society; he looks after us! ... The Bishop encouraged Fr. Superior to persevere in his holy vocation.

I then visited other important people including the Apostolic Nuncio. ... Matters are now sorted out. I can report that all goes well also in Kaisermühlen, that our priests work properly and observe the rule diligently. They get up at 4:30, hold choir and spiritual exercises until six o'clock, and then go into the confessional which is always very heavily visited.

If God wills, in the very near future we will obtain a house of our own in Vienna and we will buy more land as well. As soon as the means allow, we will build a church there as well.

From Vienna, I traveled to Meseritsch where the community has increased somewhat and where a hostel and high school have been established. To my greatest joy I found peace, order, and good observance there. I am glad to report that all is well in Meseritsch! Unity exists in the community ... such trust I have found. It touched me! Our people have shown me great, childlike confidence. In Meseritsch our Society is thought of highly and the people are very obliging, particularly the mayor who is a legislator, professor and lawyer, and who established the high school as well as another more advanced fencing school! The fact that the priests are greatly trusted there is proved by the fact that the 12 local priests confess to them – really the strongest proof of trust!

From Meseritsch, I had to go to ... , where a property was bought in order to start an educational facility for Bohemia and Moravia and to build a new church. To get the work started I had to travel with Rev. Father Superior of Meseritsch to the Prince Archbishop of Olmütz, Theodor Kohn, where I found a friendly reception. Then I had an audience with his Excellency, who has the special privilege of having his own soldiers! Really! Two sentries stood at the entrance of the palace! His Excellency received me with the greatest goodwill. Our conversation concerned the rule of our Society.

With him we accomplished all we had hoped and more! He offered us 8,000 guilders to pay for the hostel, to build a church, to hold missions, and to be otherwise morally active in Moravia ... then to start a new foundation in ... and a second in ... Thus you see the goodwill of his Excellency. But he is very strict when it comes to discipline!

Therefore, as God wills, with much effort and work we hope

to have a great future in Bohemia and Moravia. Those people are so gracious and good, and enthusiastic toward us. They give us everything and were even willing to cultivate a field for us themselves!

From here I went to Silesia, and from there back to Vienna to visit Archbishop Cardinal Gruscha, who finally informed me that we would be admitted into his diocese; all disparities are remedied! Afterward I visited the Papal Nuncio and drove with Rev. Fr. Superior of Vienna to Simbach to see how the *Apostelkalender* was coming.

From there I traveled to Bregenz. There everyone is healthy; even those who had been very sick are well again. Here choral Office is sung regularly. In Meseritsch and in Lochau the church service is celebrated in a splendid manner: the chapels are decorated in princely fashion. Nothing more could be wished! Sacred Heart Church in Vienna is very beautiful, but the debt is so big that no further outlays can be made now. Someone asked how much a lamp for the choir costs and offered 50 guilders.

From there I came to Drogens where I stayed a longer time. The professed made me very happy by the way they hold solidly together and work very hard; one university professor said that they are excellent. The problem in Drogens is lack of personnel, but the local superior is a very good religious.

The Director in Drogens labors all he can. Admittedly some things are still lacking to meet the growing demands of the diverse activities; but for the time being things are this way due to lack of personnel. One of the local notables greatly commended him [i.e., the house superior] to me. The house is taking big steps forward,

and the authorities plan to build a church together with a large house able to accommodate 100 boys. Now there are 36. Two-thirds of these boys reform and become upright and good; in church, at services, a deep silence and tranquility prevails, and that with such boys!

In Freiburg, the city councillor who established the University of Freiburg visited me [requesting us] to assume management of the big “pension” which is to open soon. Millions were spent to set up a medical faculty. I was amazed at the wonderful new equipment and the progress of the university.

From Freiburg I went to Rieti where I stayed somewhat longer. Early Monday I departed. Unfortunately the trip was interrupted twice. We had to sit 14 hours on the tracks and I arrived about 9 o’clock at night when I should have arrived at about 9 o’clock in the morning!

This is a short review of my trip, and I can joyfully report that I am very happy because I found so many good children!

To close I would like to remark on “rationalism” among religious. It seems to me, and I am very much afraid, that the same spirit blows within us as blows in the world: rationalism. I mean that little by little, in too many things even if not yet in everything, one follows reason too much. There is a great danger wherever such an “epidemic” appears. It leads to criticizing each superior at the bar of reason. The consequence from the moral point of view is enormous, yet one denies he has even committed a venial sin through it! Everything is grumbled about, no command, no ordinance is any good!

Everyone should look to see where this tendency exists, where it manifests itself. *Ex fructibus cognoscetis*. “By the fruits you will know.” Trust in Divine Providence is destroyed and replaced by criticism. The consequence of rationalism in religious life is the same as in the Catholic faith. In practice, a rationalist will hardly be a practicing Catholic. So also in religious life: one will participate so far as one must, but at the first opportunity he will deviate. A religious who doesn’t acknowledge Providence and who criticizes, degenerates.

And the fruit will be the loss of the highest gift after sanctifying grace: one’s holy calling. It will be taken from him and he will never be accepted into another order except out of necessity. This is the best proof that rationalism is a bad thing: the eventual loss of one’s holy vocation. If you behave rightly on this point, especially with us it is necessary. ...

Therefore, I would like to say: live more from faith and trust in God and his Providence. Don’t attack your superiors. Don’t say: “He is to blame!” Because this often leads to the most dreadful blasphemies. Many saints and even the Divine Savior prove that dreadful blasphemies can befall a person through saying: “These superiors, they alone are to blame.”

On the contrary they should see that nothing happens by chance. Think of St. Calasanz who recognized how monstrous Marius in Naples was when he entered his order. Though he knew what disaster he would bring, he nevertheless let it happen. The saint received him even though he had already started to execute his plans. Even after he had vowed to improve and was sent as

delegate to France, he started up the same stories again, until finally he died from leprosy!

Therefore, acknowledge God's Providence who steers all fates.

1896/12/18

Our opponent, the wicked enemy, assails the best things. It seems to me, the more sacred something is, the greater his fury [against it]. He is God's rival and hates in us human beings everything he recognizes as coming from God. If he knows one is dedicated to God, it fills him with a terrible fear and great hatred, and he opposes that person as far as he can, lashing out his fury and revenge. The more sacred the thing he can profane, the greater his joy.

We shouldn't be surprised, therefore, if even at the most sacred places and institutes the most sacred matters are profaned. Hell particularly works to defeat any religious who is dedicated to God and wants to use all his strength to glorify God and lead souls back to God. It is obvious that God permits this religious to undergo such storms. Such a religious becomes the prey of the hater of souls, be it from inside or out, or from wicked people. I like to think that hell turns against these members who are so dedicated to God because the evil enemy particularly fears them.

Certainly the tongue can greatly honor God, and edify and even save one's neighbor. But from it issue both life and death. In our Institute everyone is called to use his tongue especially for the salvation of souls. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the enemy goes after it in a particular way. He uses all his efforts to enlist in his service the tongues of those people dedicated to God – those who are called to confront him particularly with the tongue. Alban Stolz calls these sins of the tongue *peccatum sacerdotis*, priestly sins. Therefore it is our task to watch that the wicked enemy does not tempt us to abuse this noble organ which should produce only good.

St. James compares the tongue with a fire, and with a wild animal. He says an animal can be tamed but not the tongue. I worry that those dedicated to God – people called to the apostolate, to prayer, to the frequent reception of Holy Communion – are seduced by their wicked enemy to slander, to defame, to enjoy recounting the mistakes of others, to criticize without reason the actions of their confreres and superior, all so that this noblest organ is enlisted in the service of hell.

The result of all this we read in sacred scripture and know from our own experience: strife, discord, lack of charity, hatred! How many have sinned with the tongue! Everyone in the community, therefore, must watch that the wicked enemy doesn't tempt him or make him fall. Who can tally all the sins, all the disaster, brought about by the tongue! How quickly one blurts out a word and it destroys everything! Like a treacherous assassin, one strikes another down with the tongue without even noticing. One guards against [committing] murder and homicide but one remains oblivious to killing a person morally. He may even be happy about it.

We bear a heavy responsibility for our tongues: we will have to give an account! Yet abuse of the tongue goes on and on! Once you grow accustomed to it, slander goes unnoticed; and once it has become a habit, I warn you, it takes long, long soul-searching and effort to get rid of it. In my opinion the tongue instigates most disasters! When you get to the heart of the reason for so much evil you find mostly the misuse of the tongue!

The tongue is like another tool which we bring into the service of the apostolate: the pen. Guard against abusing it! Always watch how you treat the mistakes of the confreres and the community.

The one who looks for death will find it everywhere! You should only speak good about the confreres, unless you are bound by your office to do the opposite, and even then it should occur at the right place. This is rarely your holy duty. Take such reports to prayer; ask yourself whether you don't lack these same things even more. And if you prayed much and still see that you must, then report it to the proper authority, but only when necessary. *Ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis*. "By their fruits you will know them."

A false report can have severe consequences. What is more, just one such unsolicited, unjustified report may result in a member not being allowed to persevere in the Society till death. Therefore, curb your tongue! Bring this gift to the Christ Child for Christmas. Behave correctly and seriously and never misuse the tongue again. Always use it to proclaim the gospel so that you can say everywhere: "See, I announce great joy."

Directly or indirectly you should announce salvation. I ask that everyone, each in his own area of responsibility, be ready to point out whatever is not in keeping with this [injunction] whenever it occurs, because it [i.e., unbridled speech] ruins domestic happiness and brings about so much discord. The ones who now restrain you, will be the ones you thank later. Feathers are easily thrown out the window, but they are not so easily gathered up again.

At the hour of death, who wants to admit that instead of announcing God and bringing salvation to people, he spread poison on the wind far and wide – poison which worked and is still working as long as the world stands. Therefore, watch your tongue from which issue both life and death.

1897/01/08

Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres in unum. “Oh how good and pleasant to have brothers live in unity.” Certainly it is a great joy when brothers live united together. From this thought another topic sprang to my mind, like a cue that I should speak on it today – because I know the consequences. The devil is always eager to stir up evil, suspicious thoughts. Through them he obstructs our many efforts to bring about God’s honor and the salvation of people. This serious situation will always be true and one can easily understand why: the wicked enemy, the enemy of everything good, will use every means to hinder the good he fears. And if he does all this against an individual human being, how much more will he do to oppose a whole Society in order to accomplish his aims! This is why we find certain clashes within religious institutes, even often among those who are holy and devout.

But it is our common task to do everything we can to confront this enemy, and above all not to foster these differences. These suspicious thoughts and the moods which attend them are intended to destroy unity and to transform *iucundum* “sweetness” into *acerbum et amarum* “harsh bitterness.”

Therefore, we must first of all combat all these suspicious thoughts and inclinations immediately in order to keep them far from us, and continually to preserve this *iucundum*, this unity. From these suspicious thoughts spring the greatest obstacles to unity in an institute: direct and indirect attacks on authority, and especially murmuring. The critic is a ruinous cancer who brings incalculable harm to the body and soul of the Society. Criticism, attacking orders, people, and authority naturally breeds dissatisfaction among the

confreres. It arouses uneasiness in the members and spreads it. People being what they are, once dissatisfaction takes hold they will easily find enough reasons to justify their own dissatisfaction. The ultimate consequence is disruption and the loss of their own vocation.

Therefore, beware and keep your distance from this hereditary enemy, the most dangerous plague to attack humanity. Just imagine an institute where this evil does not exist. Then if you must endure want, suffering and sacrifice, you will do it happily! But if you start on the path of criticism or egoism, dissatisfaction will arise among you. This is especially important to our Society.

I know that you must make sacrifices, but I also know that these sufferings are not as great as those made in other institutes which are now flourishing. Your biggest sacrifice is to refrain from criticizing – a sacrifice made possible by God’s grace. So if you wish to pursue an enemy, then pursue this enemy [criticism] which is the enemy of the whole Society. If ever [a critic] should appear, watch him and pursue him relentlessly. Wherever there is this criticism of authority, wherever this evil destruction exists, holiness has fled. If you see signs of criticism, flee them like the plague.

A second point that easily disrupts unity is a certain mysterious secrecy which awakens mistrust, secret actions which easily give rise to mistrust.

Another enemy of unity is tale bearing. You hear something. Someone makes the mistake of saying something about a confrere, and now for the sake of a piece of news, you trump it up and thus cause him pain – all without considering how reprehensible this is in God’s eyes.

A further point is slander. I want to mention particularly that slander exists even among confreres. I have often told you how pernicious this thing is and how easily it crops up. One speaks without thinking. So uphold the honor of your confreres! A careless word can become a great slander within an hour. So often people simply seek to make everything seem so important that without realizing it, it becomes a slander.

Another great danger to peace among religious is insisting too stubbornly on one's own rights, real or imagined. Be assured, where this stubborn insistence on one's rights exists peace will never prevail. Even in a Society where everyone was holy, misunderstandings and unintended injuries still occur. And if one insists on his own rights, strife cannot be far off.

I'll never forget speaking with one bishop some time ago. Without my mentioning it, he emphasized that earlier he had been in a house together with several workers. They all worked quite contentedly. Why? Because everyone worked for himself; each one acted as his own superior and subordinate; no one worried about the other; no one insisted so strongly on his own rights.

Now in a religious order it is impossible never somehow to infringe on another's rights; but on the other hand love and leniency must be practiced. There must be order. Everyone has rights but order must also be maintained. We know that the saints, when somehow their rights were impaired, never stubbornly insisted on them. Rather they preferred suffering injustice to being too insistent, unless it was their sacred duty to insist.

1897/01/15

You were led into the Society by God's call – God's grace. Summoned by heaven you followed this invitation, this call to consecrate your whole life to God in the spirit and purpose of our Society and for the salvation of souls. You dedicated yourself to God through holy vows and committed yourself to this purpose and spirit, to work, to live, and to die.

Now there can be no doubt that your most sacred duty flows from this: to do everything in your power to live and work according to the spirit and purpose of the rules. You certainly cannot doubt that if you do not live according to the demands of the apostolate, the rules, and the directives of your superiors; if you do not live and work according to this spirit, this Pole star, that you assume a heavy responsibility to explain yourself before God, if you can. You are called, the Society is called and chosen to free so many people from the mire of sin, to lead so many unbelievers to the true light of belief – in short, you should form a great holy phalanx, an army dedicated to God, who joyfully give up their lives and everything for God's honor and to win souls for Christ.

However, even a child can see that in any institute or organization, each member must conform to the organism, must obey it. In a word, you will perform your task and fulfill your vocation if you – in keeping with the rules and the orders of the superiors through whom you are guided by Divine Providence – if you fulfill these orders in keeping with the position you have been given. Only to the extent that you carry out the will of your superior and not your own will, will you live up to your vocation, just as in an organism one member helps and supports the other. It would

be a great upset, a huge obstacle and an undoing if the hand wanted to be the foot, or the foot the hand.

Then instead of being a help and a support, you would become a disturbance. And even if you didn't completely wreck the institute you would hinder it greatly. Even those ancient pagans, the Romans, recognized this need – so how much more necessary it is for a religious with such a high mission to the whole world. Everyone should work at the post to which God has called him and in which the superiors have placed him; in this way he should realize his vocation. This is how he should proceed. Looking elsewhere for his happiness and salvation he will get into trouble and fall into error.

Oh, how many misfortunes, how much disaster arose over the centuries, how many people, how many religious became unhappy because they followed their own will and forced their superiors to submit to their wills! [And these were] religious, who having sacrificed their wills to God now reclaimed them either directly or indirectly. What sacrilege! Therefore, let everyone, each at his station, follow the holy rule and the commands of his superiors. Do well in whatever office you were placed by Providence, be it in the kitchen as a brother or elsewhere, however low the office may be (although before God no office is low if one performs it conscientiously and thus helps the whole enterprise to thrive). Whether you are a priest in the pulpit or a student – acquit yourself well. Thus you can receive great merits for yourself and you will be more pleasing to God than if you had followed your natural inclinations and been more *carnalitas quam spiritualitas*, “more carnal than spiritual.”

Thus our Society, like every other organism, prospers to the extent that everyone fulfills his duty at his station and does not look for a place of his own liking. This would lead to the greatest disorder for a society and would give joy to hell. “A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.” And if the subordination needed to follow orders is missing in an institute, if each member does not do his job, there is danger of ruin.

You know well the name of this responsibility we have before God: it is the salvation of souls. St. Catherine of Siena said that if you recognized the beauty of one single soul, you would die a hundred times in order to rescue one. Recall what Ezechiel says: ... How St. Francis Xavier remonstrated: “Woe to you who are to blame that innumerable souls lost their salvation and plunged into hell forever.”

Therefore, let us do our duty, each at his post, so this reproach can never be aimed at us: “Woe to you who are to blame that innumerable souls have lost their salvation and plunged into hell forever.” If I don't assume my station, or fulfill it, or properly administer it, whether it be in the kitchen, or as a priest or as student, if instead of *pro* I work *contra*, then am I not responsible for the loss of souls?

We should work closely together and offer our own will to God; bringing it to him as a sacrifice and advancing in military formation against hell and all enemies for God's honor and for the salvation of souls. In a few year's time you would see how far we would be!

Hell and the remaining enemies will do everything they can to prevent this. But if we hold together firmly in God, with him we

will be able to do anything! Approach it [your duty] with prayer and make yourself as useful as you can. However, we must pray that the Lord will protect us against all that blocks us from within and without. You must know that the power of prayer is so great that it penetrates to heaven and calls down blessings on you without your noticing it. Trust in his providence; he will direct and arrange everything.

Rid yourself of any secret aversions: being opposed to this or to that office, not wanting to make a sacrifice, recoiling before difficulties, increasing excusing yourselves that you cannot do this or that. It is precisely through difficulties that your zeal must be strengthened and spurred on!

You know that what Fr. Liebermann said to his missionaries sailing off to Africa is also valid for you: “I would like to shout after you: saving souls will demand your sacrifices, deaths, sufferings and prayers.”

Another enemy is human fear. This enemy will confront if not all [of you], then almost everyone. In each house there will always be those who will want to do more, those driven by grace, and there will also be those who hold others back. If you often go into the world or associate with others, you must inevitably fight with this enemy, human fear. Cling to the Society, to its spirit, to its purpose, and like a soldier confront human fear, this miserable enemy. Shout to it: *Retro!* “Get back!”

Finally, still another enemy must be mentioned: dejection – giving up is so common, it happens in all institutes if not every seed that is sown bears fruit. Few of our efforts, works, and undertakings ever yield the expected results. But sometimes, maybe

only after a few hundred years, sacrifices and sufferings endured for the right purpose do bear the fruit for which you suffered. I sometimes thought that maybe a saint like Francis de Sales who suffered so much for a certain goal but never reached it, will enjoy a great share of the merits of the institute started by Don Bosco. In heaven you will see that Francis de Sales is the main founder of the Salesians.

So don't let yourself be deterred if you don't see the fruits you hoped for, or if you lack prestige. Don't let yourself be deterred by human stinginess either! When that happens, the Divine Savior says: “Aggravations must come.” But even then don't lose courage or stifle the spirit. Read church history, as I repeatedly urge. There you will find that among the apostles, the first deacons became apostate! The same is true all through the centuries. Some who were called to shine like stars *in perpetuum* “in perpetuity,” sunk into the abyss to burn for eternity. Therefore: *oportet scandala venire, sed vae, per quem veniunt* “Certainly scandals must come, but woe to him through whom they come!” This, however, should not discourage anyone.

Work as Providence instructs you; work for the holy purpose of the Society. If you could see it as it really is, humanly speaking you could no longer live. You would be taken up in ecstasies. Unfortunately, pettiness darkens our minds. Our humanity frequently prevents us from fathoming things deeply. But you can get some light from sacred scripture and from the lives of the saints. Let everyone work in such a way that in old age he can say what St. Paul said: “I have completed the work which you asked me to do, and made your name known among the people; now, O Lord, glorify me as I glorified you on earth.”

1897/01/22

To protect the precious gift of unity and harmony in a family, it is especially necessary to observe the law involving the tongue, above all not to misuse the tongue towards a confrere, or something even worse, to attack a superior. You must particularly watch how you use it when you must say something negative about a confrere, inform him about something, or report him. How much disaster, strife, frustration, and vindictiveness are provoked by the tongue! Don't forget what St. James says in Chapter 3! Then you will have some idea what a destructive tool the tongue is! He compares it with a burning firebrand; he says animals can be tamed, but not the tongue.

Be on guard against immediately telling others something you hear in or outside the house. Remember you must give an account of every wrong word, not to mention slander! Experience shows that generally calumny is added to detraction, and usually not for the better but for the worse. So think before you say anything. Don't talk when it is not necessary, or when it is not your duty. This way you won't commit a sin and set up your own undoing.

Quite naturally, no one likes it when you criticize the actions of your confreres by pretending to be superior to them. It is worth saying: "sweep in front of your own door first, and only then in front of another's." Everyone should look to himself, and if he is called to supervise others he must follow the voice of conscience. But be on guard never to injure the honor of your confreres. It is their most precious possession. Don't be so quick to report some news or something you heard, thus throwing fuel on the fire. Don't become the devil's helpers; rather be guardian angels. Don't be

like devils who if they see a passion or something bad seek to spread it even farther. A noble heart and a noble tongue will talk about such things only with reluctance and with a certain horror. Therefore, don't talk about them, and speak only insofar as duty demands.

Protect one another's honor; guard the reputation of your superiors. Because if you undermine the honor of your confreres, or something even worse, the honor of the superior, you will fall into the pit. No human being is beyond reproach. We all know in what light the God-man was portrayed, and most saints as well. There is no human being whose actions cannot be laid out in such a way that they cannot be construed as crazy, in order to ensure a bad judgment. Oh I beg you, use your tongue to praise God! *Psallite Deo nostro, psallite!* "Sing praise to our God, sing praise!" Don't use it to undo yourself! Use it as the holy rule says! From the tongue issue both life and death! Use it in accordance with the rule to promote the spiritual life.

I would like to note further that you should follow each of our rules regarding conversation. Everyone should pay due respect to the standing of his confrere: whether he is older or younger. But just as everything else can degenerate, this too can be abused. For example, it is very easy for us who are somewhat older to abuse others, thinking that the difference of a few years makes us really quite different. This is ridiculous. Do not fall victim to it. Certainly age has some prerogatives, but age alone is never decisive!

You know what the Holy Spirit and the church say about some saints who died young: that they had mastered long years in a brief time. Therefore, the first and most important thing is that one is a

person. What makes you a man is not the number of years but your spirit! If a lad of 15 or 16 truly exhibits an adult spirit, he can conceivably surpass a 70-year old. Otherwise, the eldest man in each diocese would have to be its bishop; but this is absurd!

To be an industrious and useful member of the Society – this is what is important and not age alone. Even if one lacks the stipulated age, the church will easily grant a dispensation if he possesses the rest of the qualities, if he is a good member of the Society and proves himself as such. And so he will become before God, the church, and himself.

1897/01/29

It certainly was most fortunate when Divine Providence entrusted us with the task of contributing to the salvation of souls: of winning souls for heaven. This is even greater work than raising the dead: to call souls back from death to life, to eternal life. How I wish that we would understand this task better and better and penetrate more deeply the purpose of our Society in order to work for the salvation of souls with all the strength of body and soul.

Therefore, I would like to admonish you again, *omni modo*, “in every way possible,” as your status and your vocation allow, to work together to promote and to achieve the exalted goal of the Society. You know that your own sanctification always comes first. In this way you master your own will, put to death your own inclinations, and conform your will to God’s. This you do insofar as you recognize God’s will in the rule and in the orders of your superiors. This is the primary thing to keep in mind. Whoever is presently obligated to study conforms himself to the will of God by studying conscientiously and with dedication. Each and every one should make himself as useful as he can. Everyone should work! Whoever cannot do much can at least do a little; but everyone can do something. With goodwill one can achieve much.

When you consider the needs of the world, the misery in which humanity languishes, how many millions are on the road to hell – and that God appointed us and called us out of the world, and showers us with so many many graces, should we not do everything possible to achieve our goal! Let’s not forget that this high calling offers us both the promise of joy and the danger of perishing if we do not cooperate with these graces we received from God. We

would sink into the deep abyss of hell otherwise. A religious, a priest – the higher he rises the lower he will sink. The higher one stands in the spiritual life the more hell fears the harm he could do, and the harder it works to bring him down all the lower.

God has given us, each one of us, so many graces in these few years. He also gave the whole Society innumerable graces, in addition to proving his exceptional favors. In a very short time he strengthened the Society and developed it to the point that it now works almost everywhere in the world and its priests minister in about 13 different languages. They work throughout the whole world so that we can say the sun never sets on our confreres. However, this is only a small beginning. The Lord would give us many more graces if we responded to them.

Therefore, never tire! Let everyone at his place make himself useful and do his job conscientiously, doing good while there is still time, promoting the spirit of unity more and more: *concordia parvae res crescunt, discordia maximae dilabuntur* “harmony nurtures small things, discord destroys even great things.” Therefore, unity. Not everything which seems to be a good or better thing is actually always good. Unity is necessary for great undertakings. This unity will come if you concentrate on *one* goal, not if each one pursues his own course different from that of the superior.

Keep an eye on unity. Regard it as your duty. I have already said that the devil seeks to plant discord within great undertakings because he fears them. Struggle against this. Do everything to remove whatever could disrupt this harmony. How happy you will be if you are united as confreres, from one end of the earth to the

other, having the same fundamental attitude, the same goal, the same rules, following the same statutes. What joy, what bliss, not only for your confreres but also for others. Therefore, work while it is still day! Work, each in his place. It is highly unlikely you will not be able to accomplish something or another if you execute your office and your position well: through prayer, patience, sufferings. Ah! how much you can do! Each of you, I believe, can say: with God’s grace I can accomplish much for the Society and for the salvation of the souls. So do it!

1897/02/05

Today I would particularly like to impress upon you three points for promoting the goal of the Society:

- 1) *Magna humilitas*, great humility
- 2) *Oratio continua*, constant prayer, and finally
- 3) *Magna activitas*, great effort.

The first point, as you know, is the most important. We can do nothing without humility! If we do not possess humility, if we are proud, God will oppose our efforts: *superbis Deus resistit* “God thwarts the proud.” Therefore, if we really want to achieve great things for our own salvation and for that of our neighbors we must lay a deep foundation of humility. In fact, the higher we want to raise the building of our own salvation and that of others, the more deeply we must dig the foundation. Without humility our works are useless; without a foundation our accomplishments are liable to collapse. Therefore, humility first, *magna humilitas!* Our humility attracts God’s grace. You know that just as the valleys soak up the rain, so the humble soak in grace; but no water collects on the mountainsides. *Magna, magna nimis humilitas!* “Great, very great humility!”

The second point, the way to give the greatest honor to God and to accomplish our own salvation and that of our neighbor is constant prayer-ardent, intense prayer. *Oratio elevat, transpenetrat nubes*. “Prayer raises [one] up and pierces the clouds.” The prayer of the humble penetrates the clouds and does not rest until it arrives at God’s throne. Let us employ this powerful tool and never abandon it! Let us use it in our work when and wherever possible, by day and by night. Pray and pray, again and again: *Orate sine*

intermissione! “Pray without ceasing!” Only in eternity will we realize what we could have attained through prayer. And when we ourselves are in heaven this will be our joy. Oh, what we can attain through prayer! Now we are given the means: “Ask, and you shall receive, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened!” How clearly the Divine Savior spoke. Therefore, use this second means: constant, ardent, good prayer. It is crucial that you become men of prayer: *virii orationis*. If you are not, you will never be great. If, however, you are men of prayer you will experience God’s blessing.

The third point, in order to accomplish much for God’s glory and the salvation of souls, is *magna subtilitas* “great subtlety” that we live in the right spirit. You know God has given us strengths, even natural ones, and he wants us to use these natural means which come from him. Therefore, by all the means compatible with our calling in life, eagerly attend to your own salvation and to that of your neighbor. Each one of you in your respective position should be deeply concerned to contribute to the advancement of the Society.

These are great and powerful tools. Through great humility you protect yourself and the Society against the attacks of the devil! Our humility breaks the power of the enemy! If we are men of prayer we will accomplish many great things. If we pray devoutly it will strike fear and terror into hell itself. Then the help promised from above will reach us. If we exert ourselves, how much we can do! You know how, if a person has a great desire for something, if he wants to make it happen, he does everything possible to accomplish his goal. Why don’t *we* do this, every one [of us] at his place, for God’s honor and for the salvation of so many people you can lead to heaven.

Take these three points to heart, but always give first place to the most important. Because without the first, the second and third collapse: *magna humilitas, oratio continua, activitas magna et subtilitas!*

1897/06/04
On the Holy Spirit

Since it is our duty and task to follow the holy apostles as closely as possible, it is also our special duty and task to honor sincerely the Holy Spirit, particularly in the time leading up to Pentecost. If we desire to exercise the same office as the apostles we need the Holy Spirit. What will we accomplish if we are not illuminated and guided by the Holy Spirit?

In these days I would like to alert you to one special grace you should request through fervent prayer: I mean love – that *caritas*, that brotherly love through which you follow the command of St. John: *Filioli, diligite* “Little ones, show love!” We are called to the apostolate; we are called to announce God’s word; and, like St. Gregory says, without *caritas* we are not qualified to preach the gospel. Therefore, if we want to preach, we must possess love for each other. How much an apostle accomplishes if he is permeated with love! And on the other hand, how much harm a preacher does who is not filled with love. Even if he thunders, how can he strike fire if he himself is not aflame? Even if he is a scholar and preaches keenly, he must ignite through love.

At this time, as special resolutions to honor the Holy Spirit, particularly avoid whatever disturbs or injures brotherly love. First, punctually observe the rule so that you won’t need to be rebuked by your superiors! Follow the holy rule and all that God wills! Further, seek to avoid whatever can disturb the harmony among the confreres in any way. Follow the holy rule. Whoever heeds his vocation seeks the other’s happiness! Oh how beautiful *habitare fratres in unum*, “for brothers to dwell in unity”! Endure failings

whenever they occur; if we were genuine saints we would love each other. God taught us to deny ourselves and to carry one another's burdens.

A great obstacle to brotherly love and unity, and to steadfastness in love and unity, is something I would like impress upon you. It is something found so often not only in the world but also in the cloister. It is slander, or all idle, useless talk about one confrere or the other either in the house or outside. If you knew what damage it inflicts certainly you would never engage in it! Remember, you must account for every useless word. How easy it is to paint any mistake in the darkest colors, or even something that isn't a mistake. One cannot keep it to himself for long and immediately spreads this or that. But in the end it turns out to be something completely different.

Watch out for this thing, slander, evil gossip. Banish slander once and for all from the Society. If you don't, it will continually disturb unity and love. You must eliminate it. You know how you hate it when someone speaks adversely about you with another, when he slanders you.

Don't treat others in a way you wouldn't want to be treated. As I already said, without actually intending it, it is easy to deviate from the truth. And what are the fruits of all this talk? They resemble their tree! The thing is a sin; in the sight of God it is beneath [the dignity of] an apostolic religious. What follows from such a sin? Slander weakens enthusiasm, ardor and love. In short, even good members can lose their zest. An incident can be represented in such a way that one loses his eagerness. Now who is responsible? How can we talk about love and then immediately

turn around and start gossiping? Ah, that this might be purged from the Society! You cannot imagine what harm you do through it. Maybe one is weak and makes mistakes – everyone does! But who is to judge? That person or another?

Someone told me how at one time somebody eagerly strove for good, but then he made one mistake. Then someone came along and broadcast his mistake. Because of this, that person fell into vices, became disheartened, and abandoned himself to sin! So avoid slander, control yourself, particularly in other houses and communities! Say only good things which concern the soul, never bad or disadvantageous things!

Don't be like termites. Be like bees who look for the best. This leads to *aedificatio* "edification" not to *destructio* "destruction." In my experience pious men [and women] not only never touch evil, they always accentuate only the good. Do the same and you will see what love, what unity will prevail! Therefore, banish slander from the Society this Pentecost season. Slander brings disaster and disturbance in the Society. The Holy Spirit desires and brings unity.

1897/06/11

At the close of this octave of Pentecost, I strongly recommend that you foster devotion to the Holy Spirit, which is one of the great tasks of our Society. What shall we accomplish as apostolic men without the help of the Holy Spirit? It is especially important for us to implore the Holy Spirit to help us so that we, like the holy apostles, always remain unanimous, united in the Holy Spirit, one in heart.

If the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts he preserves our unity in all circumstances; where there is no unity he creates it! This is so important! If even in worldly undertakings united effort and endeavor are so necessary, how much more for us who fight against innumerable enemies – terrible enemies both inside and out! Without help from above how can we recognize these enemies or have the strength to resist them? What can we expect to accomplish if we are not united? What can a small army do against so many enemies if its own ranks are not solidly united? Therefore, pray and ask the Holy Spirit daily to help us, that we may always stay one in mind and heart, *uno corde et ore, laudantes et praedicantes Dominum!* “With one heart and voice, praising and proclaiming the Lord!” Never forget the enemy we have to fight. Never forget that [our] little army is battling against the world and hell, terrible opponents, and that we are in need of special enlightenment.

Use the opportunities you have for special devotion to the Holy Spirit. I heard lately that so much blessing resides in a society where the Holy Spirit is properly venerated. So worship the Holy Spirit properly so that his blessing comes over our Society too, and over each individual! If we are one in the Holy Spirit we have no one to

fear. However, if we are not united, oh, how easily this or that one is defeated!

Furthermore, for the Holy Spirit to be properly worshiped, and for you to become men of prayer, follow the Divine Savior’s dictum: *Oportet orare et semper orare!* “You should pray, always pray!” It is and always will be necessarily for us to pray, to become men of prayer, to storm heaven, not to rest but to fight and to wrestle in prayer until we attain help from above. Ah, how much one single person attains if he prays constantly, if he never stops asking, importuning and pestering, if he always prays! Such insistence greatly pleases God! So many examples admonish us to pray! And it is possible to do this right here where we live! How many moments, how much time we can use more profitably, whether on our journeys or at other times, everywhere and in the midst of our activities we can pray. Let us develop the habit of sending even little prayers heavenwards, like: *Domine, adiuva nos!* “Lord, help us!”

This continuous prayer has a particular advantage: it shields us from many temptations. Our spirit always remains directed upward, from whence help comes and where we call for help. And this way our spirit is oriented, pointed upward, turned away from earthly things – *sursum corda!* “Lift up your heart!” As far as possible, we must follow our prayer heavenward. Just try it, and you will soon discover what strength you possess. Even if human nature is sometimes in danger of giving up, you will be strengthened inside, and the Lord will not abandon you. He will support you to fight the good fight to the end. Prayer, I say, assures us victory!

Therefore, use your time well and pray. Always properly venerate the Holy Spirit. If possible pray the *Veni Creator Spiritus*

[cf. 1899, May 19] at least once a day as time and circumstances allow. Then you will see what great things you will accomplish. Even if floods engulf you and threaten to sink you in the depths, you will rise again and again.

Pray over and over to realize the grace of your vocation, so that you see more clearly the purpose and task of our Society, that you fight the good fight, that you always have light from above to distinguish true friends from false. May the Lord help us, so pray again and again, and don't forget that it is our continual task to pray! Whoever wants to accomplish great things must be a prayerful person. If not, [you can] be assured your work will be nothing. But if you are men of prayer, even if you seem to go astray, you will always be victorious.

1897/09/17

The more you study the history of individuals or groups, past or present, you will find that observance of the rule is essential, the *conditio sine qua non*, “the prerequisite.” On my last trip this is what I saw and heard for myself: communities which are not observant die out. Now if we want to comply with all the demands God places on us so the Society can fulfill its purpose. We must stay faithful to the rules we have been given and follow them conscientiously. It makes no difference what kind of rule we have; it is enough that it is good. The most important thing is to follow the rule as given!

It is the task of the religious to deny his own will – to subordinate it to the will of his superior. The rule aims at this: *vince te ipsum*, “master yourself,” subdue your own will. *Ad serviendum venisti, non ad regendum; ad patiendum et laborandum scias te vocatum non ad otium et fabulandum* [Imitatio Christi I.lb.c.17]. “You came to serve, not to rule; know that you are called to suffering and to toil and not to idleness and stories.” *Nemo potest stare qui non nititur esse minimus et omnibus subiectus*. “No one can survive who does not strive to be the least [of all] and subject to all.” Observe this principle: *Nemo potest stare, nisi ex toto corde voluerit se propter Deum humiliare*. “No one can survive unless he desires wholeheartedly to humble himself for God's sake.” Therefore, break your own will, put aside your stories; you came to serve, not to rule! Don't follow your own will, stifle it! This happens through observance of the individual rules which do not coddle human nature. Mastering yourself involves sacrifice. This strengthens you against temptations which may be difficult to overcome. I continually think of what you could do for God's honor, for the

salvation of souls and for the church if only you observed all the rules.

So much more confusion and dissatisfaction arise due to lack of observance. So keep the holy rule! You will see what joy it brings! You will see how generously God will support us. Our distress is our own fault because we are not willing to live as poor, humble, vowed religious. But if we follow the holy rule we can be assured that we will have all we need! Therefore, let us study the rule ever more thoroughly, from individuals in high positions down to their secretaries. All these rules are given for your benefit and welfare – for the common welfare!

The only way to live happily and contentedly is through observance. If you are not observant you will become dissatisfied, you will have cross after cross, and your soul will be injured! In the end I fear you can sink very low, and as I have often said, if you fall you will fall far! The higher one stands, the lower he falls; and this is especially true of religious. In eternity the dawn will shine first on us! Therefore, observe the rule completely. If there were times you could not be observant because you lacked the necessary manpower and requisite strengths, that is no excuse. On my last trip how much joy and solace I experienced wherever I could always apply this standard: the greater the observance, the greater the blessing from above, the greater the solidarity, and the greater the sympathy from people and from those living outside. Therefore, desire to live up to your vocation and don't backslide! Hold on to the holy rule! I desire to live according to this rule and therefore I want to overcome my own will.

You should also stress meditation. If you omit it you will sink

low, you will go straight down! In the world outside things are difficult; therefore, you must become men of spirit! If you are not men of contemplation now, how will you manage later to guide priests? *Aut sint aut non sint observantes*. “Either you are observant or you are not.” Whoever observes the rules will spread *benedictionem*, “a blessing;” others, however will spread, *maledictionem*, “a curse!”

Look especially at this basic principle; study Chapter 17 of *The Imitation of Christ*. It will give you the key to good observance. I could tell you more, but I only say: hold to the rule; obey it! Then you will discover whether it is from God or not! I always insist on this principle: hold to the holy rule; I don't exempt my poor self. If you strive properly, in a few years you will see us accomplishing much for God's honor and the salvation of souls. Particularly on this last trip where I spoke with several bishops and archbishops, I saw again that we will be welcome everywhere if we live according to the institute, holding to it faithfully.

1897/10/01

You must become more and more conscious of your great mission. Especially of your obligation continually to renew the spirit of the Society. But it is easy, even for one who once was firm, to relax little by little. Yet if you honestly accept the purpose of the Society and strive eagerly to fulfill your exalted mission – the imitation of the holy apostles – then you will view your high task differently and grasp it differently. How supremely happy you will be if you strive for this mission! You are called, the Society is called, to form a new army in the spirit of the holy apostles, under the banner of Jesus Christ, the Divine Savior. And this army, this new force, could transform our faithless, cold, immoral, dissolute age into a mighty, divine voice for calling the world and humanity back to the right path.

Desire, therefore, to become useful members, instruments, and tools. To do so, like the apostles you must become detached from all earthly things, yes, even from yourselves! You must depend completely on God, throw yourselves completely into the arms of the heavenly general. You must fight, suffer, and struggle like the holy apostles. You must zealously spread the teachings of our Divine Master to all corners of the world. Clearly, one individual working alone cannot manage the task. However, united it can be done.

Love, this is what the apostolate strictly requires: *caritatem!* You know what the breviary says: whoever lacks *caritas* should not be entrusted with the ministry of preaching! If, therefore, we want to follow the holy apostles we must have great *caritas*, and among us there must be mutual love and peace: *alter alterius onera portate!*

“Carry one another’s burdens!” Not merely the burdens of our confreres but [the burdens] of all whose lives we touch – however rough, however uneducated, however fractious and raw they are! Whoever doesn’t possess *caritas* cannot be trusted with the ministry of preaching.

Let us try to fathom ever more deeply the mission of the Society and our calling. Let us humble ourselves and invoke help from above, that God’s spirit may fill us, that his spirit may animate us! Ah, how happy, how happy, a thousand times happy you are when you follow your vocation! You can search from morning to night, year after year, and you will never find a more beautiful calling! Ah, how dreadful you would feel in eternity if you didn’t follow your vocation, when you saw how you could have shone like stars *in perpetuas aeternitates*, “forever and ever.” Be really loyal, solid, holy, zealous members of the Society. The Society will triumph; God will help it to victory!

All should desire to live with a holy outlook. No one will persevere who doesn’t strive after the spirit of the holy rule; eliminate unhappiness and dissonant elements! If you could appreciate your vocation, you would gladly die a thousand, thousand times for it! How very differently from us would others have lived out this vocation if they had been called by God to enter the Society! So let us not fail to study, meditate on the mission and the rules of the Society, and whatever concerns each individual.

We don’t want to serve the Lord or to carry out our duty sadly, but with joyful hearts! If we are happy in our mission and in our choices, then even if temptations come we are happy! Our vocation is like the sun that shines through the night.

But once we assume the task, let us deepen our awareness through meditation, prayer, detachment from earthly things, deep humility, and those things that comes with humility: patience, obedience, etc. Of course, as the holy rule says, the apostolate doesn't exclude spreading the divine word by all possible ways and means in order to make God known to everyone: *Ut cognoscant omnes Deum et quem misit, Jesum Christum!* "That all might know God and the one he sent: Jesus Christ!"

However, like the apostles, we should also be busy with other things. Therefore, it is so important to study the lives of the apostles in order to imitate them! Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles, never thought it beneath his dignity to work with his hands. Wherever Providence calls us, whether to this activity or to that, we go; if our vocation is so exalted and sublime, then we should also work. Brothers especially should realize that they too participate in the great mission of strengthening the Society. Even though they do not [work] through sermons, etc. like clerics and priests, brothers do collaborate through work, prayer, and suffering. With faithful good intentions they should embrace suffering so that they will not be deprived of a great reward.

And you who are called to the priesthood, bear in mind that a priest must also be holy! Therefore, consider again and again your priestly vocation, your apostolic vocation! Consider again and again what a vocation it is! And don't lose it! If you have such a high and exalted vocation, all hell will conspire to steal it from you. If you don't follow it, rest assured: *corruptio [optimi] pessima!* "The worst failure [is the fall of the best person!]" You know where so many scandals come from! Therefore, live up to your high holy vocation!

Really endeavor to become saints! We will never reach this goal completely in this life, but we must strive to become holy! If you work together according to the measure of your strengths and God's grace, and if you live your vocation faithfully, then you will be happy and united. Then complaints will stop, patience will blossom, and your motto will be: better to tolerate than to be tolerated! Where there is humility there will be patience. If you embody this spirit you will shed temptations like scales!

Become imitators of the holy apostles, ambassadors of the Most High, heralds of Jesus Christ, fighters under the flag of the Divine Savior! Make yourselves worthy of your vocation! Prove yourselves worthy! Fight, suffer, struggle until the last breath under the flag of Jesus Christ.

1897/10/04**Nameday of the Reverend Father**

[Address of the beloved Reverend Father and Founder, October 4, 1897, 10:15 hrs., after party congratulations were offered him in the community refectory.]

I thank you all for your good wishes and for your participation at today's festivities. It is a joy for me. And that joy is justified because if, as I hope, you are all sincere in this unanimous devotion and fidelity, this is a proof of future happiness and blessing for you and for the Society. This is not the time or place for me to mention any painful matters in the history of the Society which I have buried deep inside myself, since according to my firm principles I must see to your welfare and that of the Society. So I simply repeat that it is a joy that you stand together united with your spiritual father and your superiors. On this the welfare of the Society and much else depends! When building and building, you will see that things go well if you stay in agreement with your spiritual father. But if you go another way you will build, but another invisible hand will destroy your work again!

There is no other or better way to happiness for you and for the Society than to hold together unanimously. This is impossible if you don't hold together with your spiritual father! God placed me here, so be assured, even if you work zealously, if you don't hold with me you won't enjoy God's blessing!

Therefore, if you wish to become happy, if you greatly desire the Society to reach its goal – to achieve great things for God's honor, the salvation of souls, and the church – and if you want to

persevere in your holy vocation, ah, then cling steadfastly to your spiritual father and superior, so long as it is not a matter of sin. "Whoever is not with me, is against me, and whoever doesn't gather with me scatters!" I could write a whole book about this one truth, though you come against me armed with all the philosophers.

But if you are lacking the blessing of God and of your spiritual father and your superior, do you believe the building will stand? I would never have imagined the importance of this principle, but experience proves it day after day! Therefore, hold together! This is a joy for me – this proof of your devotion and love! It is also an indication of your future happiness! I would almost like to say with a holy assurance that God's will showed itself to me recently. The Society has a noble mission!

It will only attain this high mission, however, if you stand solidly behind your superior. And where one single member is not in line, the whole organism suffers! So at today's celebration I beg and implore you by the love of the Divine Savior and by all I can swear to, hold together and don't mistrust!

Hold firmly together, and I will recognize you as my children because you gather with me. Otherwise you are against me and bring about the destruction of the Society and of your own welfare. It saddens me to say this! So if you want to be really happy, hold together, and approach this goal head on, the goal of God's honor and the salvation of souls. I will have to leave this earthly arena some day, and then it will be my solace and my successors' solace if you hold firmly together.

If you hold firmly together you will see in ten to twenty years

or more what you don't yet see today, and you will find the truth of my words confirmed! How painful would it be for me if you didn't believe my words, or if you first believed only after drinking the poison! Hold together, hold together! Be united, united! This unity will help you endure the storms easily. If you hold together in this way and if you are united in holy works, then the mission will succeed! "If two or three are together and pray, so I am there in their midst." Then how gladly God will advance towards us! I say once again, if you stand firm on this main point you will become great and accomplish enormous things for God's honor and the salvation of souls, and the Society will spread fast. But if not – then you can only say: *mea culpa, mea maxima culpa!* "Through my fault, through my great fault!"

You will probably believe me [when I tell you] how very much this topic moves me when I see how many souls are waiting for our help and will one day live forever in eternity, and when I see how many thousand and thousand, millions, could be led into heaven – when I see how this could happen and yet it is destroyed. Believe me, it is a serious thing to risk God's curse being directed against those who in any way obstruct God's plan.

1897/10/08

Concordia parvae res crescunt, discordia maximae dilabuntur.
 "With concord small things progress, with discord the greatest things collapse." This is especially true in a religious community! Therefore, I would like to remind you to bolster your unity more and more. Become strong and powerful, and avoid everything which damages this unity and harmony! To protect this unity, this harmony, this peace, it is particularly important for each individual at his place, to carry out his tasks conscientiously as a vowed religious, to observe the rules exactly, and to work and suffer in the particular position to which he is assigned according to the rules and regulations.

If one member, even a single one, is defective the whole organism sometimes must suffer, just as in the human body. However, if each member is sound and regularly performs his functions, then the whole organism is in good shape and achieves its purpose; everything is calm and peaceful! Therefore, if you desire unity and peace among one another, then above all be good religious who live by the rule, conscientiously and completely, in the post entrusted to you.

In order to do this, however, to be good religious, we must use the means at our disposal. These you cannot neglect, because with nothing more than wishful thinking things won't go well. Throughout the day you should perform the prescribed prayers and meditations conscientiously. Oh, work hard to meditate as well as possible. If you omit it only once this is not so bad. But if it happens more frequently on average, you can be sure that you risk great danger and very serious injury. Therefore, always strive to pray and to do your spiritual exercises well, especially meditation;

then you won't need so many lectures and admonitions. Then the Holy Spirit will speak to you; you will be ennobled and become good religious! People will be able to tell just by looking at you – contemplative prayer will also will show itself externally. If a spirit-filled person comes, it is not difficult to say at first glance whether he is a person of contemplation or not. Therefore, keep a close eye on contemplation. My only wish is that all of you dedicate a full hour to contemplative prayer [daily].

How will you fare against the world otherwise? If you fight against it and want to win, how much you need contemplative prayer! And if you are not men of prayer you won't fulfill your mission! You know how an apostolic person like St. Francis Xavier, if he could not meditate at the appointed time, withdrew into the forest or to a solitary place to contemplate there. Even with so much work to do, these [apostolic souls] still found time for prayer. If you don't pray much, one can predict with certainty that you will soon collapse and be lost. Therefore, hold on to prayer and meditation. Look there for help!

In order to pray and meditate well, climb down low and become humble! Ah, if we don't fight against this enemy – arrogance, against pride, the root of all sin, such a great enemy which strives for our downfall – ah, then we won't pray either. At least we won't pray or meditate well! Therefore, if we want to pray and meditate well we must first become humble and continually look to strengthen humility in ourselves! You know the remark of one spiritual master: "Remove humility and all virtues are vices!" *Tolle humilitatem et omnes virtutes sunt vitia*. Therefore, deep humility, *fundamentum profundum*, "a deep foundation" so you can raise a good building. The taller the building, the deeper you must dig the foundation!

Therefore, through deep humility, zealous prayer and conscientious meditation seek to become good religious yourselves and to form yourselves into good religious, apostolic workers. From this will come peace, harmony, and love! Then you will be able to endure anything from your conferees, even if it is painful. You will call to heaven for God to stop it. Oh, how easily you can move God's mercy to remedy these inconveniences. Therefore, be humble, practice prayer and meditation, and you will become united, striving toward one goal, obedient to your superior. You won't insist on pushing your own attitudes and opinions, you will submit gladly! If you walk in humility, God's blessing will descend on you, and the Society and all her individual members will fulfill the mission entrusted to them according to the measure of their strength and of God's grace.

1897/10/15

In the first place, the rule states how we should normally work: *exemplis*, “by example.” There are two ways of working in the church and in the Society: *exemplis* or *scandalis*, “by example or by scandal.” One builds up, the other destroys. I would like to stress these two points to you since they are so significant for the Society.

You should work *exemplis*, by example, *tales quales profitemini esse*, “to be what you profess to be;” namely, *Sodales Divini Salvatoris*, members of a society that strives to follow the holy apostles. In short, you must embody the purpose of the rule in yourselves, not only through external actions but also *ex corde*, from the heart. You must be members of the Society from interior conviction! If you are only members externally, you will act like members only for as long as your superiors are watching. But when no one is looking you will switch into the enemy camp. Therefore, pay attention: you must be members of the Society *ex corde*, *ex intimo corde* “from the heart, from the depth of the heart.” To me it makes no difference if you don’t cause scandals outside, if you are not really true members of the Society *in intimo corde*, from your heart of hearts. Be assured that if you do not act from your heart, then whatever you build is rotten and it will collapse at the first turn.

You should work through *exemplis*. It is enough to behave like members of the Society in order to preach, and to work more and more on believers, on opponents, and on the souls called by God. If you don’t [work through example], you are not true members of the Society. And if you are not [true members] you already give offense. People will look for something in you but not find it; and

discovering themselves mistaken will ask: *Sunt isti, quales confitentur? Non sunt tale!* “Are these who they claim to be? No they are not!” You can be sure, I know what people judge, and I know it will go hard on anyone in our Society who lacks it [good example]. It’s either *exemplis vel scandalis*, by example or by scandal.

You also cause vexation if you don’t live as good members of the Society. That is a contradiction in itself: you belong to the Society through the habit you wear, but you do not behave as members of the Society. This contradiction, this behavior, is a vexation.

A second aggravation is failure to control yourselves. People watch religious so carefully, particularly Catholics. Whoever doesn’t show self-restraint in eating and drinking, you can be sure one single incident is enough to ruin his credibility. Therefore, work by *exemplis* and not *scandalis*. I mentioned before that one long-established mission was destroyed by a single indiscretion. Therefore, it is your duty to work by *exemplis* and to avoid *scandala*; each individual is bound in solidarity to avoid *scandala*. *Oportet scandala venire*. “Scandals must come, ...” they are unavoidable even in the Society to which we belong, even though they should not be. When they occur, don’t be vexed by them. Pray that they will be stopped in a legitimate way. You can be sure that if you do this you will succeed. So pray that God will give all the grace necessary to resist all temptations.

Furthermore, *fragilitas humana*, “human weakness” may appear anywhere; *oportet scandala venire*, so please I beg you, don’t be vexed. Consider that everywhere in the church there are good things and bad things, some very good people and some less good. A religious congregation is like a garden; just as in a garden,

however hard you work some weeds still grow, so see to it that you are always a light. As members of the holy church and of the Society, strive and work through example. Then we will also be in better financial shape soon.

Work with your whole heart, *ex intimo corde*, “from your innermost heart” to acquire virtues, self-control. On the other hand, avoid everything – confreres, the world, your fellows, friends or enemies – that in one way or another scandalizes Catholics! If you do this, and collaborate, participating especially through prayer – you will see that God will somehow provide whatever is still lacking in the Society. I am convinced, and one of the highest princes of the church has also told me, that our Society has [now] chosen one path. It had to happen because at the beginning one did not take the calling so seriously. That is why a few entered the Society who should have stayed outside. I’m not saying such people are in the Society now – that only God knows – I don’t want to say. I only say that what I said was certain. So pray that, if anyone not called by God has somehow entered the Society (like the one let into the Last Supper who was then the first to leave), God somehow remedies it very soon.

It is really like that distinguished prelate said: at the start it was God’s will [that we] not proceed so strictly. So you cannot be surprised if now and then a cross came and maybe still can come – the Lord will clean his stable soon enough. But pray steadfastly, hold to the rule and to the assigned superior. On the other hand, if you see such [scandalous] things you should not judge. Let the superiors take care of them and let God be the judge.

1897/10/22

Holy poverty is so important to religious orders. They rise or fall with its observance. Over the centuries the holy church and its servants (particularly the Council of Trent) have prescribed through many ordinances that we love holy poverty *matrem tamquam*, “like a mother.” In our society we also regard it *tamquam matrem*. Furthermore, you transferred everything you possessed to God through your holy vows. In addition you committed yourself through those vows to observe holy poverty in the spirit of the church and its constitutions, as the church asks each institute according to the rules of each.

It follows that if abuses creep in, which *nolens volens* “whether you like it or not” must have been approved, nobody can appeal to [what is done in] other institutes or orders; and furthermore, that I never ever in any way, shape or form dispense or condone any *abusus*, “abuses.” On the contrary, I don’t tolerate for one second anything which is against this rule. And no one can argue by saying that he saw this or that [practice] elsewhere. The rule is the law. On this I stand, to this I firmly adhere.

Everyone should review his own stand on holy poverty – whether he has kept the vow or whether he has turned into a thief and has stolen back from God what he had transferred through his holy vows. You know that you cannot possess or own anything.

I would like to underscore this point: no one has anything at his disposal for which he has not been given permission, nor can he presume permission. This is especially true on trips for which money is given. Furthermore, you should pay attention to anything

you have in your cell, in your desk, or anything you routinely use, to see whether it is legitimate or not; and consider how those in authority behave.

Watch and test yourselves, each at his own place. Behave in such a way that if at any moment God came and said to you, “Give an account of what you have” whether you legitimately possess it or not, you would be ready. And remember you cannot play fast and loose with conscience.

Violating poverty leads to very bad consequences. As soon as poverty is no longer observed, the apple of discord appears in a religious house! As soon as poverty is no longer observed, peace, that tender blessing, vanishes, and that necessary support which comes from God will disappear. So be careful not to use or possess anything about which you can certainly say: Here I can presume. Nobody should take something into another community without legitimate permission of the superior. Here you can fail against justice, indeed commit theft. You can easily take an object that doesn't belong to the Society. Then this thing is missing and people don't know where it is. Then you have stolen something. Hold to this rule: nonobservance has severe consequences!

If anyone received any money [from the superior] for a specific purpose, as soon as he carries out that task he should no longer keep it. If he keeps it longer he shows that he loves it, even if he is no thief. I'm not talking here just about pocket money, but about anything one has for himself. You need only read the prohibitions church authorities have enacted on pocket money! Of course, what is true about poverty also holds true regarding eating and other matters, yes even regarding medical treatment. The superiors will

not only dispense this, but they will certainly want everyone to have what is necessary. Yet even here one can go too far! Certainly the individual superiors cannot get too specific on this point because otherwise abuse can easily creep in.

Now everyone should examine how he lives the vow of holy poverty! Cling to what I said! Also consider that as long as you possess anything to which you have no right, or [as long as you] have property unlawfully, you have no blessing. Rather it is a vexation! It is a very big danger in an active order to offend against poverty. And if you don't observe poverty now, what will it be like outside? It can get to the point that one no longer notices that he is a religious who vowed to live poverty and to be poor. It can also happen that the superiors don't dare to say anything, or that they don't draw attention to it. I call upon each superior (myself included) to insist on full observance of holy poverty, always and forever, even when I am no longer alive!

Consider what I have said: God's blessing will not rest on us if holy poverty is not observed strictly. No one should say that he saw this or that being tolerated. Sometimes subordinates to some degree even gag the mouths of their superiors; but from my side, I won't keep silent! Therefore, as I said, never ever would I *abusus approbieren*, “approve of an abuse.”

1897/11/05

May the saints whose feast we are celebrating be a powerful incentive for us to advance courageously and faithfully on the path Providence has shown us, so that we may progress through strict observance of the holy vows and the holy rule!

This pertains especially to observing the holy rule and silence, because it is a well known fact that no religious house can survive where silence is not observed. You might think I am exaggerating. But with the benefit of practice and experience, unfortunately, you will find it is so. Sadly, that's how human beings are! Once you start to neglect "religious silence," talking here and there, it won't be long before you will start to disrespect the confreres and to speak to their detriment. Behind one another's backs you will begin talking about things you have heard, criticizing the directives of superiors and contradicting commands. And what follows from this? Strife, discord, etc. And where is it all rooted? In not observing silence.

You know what St. James says about silence, about the tongue – an organ that can instigate so much trouble! Often in the case of those who went astray, it all goes back to disregarding silence. Therefore, observe silence! The result will be peace and harmony; the Society will bloom, and the family will blossom! Observe the times for silence as stipulated in the rule; above all, observe "religious silence." Don't abuse what is intended for good [i.e., the tongue], for the praise of God, for teaching the sacred truths, for dispensing the holy sacraments. Act like real confreres, and take care to use your tongue only for God's honor and for the salvation of others.

I would like to remind you again to consider the observance of holy poverty. Remember that in having embraced the holy vows, you have promised before God to love the vow of strict poverty, and that failure to love this vow will be punished. Examine yourselves again and again, and be on guard not to call God's judgment down on yourselves through your sins. Let us pray, and strictly observe the holy vows! For when we observe ours [i.e., our vows], the Lord will also fulfill his [promises].

Pray much! This will bring you light and strength, and teach you to carry your personal cross! Spare no effort everyday to renew your resolve: I must become a man of prayer! Therefore, pray often; pray whether alone or with others; *semper oportet orare et numquam deserere!* "Always carry on praying and never give up!" Remember this, and act wisely! This will call down many blessing upon you and upon the Society. Therefore, pray, pray, and pray again! Become men of the prayer, and you will accomplish great things.

1897/11/12

When I think about the Society and assess individual houses and individual members, deep melancholy overtakes me. I am filled with deep pain because, knowingly or unknowingly, enemies are attacking our sacred work! I sometimes used to think – I know all our enemies more or less at a glance, even if not by name. So you will ask, where is our greatest enemy? Who harms us most? Freemasons? Liberals? I say: no! It is different: *ex vobis exsurgunt homines*, “men rise up from among you.” No! They are within, and just as in the early days of the church the greatest enemies were not Diocletian or other persecutors but heretics, so it is in every society torn by the spirit of criticism. This proves that solidarity with superiors, from the lowest prefects up to the highest, is missing.

If I go through the Society from top to bottom, there is no greater enemy than this [criticism]. How many vocations ended up in the graveyard, how many lost their enthusiasm, how many souls were lost to the order! So ask yourselves, ask everyone who hits a detour, loses enthusiasm, or gets lost! Ask that one to confess his conscience frankly. Admittedly, the passions contribute a lot! But you will discover it was criticizing the superior, ordinances and rules, discarding judgment, all this rubbish heaped together was the cause. I tell you frankly, I would hate to be judged by a critic.

Where there is criticism, strife and discord follow. Where there is peace, there will be full agreement; there the confreres will hold together and strive for perfection! Oh, how many would have blazed like saints in eternity, how many would have come to the throne of glory, but will now perhaps end up in hell because of criticism. It [criticism] is enough to deter one from the quest for perfection,

especially one who is already floundering in his vocation! No matter what I say, I cannot paint a complete portrait of criticism! I name no one; everyone must look to himself to see whether this is true of him. I am talking about the problem and not about individuals; I am talking about criticism, this malicious tongue that uncovers mistakes unnecessarily and criticizes everything!

That is the Society’s biggest enemy; and it is our most sacred duty to drive it out. If we don’t, then one vocation after another will be swept into the grave. If one such critic were in the Society, I beg you all to fear him more than anything! Even if he doesn’t lead you directly into sin, even if he doesn’t shake your vocation, still he will sap your enthusiasm in the quest for perfection! Just listening to a critic already militates against perfection; just like the one who reads tabloids, you soon see that he is no longer on the straight and narrow. And if one no longer strives for perfection, he is already headed downward, according to the individual circumstances.

Therefore, the enemy lies in criticizing, in collecting everything one can find in order to have the inside story! Look at a missionary, one out in the world who must shoulder such worries, such deprivations. Wouldn’t he have a thousand times more things to criticize! Whoever wants material will find it everywhere; what is sometimes good in and of itself can, in certain cases, be forbidden!

Again, this is the biggest enemy in our Society. If a critic lives in the house or elsewhere – hold fast. But if this enemy is put outside, then the burden will soon decrease and dwindle! It still remains your concern to be observant and to strive after perfection yourself. You know what St. James says about the tongue:

“Whoever masters the tongue is perfect.” Hold your tongue well, and you will assuredly advance in the spiritual life.

Therefore, if you want to have peace, hold together. If you want to become holy, watch out for this! I want to say frankly that I cannot endure this monster of criticism, who harmed body and soul so much. And I will say it often. I recommend that each one, including myself, examines his conscience thoroughly to see whether or not, through a foolish word, criticism, or remark you have harmed your superiors or somehow dampened the enthusiasm or seriousness or their holy vocation. The point is to examine yourself. And consider that if here [in formation] you act this way, then when you are appointed to an apostolate you will not be an apostle at all, you will be confreres of the devil. Excuse me for using such an expression! Therefore, rid yourselves of criticism so that you won't have to say in eternity, “through my tongue, I made things this bad.”

1897/11/19

Mando vobis, ut diligatis vos. “I command you to love one another.” *Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum, habitare fratres in unum.* “Oh, how good and pleasant it is for brothers to live united.” As regards living together, we can see our task in these words! Love, harmony, brotherly love are particularly necessary for us! *Filioli, diligite alterutrum!* “Sons, love one another!” Each one at his place should work at this: to truly love each other, to be united in the Lord's name!

Today I would like to develop one important point I made last time: to identify the chief enemy of our Society, of our common life, and of our spiritual progress. What especially hinders the advance of love, brotherly love, community life, is criticism – not only in words but however it may come about.

You probably know that it doesn't matter whether one criticizes in words, gestures, talk or gossip. It is enough that one does it somehow. Even through silence you can ruin a human being entirely – in some cases through a shrug, without saying a word, if only the circumstances are right. Thus, it is criticism, gossip and such, that offends so much against love.

Furthermore, harmony and love are disturbed if you aren't observant [of the rules] and if everyone is led more or less by his own thoughts and ideas and no longer seeks to fulfill the will of the superior, so that one must say: *sua quisque quaerit*, “he seeks his own [will].” If this happens among you, you will hardly find peace or hold on to it! You must overcome your own will. If you want to have peace among yourselves you must give up reliance on your

own judgment, inflated trust in you own experience, insight, etc.

Just imagine for a moment everyone following his own experience, his own agenda, whatever he had discovered during his life and whatever his mind and his abilities took in. Imagine each one trying more or less to insist on these things, and not exactly in the right way. What do you think would happen? It would not be so bad if things developed in a legitimate, correct way, but if they developed in another way it could become a great evil. Therefore, subordinate yourself in this matter and follow the spirit of the Institute as it is given by the superiors. As soon as you set out on this wrong way of pushing your own will and ideas, discord is already present. But as you know the opposite can also happen. In that case even something done with the best intention can become something bad.

I would still like to stress that no one should ever refuse to love and serve his confreres, so long as it entails nothing forbidden by the rule. Thus in living together, everyone whose words and actions generally show that he is motivated by sincere love contributes positively. It is easy to infer someone's basic attitude from looking at his outer actions, to know whether true love is really there. There are so many things that really disturb common life. Therefore, seek to remove this one so that we can say in truth: we are gathered in the Lord to love each other. But *in Domino*, "in the Lord!"

How can we promote love? First of all the rule states: *Ut sodales se invicem prosequantur, mutuam in semetipsis caritatem continuam habeant; nullus quod sibi, sed quod magis aliis placet sequatur.* "In order that the members of the Society get along with each other

they must have a constant mutual love for one another; no one should follow what pleases himself but what pleases others most." It is natural that everyone receives what is due him. But if one cannot make any sacrifices and always insists on his own rights, how can he have any peace? Even in the world, one can hardly live without getting the short end of the stick every now and then. *Mutuam in semetipsis caritatem continuam habent, nullus quod sibi, sed quod magis aliis placet, sequatur.* "They maintain mutual love among themselves; no one should pursue what pleases himself but rather what pleases others." You must have a mutual love that comes from God, which is rooted in virtue, which doesn't seek itself, and therefore comes from God, from higher motives!

Defectus et infirmitates, tam corporum quam morum, patientissime tolerant juxta apostolum: alter alterius onera portate. "With great patience, put up with one another's defects and weaknesses, both of body and of character. As the Apostle [St. Paul] says: Bear one another's burdens." That is a further means to harmony and love: that we can endure something from each other! Even if we were all to be declared saints, at times we would still have to endure something from one another! Providence allows that we have something to endure from each other! God admits people into the religious family who don't live properly according to the spirit of the Society in order to test whether others practice their patience, and to give them opportunities to fulfill the rule: *alter alterius portate onera*; "you should bear one another's burdens."

Whoever always insists on his rights, on his own opinions, achieves peace with himself and others only with difficulty. He should render service to others, he should desire to serve others as he himself would want to be served and obeyed, except if his position

requires others to obey him! This love is precisely what makes unity so firm – if it springs from good intentions and promotes mutual goodwill. Of course, as everywhere, here too [in religious life] there are inclinations that do not come from God. Selfishness is simply an evil! Without love, people cannot be united in common life, in the cloister or in the religious family.

If you don't have any enthusiasm and simply follow your own ideas, if you have no virtue, you may be good members for a while. But when your virtue is put to the test you collapse because you have no true, solid virtue! It only takes one incident, one mortification imposed by a superior, one command you don't like, and you are lost! Therefore, *vince te ipsum!* "Master yourself!" Whoever cannot overcome himself should fear that things will not go well in the future. If you want to become good men, from novitiate on up, conquer yourselves!

I don't demand that you impose things on yourself that damage your health; but you must seek to overcome yourself in small things. In this way if a [difficult] situation arises later, you are accustomed to it and can also master yourself in bigger things. In a word, this is how you acquire virtue. Never despair! God will help!

Therefore, acquire virtue! In my opinion, this is what the Society lacks. And without virtue it won't work, it won't work, and I say it once again, it won't work. Even if you have heavenly visions and perform miracles, without virtue you are in the most serious danger. The jug makes many trips to the well, but one day it will break. I found out over 15 long years and I can tell you, that if you don't speak honestly, and if you stretch your conscience this way and that in order to get your own way, the time will come when it

will snap to your great detriment.

So master yourselves! Seek to make sacrifices, to render service to the confreres wherever you have the opportunity and the rule allows! Ah, how easy some sacrifices will become for you, and how very agreeable community life will become! Certainly it is difficult. Where many are living together things become difficult; but at least do what is possible! You have in community life, in religious life, so many advantages that people in the world do not have, and the few freedoms that are granted you are dearly paid for!

Therefore, avoid everything which can in any way destroy love of the confreres, the superiors, and the whole organism. On the contrary, do everything to insure peace; practice self-denial. Another thing seems true to me: where there is no virtue, necessarily there is strife. Either you stand united with each other or [you stand] with the evil one. Therefore, virtue, and once again virtue! And if you want to proceed happily and to stay completely loyal till the end, acquire virtue for yourselves!

1897/11/26

I talked last time about some important points that are so necessary for the unity and growth of our Society. I am referring to criticism, gossip, and charity. Today I would like to touch on another point of great significance that can have serious, incalculable consequences and bring much unhappiness to a community, an order, or a society. You know an organism is arranged in such a way that each limb supports the other. You know how in a machine one part affects the other, and how in a building one stone carries the weight of the other, each in its place. And if any part were missing in the machine, the organism, the human being or the building, the whole structure would suffer. It is similar in the Society.

I would like to underscore one point you should follow your whole life and must never forget – a point you can never contemplate sufficiently: observe the rule!

Specifically, I would like to alert you to one point for promoting the happiness and advancement of individuals. First and foremost, individuals should be open to their [major] superiors and immediate superiors; if any serious temptation comes they should share it openly and let their seniors know. Furthermore, if they see faults in the community, even on the part of their superiors or seniors, they should tell the right person – of course with the necessary respect. And the superiors too, if they see faults that must be corrected, should confront the subordinate who made the mistake, bringing it to his attention with the same respect and love.

In addition, if one believes he is not trusted [by a superior], he should go to him to clear up the matter and settle the grievance.

You know that the devil makes every effort to arouse distrust precisely among those who should accomplish great things. Therefore, openness towards the superiors! Furthermore, turn to your immediate superiors first. And only if you have done so repeatedly [with no resolution], should you then appeal to the higher superiors.

Furthermore, see to it that everyone, each in his place, absolutely lives the rule and obeys his local superior. Even if the superior makes mistakes, you must obey him in everything! So heed this point which has such great importance for your salvation, the salvation of others, for the Catholic Church, and for the whole Society.

Another point is sticking together. I already gave the example that a religious society is like a building: one stone supports the other, as in an organism one limb affects the other. Thus, it is necessary for both the individual and the whole community that everyone, from the prefect to the highest superior, in every case protects and supports the superior. And since everyday Christian life certainly demands charity to forgive mistakes, how much more [charity] is required towards one's superiors! Therefore, one supports the other. Having complaints but not voicing them to the proper superior can bring incalculable consequences, be it between a superior and a prefect, or the vicar and the superior, or the confessor and anyone in authority. In short, if one complains this way, pouring out his heart to someone who listens without immediately going away (maybe letting something else slip out in the process) the one complaining is comforted momentarily, but [underneath] there is discord! Heed this if you become confessors, and I hope that you will keep an eye on it. You cannot render any

judgment without hearing the other side. *Audiat et altera pars*.
“Let the other side be heard.”

Furthermore, superiors have the duty to support their subordinates, and subordinates their superiors. Remember that this is for the welfare of the individual. Study the Jesuit rule and you will find that this is necessary in each order. If you don't support your superiors, factions will develop and the whole community can fall apart. I heard a very sad example several years ago – not in our Society – where a whole community completely turned against one another just because one confessor started to doubt [the necessity of supporting the superiors] and [yet continued] hearing confession. Therefore, I cannot stress sufficiently how sacred an obligation it is that you hold together. If you don't, then you can be sure that discord will arise here and there, in this or that, and as a consequence the organism will be disturbed. You know if you remove one part from a machine the whole machine is disrupted.

Work at holding together, I beg you. Don't underestimate it. Thus, the prefect supports his immediate superior, and he the next superior; he supports the vicar and the vicar the superior who supports the provincial and he the superior general, and especially the spiritual director should also consider, however, such horrible fear threatens! I already told you about one individual who inquired concerning his vocation with someone who himself was having difficulties. He then looked for reasons, blaming his novitiate formation even though it was many years afterward, [complaining] that the matter [of his vocation] had not been properly explained in the novitiate. The affair came to [the attention] of the Congregation. As the novice master was still alive, investigations were made, and it finally came out that everything had been

explained precisely and had been handed over in writing. Now he could no longer do anything but deceive himself, so much that the community was glad he was out. I only wanted to relate this example of how people can deceive themselves.

It is also harmful to make inquiries outside the Society. Confer with your rightful superiors appointed by God's will. How can a stranger who doesn't know the Society offer good advice? Therefore, seek unity and peace, and protect harmony by avoiding criticism and gossip.

So, seek to help the local and next immediate superiors through punctual observance and through openness; in particular, support one another according to God's will. Stand by the superior. I could explain this point even further but it is not opportune. Be sincere with your superiors who are appointed and guided by God! Follow them, I ask you, and never take sides in any discussion against them. If anyone fails, try to overlook it, do not report him to the prefect and then on up because this does not bring God's blessing!

1897/12/03

On the poverty of our Society and how to remedy it

Previously I reminded you of our purpose, and encouraged you to cooperate with the Society to attain its goal. I come today with another very serious concern. As you know, for some time now we have been in a rather distressing financial situation. This arises from very different reasons which perhaps God alone knows. But we have a duty to remedy them. This is not impossible. Although it depends on heaven (after all we need assistance from above and can do nothing without God) still it is possible. With God's assistance we can do it! In one, two, or three years we can put ourselves into a position where we are no longer pressed. We are already in the position to say that even within the next eight days our dire situation will be somewhat mitigated. Thus we are confident that we shall not continue living with the effects of these difficult circumstances and insufficient resources. Although no one can say that such difficult times will not come again, it now looks as though in one, two or three years, if we apply our efforts uniformly to achieve this goal, we can be freed from this bad situation. But if we don't do it, serious damage for the Society is unavoidable. It is your duty to employ all your efforts so that we escape this situation soon.

We must be convinced that this is our duty. In the world outside people think about such things much more. It is true that in religious life one should not be so preoccupied with material things; still, human beings consist of body and soul, and without means a religious house will find it hard to exist. You enter the cloister so blithely and here you rely on others and live untroubled in your post. That would be completely alright if we had the necessary

means; now however, we cannot live so lightheartedly. Apart from the duties we already have in the order, we have the further shared responsibility to concentrate on improving our material existence so we can free ourselves from our dire straits.

Certainly it would be nice for the superiors to transfer you somewhere to save many souls here or there. But if he did this to the neglect of the Motherhouse: i.e., it can easily happen that one really works hard, but the rug is pulled out from under his feet and he collapses – his work is finished! So it now is the sacred duty of all of you to help – primarily by putting the common welfare above your private interests. Everyone can apply this in his own situation! Furthermore, in this regard everyone should do what he can according to his inclinations and opportunities, to ease the present situation.

Even now I can give you some data to prove this [goal] is possible. For all of 1897 we collected approximately 60,000 francs strictly as alms. If all of you would now participate vigorously with all your strength, you can see that we could expect double or even more. Certainly some exceptional sacrifices have been made; but many would admit they could have done even more.

How can you help? Above all through prayer, trust in God, and observance of the holy rule! But with trust alone and your hands stuck in your pockets you won't get far! That puts God to the test. You must do it like this. Yes, everything depends on God, but work as if everything depends on you! I often wondered why, if I have prayed and trusted, why has God nevertheless not helped, and has let us fall into this situation? It is quite possible that Providence has this plan, that when I die you might no longer work

together and if resources grow scarce, as actually happens (we have many examples in the church), my successors would no longer have it so good. You should be men of trust and prayer, applying all the ways and means allowed. These means are simply the means to bring about God's glory. Even someone who is just at a lower level of studies can assemble such resources that he not only doubles his talents but increases them tenfold. And in this modest situation he is protected against pride on the one hand, and on the other hand great success comes his way since he has done more than the others.

Imagine someone studying for the ministry who quickly, as they say, runs out of steam and whose wings start to weaken after one year [in the field]. I am only pointing out the danger. Now imagine another confrere who [after ordination], following God's will, doesn't go into the apostolate but stays in the Motherhouse and works to secure the means to spread the Society. Perhaps through him more than 20 or 30 become priests or enter the order. How much you can multiply yourself over the centuries!

And who gets the credit? The one who surrendered his original intention! In general, God does not bless those who force their way into the ministry. Therefore, each one should turn his attention to this goal, as far as time allows. Each one should examine himself, ask others, ask his superiors! There are so many ways [to raise funds] I cannot easily list them all.

You can work by distributing magazines. Last year magazines netted a profit of 10,000 frs. I know a priest who launched a magazine to underwrite the education of priests. He enrolled 40,000 subscribers; the magazine sold for \$1.50; the printing cost was \$50.

Accordingly, the annual net profit was \$40,000. In addition he begged 50-100,000 frs. So you see what one can do. Even if one cannot achieve these successes everywhere – one must dare!

But you already see that we have a start! From here we can expand to the whole world – France, England, etc. We can disseminate writings and periodicals in order to find the benefactors the Society aims at. You can be assured this will bring much more blessings than jumping into the field. It's not like that one should work. But one should first publicize the matter and then set out from here [the Motherhouse]. So my opinion, my hope, is that if you would cooperate, we could not only get out of debt, but we could have here [in Rome] a permanent community of some hundred.

I maintain that it is useful for you to know my plan, so that you see the path and share the insight I have grasped with the grace of God and by overcoming difficulties. And you will see, if everyone perseveres in his position, it will happen! Little by little I will establish stations with 10, 20 or 30 members, several houses of study with novitiates in areas that have adequate means and adequate vocations needed to become proper communities. Later from among these newly professed, according to their abilities and other circumstances, some shall return to the Motherhouse in Rome for one, two, three, or four years under the condition that his house, his province, pays for his complete upkeep. And it should be easy for such a province to pay for five, six, seven, eight [scholastics] especially since some already contribute.

Therefore, especially in the next one, two or three years, give your full energy. Perhaps the happiness of thousands of souls, the

priesthood of so many hundreds depends on this! Seek to rein in your own self-interest, sacrificing it for the common welfare with a good, pure intention, and say, “Lord, I want to do this for you!” And be confident: you will receive your reward!

1897/12/10

I admonished you last time to work very zealously for the interests of the Society. Today I would like to show you another way through which you can accomplish much good for the Society and for your own salvation. And when you have survived difficulties you will be happy and will endure sufferings willingly. Consider: *diligentibus Deum omnia convertentur in bonum*, “all things turn out for the best for those who love God.” Even if now and then some difficult times come for the individual or for the whole Society, they will [turn out] for the welfare of the Society and the individual! Segneri even said that for human beings unlucky days are those when all goes according to our wishes, because then very often things are at their worst.

Now, how should you help yourself and others? First and always: be sure that your soul is in such a condition that you can appear confidently before God! First be sure you are in the state of sanctifying grace and avoid everything evil. If you fail, rectify it immediately.

And then, exercise the virtues zealously; observe the holy rule promptly! That is a powerful means which hell fears and which defeats the enemies!

I would like to remind you of another means: don't omit prayer. Pray zealously, pray often, pray always: *Oportet semper orare*, “it is necessary to pray always!”

Another point is faith! It is so often the case in our century that people believe so little, they judge everything according to

their natural lights. I would like to read something I found: if you plan your steps only according to human cleverness, you can never rely on extraordinary help, and you will never achieve great things! Notice this! Just trust the right way, presupposing of course, that you are good religious! So have trust, and ponder what you hear and read about from so many sources. Think of the words of St. Bernard: ... There is a very simple means to attain everything from the goodness of God: let us hope with confidence that he will fulfill his promises, and act on this trust! St. Frances of the Five Wounds says: “My God, highest and infallible truth! I hope whatever you are able to do; but [actually] you can do everything, so my hope is unbounded.”

It says elsewhere that we possess to the degree that we hope! Therefore, always keep the words of sacred scripture before your eyes, those referring to trust and touching on trust! How often we read in the Office: *In Te Domine speravi, non confundar in aeternum!* “In you, O God, I have hoped, let me never be confounded!” Our confidence alone would convince God to help us, to save us, since it shows him that we know his name and rely on him. *Quoniam in me speravit liberabo eum: protegam eum, quoniam cognovit nomen meum.* “Because he hoped in me I will free him; because he knew my name I will protect him.” These are the words of scripture. We often read and hear them – but do we heed them? Not everyone can progress easily in this; but all of you must try to advance as far as possible.

I would like to make another point, and advise each of you to mortify yourselves, performing penance in the spirit of the Society. I don’t recommend penances that could become detrimental and harm the body, but penances that are pleasing to God and

conducive to your own salvation. How much you can do through them, through self-mastery, mortification for sins – your own and the expiation of others’, the confreres’. This becomes salvific for you and effective for others. Even if we strove relentlessly for holiness, we would still make mistakes! Therefore, *poenitentiam agere!* “Do penance!” Think of St. John’s words: “Do penance!” and also what the Divine Savior says: “If you don’t do penance, everything you do goes to ruin!” Therefore, penance, penance and again, penance! Everyone can do something. Everyone should investigate what he believes is pleasing to God and conducive to his salvation. As I said, penance for one’s own salvation, penance that does no harm.

Therefore, through strict observance of the holy rule, strive seriously to avoid all sins. Remember that each sin, however secret, can cause much disaster and ruin the whole Society. Be zealous in prayer, have great trust, and live as God wants. If you pray the Divine Office, the breviary, or read the psalms in sacred scripture, heed what is there so that you don’t go into eternity and only then the meaning and significance of the words dawn on you. What would the dear Savior say? “He read it and prayed so often, but never paid attention!”

I conclude once again with this very urgent advice: don’t omit any daily mortification to expiate your own sins and those of the confreres.

1897/12/17

Last time (10 November) I spoke about criticism, the damage it can cause the Society and your spiritual health, and the great dissatisfaction which can arise from it. You also heard what St. Vincent says regarding Paul: that criticizing and grumbling are among the greatest evils. Today I would like to raise a further point, which if it is not observed and kept exactly, has serious damaging consequences for the whole Society and for the individual. It is this: if the rule is not observed strictly, community life fails to flourish!

If you want to become increasingly happy and zealous members of the Society, then be exact and punctual in community life and practices. Meditate regularly, visit the Blessed Sacrament, and never be absent from community exercises. Never be absent from table unnecessarily, never seek any exceptions if you don't have to. Consider what St. Theresa says and you will know how far you can go. Generally, you can be sure that God does not approve these kinds of things [i.e., exemptions]! Of this I have clear proof. Once there were very observant confreres whose health was so poor that I despaired of them. Nevertheless, they never strayed from their quest for perfection. God's blessing rested on them in a quite outstanding way so that instead of deteriorating, their health flourished! Therefore, strictly together at table, strictly together in choir, together for examination of conscience, community prayers. In short, hold to community exercises as far as possible!

Most of all be punctual, be observant of the rules and community exercises, keep the spiritual exercises; after all, these are precisely what the institute is! I would like to say that you stray from the

warming rays of the sun if you absent yourselves from these community exercises. And as soon as you start [to deviate] you will move further and further away and finally you will cool! Therefore, no exceptions! No exemptions from these exercises. Regarding the habit, make it your constant garb! It was exactly this which, as you know, had such dreadful consequences. Hence, you will see why St. Theresa made such strict demands even in the smallest things! No one should ever dare to alter even the least of these! Therefore, keep all together. Always to be making exceptions, to be missing from community exercises, that is a bad sign! Hold all together, and don't exempt yourselves from them!

If you don't hold to this, mediocrity sets in together with gossip and dissatisfaction! In my opinion the one who is promptly observant, who performs the spiritual exercises well, you will never find him becoming critical or increasingly dissatisfied – but always there can be exceptions. Be assured: *ex fructibus cognoscuntur!* “By the fruits they are known!” Therefore, I say again and again, hold to the common life. And judge by it!

I see that especially in our Society observance is so necessary, and I deeply regret how in the last 16 years some have fallen due to mediocre, lukewarm members. Lukewarm members are the cause of it! You know it is better to spit them out! The lukewarm in a religious house are a nuisance because so many things creep in with them! You will always have work, be it in studies or in something else. So heed the holy rule promptly so that you don't fall into mediocrity and become such a plague. Examine yourselves. Perhaps you have already had the experience that when you relax in your duty you start to become lukewarm, to criticize, and to become dissatisfied. And this becomes a poison, a plague for the

whole Society! You will see, if you don't perform the exercises, if you don't strive after perfection with eagerness, if you don't follow your duty, then you will trudge along like any everyday person. You will no longer make the sacrifices demanded of religious, especially in a new institute where exceptional sacrifices are required. And the consequence will be criticism, the greatest possible dissatisfaction, just more vermin!

Consider before God what I said! And those of you who by God's grace share in the Holy Spirit, so full of eagerness – ah, be on guard against the lukewarm. Do your duty and take care to do what should be done in a religious house! You know what St. Augustine says: “Whoever believes he will find only good things in his vocation will not endure but will be shaken!” Be on guard that you don't suffer bad things but good things because of those who are lukewarm! You will find such people everywhere you go – even as far as China or the Pacific Ocean – there will always be some. Beware of them, fear them, persevere, and pray! One who is lukewarm will harm you more than a criminal. When I am no longer here don't put into any office anyone who doesn't observe the rule. It is a contradiction to assign someone to a post who doesn't observe the rule! Therefore, perform all community activities punctually, and don't let yourself be kept away except through illness or necessity! You will see that God's blessing rests on it [such behavior].

1897/12/31

At the end of this year we must ask ourselves, how did we respond, how did we respond to the purpose of our Society, how did we meet our obligations as religious; most of all, how did we preach by the example we gave. If we look into and examine these matters, what we have done whether good or bad, we will see that the source of these bad or good deeds lies in the quality of our vocation, the degree of our cooperation with good or with evil. If you want to know how you have done in the past year, to see to what degree you have been faithful to the rules and constitutions by which you are bound, why you shunned the fountain¹ so much, perhaps [it is] because you are not faithful in your vocation. Examine yourself right now as to how you have responded to your calling! Take a look and examine yourself and see, perhaps there is a danger for the next year, perhaps God will deprive you of his grace because you did not respond to your calling. Examine everything now, as God searches a city. Examine all your deeds, good and bad, and see whether you can hope to make progress in your vocation in the coming year. If you did not respond last year, there is the danger, indeed the likelihood, that in the coming year the Lord will extinguish the candle. Take care lest He say, “Let another receive your task.”

Look, perhaps you resisted your calling ... correct yourself, and try with all your strength to be faithful to the rules and constitutions of our Society. Try to give an account of your life and live a life which is in conformity with your vocation. Otherwise, be fearful! Steadiness in one's vocation is more or less necessary for everyone: this is the

¹ “Shun the fountain”. The text has *fontem voluisti* which does not seem to make any sense. I have translated it as *fontem noluisti*.

foundation of a vocation. Each and everyone, therefore, is bound to resist and to flee from anything that would steal this treasure away, and the one who leaves himself open to this danger will perish! Faithfulness to the Society is vital. How can you be a true son of the Society if you are not faithful to your mother, if you do not desire to keep your vocation! Be observant religious! Don't neglect the rules, even the least of them! And then, gratitude is what most of all should lead you to keep the treasure safe! Oh, how great and how evil is the world's ingratitude, what a huge evil it is! What does the famous Father Faber say about it? Here is what he says: If I hear that a person has a long-lasting memory of his benefactor's favors; if I hear that he feels most grateful; if I hear that a person is so disposed to be grateful, there is the greater probability and hope that he will become holy than if he scourged himself until he bled, or was scourged by the devil, or had a vision of Our Blessed Lady. Therefore, there is the greater probability [of achieving holiness] if you are grateful than if you work miracles!

I would like you to commit this last point to memory – a point of such great importance which people forget – the claim made by the celebrated Faber. If he heard someone remembered his benefactors for a long time, remained obligated to them, and was extraordinarily grateful, Faber was more likely to hope such a person would become a saint, than if he heard that someone scourged himself, wrestled with the devil, and had visions of the Virgin Mary. Therefore, according to him, the exceptionally gratefully person had made more progress on the path of holiness than the other!

Therefore, at the close of this year, see to it that you are grateful to God and to all to whom you are obligated. Never fall prey to

that “black vice,” ingratitude. And I especially ask you to be truly grateful to the benefactors and your superiors. You also surely know that ingratitude brings you no blessing. So be grateful. I ask you at the end of the year to be grateful, and to strive to be quite grateful your whole life long! I could give you an example from history of exceptional gratitude, of an incomparable man so very much shaped by Providence! Therefore, be grateful to God and to all, to the superiors, to the benefactors of body and soul. And watch yourselves so that this gratitude is never missing in you.

1898/01/07

A good citizen observes the laws of his state, his country; and just as it [a state] cannot exist without respect for the laws, neither can a religious family exist or flourish without observing its rules and constitutions. It matters greatly, therefore, and is of the greatest importance that the members of a religious institute carefully observe each and every one of the rules and constitutions of their own society!

If you wish to know or to get to know yourself, whether you are a good or bad religious, take and look at and examine how you observe the rules and constitutions of the Society. Perfect observance of the rules and perfect observance of the constitutions by the members contribute greatly to the personal sanctification of the confreres. They lead to peace and harmony within the family and they help greatly in accomplishing deeds for God's glory and the salvation of souls. You know this: great things can be achieved by united effort! But there is no united effort where the rule is not observed.

Where there is no observance there is no peace, and where there is no peace, no common effort is made. Therefore, accomplish great things for the glory of God. Be observant, therefore, keep each and every rule, keep the constitutions and the vows you have taken. So, be observant, for your own sanctification, for peace and harmony in the Society, within the family. Oh, give yourselves to the work; an observant religious accomplishes great things, and one can have great confidence in religious who are observant. If one observes his rules, he will make great progress, if he perseveres in it! If one is observant of the rule, he will have heaven's blessing and his deeds will be blessed in God's eyes! But where there is not observance of the rule in a religious institute, there is bad example, scandal for the entire church! Oh,

what great evils, what great scandals there are in the church! And what great evils there are in the religious institutes! There must be scandals, but let them not come through us!

It seems that non-observance blinds the mind, with the result that the one who is not observant will not have the same bond with the Society as the observant religious will have. The one who is observant is at peace; the one who isn't is unsettled, he is discontented, he has complaints, he is not happy or joyful; if he is not observant, he is in danger of a great fall. Moreover, if one is not observant, you cannot have great confidence in him, even if he does great deeds, because he can be acting from different motives. But if one is observant, that is a sign that he has a pure intention. But if he is not observant, he is in danger even if he does great deeds: don't trust him! We cannot judge in particular cases, but generally speaking we cannot trust him because there is the suspicion that he is acting from some other motive. How many people there are who act from their natural inclination, who seek honors, look for prizes and rewards; but the observant one shows that he acts out of charity, out of love of God, out of virtue, to do God's will. And so an observant religious is one in whom we can have confidence!

Don't put any trust in the one who does not observe the rules and constitutions of his own institute: don't trust him, no matter how great the deeds he seems to accomplish. You will know them by their deeds, by the fruits they produce. The one who keeps the rules is a great person and a good religious. Next time we will speak about observance and non-observance in particular cases.

Briefly now in German I would like to stress to you, especially to the brothers, something that is so important for religious: to

observe one's vows strictly and hold to the rules and constitutions, to observe them strictly. This contributes to one's own salvation, to peace and harmony in the institute, and to achieving great things for God's honor and the salvation of souls. But those who no longer observe the rules, no longer work with unified strength. Good religious who are observant are greatly respected by God and by people. The opposite is also true: bad religious who don't observe the rule, who place themselves above the rule and thereby disturb peace and harmony in the spiritual family, are not capable of accomplishing anything great. It seems to me the characteristics learned by [good religious] – to master themselves, to observe the rule, to mortify themselves – all these are signs that they possess virtues.

Never trust those who talk so well and achieve such great things if they don't observe the rule! Because these good things can be grounded in so many different motives. Hopefully those who are really observant are at the same time useful! Here one can be confident that all goes well. But where observance is lacking, nothing can be hoped for! Therefore, either there is trust or there is none; either there is observance or none!

1898/01/14

Exceptions and dispensations do great harm to the well-being of the Society and of the religious family, unless they are granted with prudence. Ordinarily speaking, exceptions and dispensations are bad. However, not to grant dispensations and exceptions would be to act imprudently, cruelly. Therefore, in cases where exceptions and dispensations are not harmful, it is necessary that they should be kept to a minimum and only given for a legitimate reason. In themselves they are harmful, but sometimes they have to be granted because of the circumstances. Each one, therefore, should be careful to avoid dispensations and exceptions in his observance, and not to make them without a sufficient and serious reason. And so, the fewer exceptions and dispensations there are in the Society, the better it will go forward. Then, what is most harmful to the common good, to peace and harmony, is when the members are unwilling to subject themselves to the rules and to their immediate superiors. To wish to act freely and independently according to one's own judgment is very harmful to concord.

You heard what St. Vincent said in this matter: "It does great harm if any of those in office act independently of their immediate superiors." So, if you wish to have peace and harmony, freely subject yourselves to your immediate superiors, steady yourselves in observing all the rules of your own particular duties. The more you desire independence, the worse things will be for you! Avoid, therefore, independence and insubordination. Know that we are blessed if you act out of obedience. Moreover, as I have often said, it does great damage to the common good and the good of the Society to criticize and to blame the things which the superiors are doing; not only is respect damaged, but the subordination must be dealt with by the

superiors and great loss ensues. Normally the critic does not know all the reasons which led the superiors to act, and so forms an unjust judgment. Frequently superiors cannot say or reveal their reasons for what they do.

And so, don't judge, criticize or blame the things which superiors do, lest you form unjust judgments and harm yourselves and others. If someone uses unfair means, such as threats, to get a dispensation, he does harm to concord, peace and harmony. And so, from the bottom of my heart, I commend you as far as possible to avoid exceptions and dispensations; do not wish for independence, but subject yourself willingly. Flee from any blaming, criticism, especially of superiors. And have a horror of and avoid any kind of threat.

Today I pointed out four major things you should particularly avoid for your own sake and in the interest of the Society: avoid making exceptions and dispensations as far as possible, conform everything to the common life. On the other hand, however, don't judge if one or the other exception must be granted. Furthermore, if you have an office to exercise, you should especially avoid desiring to discharge it as independently as possible – independent even from the immediate superiors and seniors. That way you would risk spoiling God's blessing along with peace and harmony. Therefore, avoid independence and insubordination; live in a spirit of joyful dependence.

Furthermore, everyone should beware of criticism, judgment, especially about what concerns your superiors! Avoid, beware of, and detest criticizing the actions of your superiors. Your reprehensible criticism harms both the honor of the superior and your own. This happens because your judgment is often incorrect

since you look more for reasons that make sense to you, without knowing why the superior acted as he did, and so you judge unjustly! Therefore, avoid these four things: making exceptions, independence and insubordination, criticism, and harassing your superiors.

1898/01/21

Because of our extreme poverty and need, I once again recommend that each one of you to the very best of his ability work for the Society and relieve this state of need. The expenses of such a large community are big, extremely so. Last year we expended more than 140,000 lire on the Society alone. Therefore, if you consider how diligently each one should work (especially the clerical members, because it is for them that such great expenses are incurred) so that they [these expenses] become less as the days go by – and as little as 500 lire is sufficient for each one! And how can you help? Especially, as I have often said, you should live faithfully and take care with all your might to keep the rules and constitutions, and lead a life adapted to your state. This way a heavenly blessing will descend on our community and God will help us. Secondly, each one should keep holy poverty, live sparingly, keep unnecessary expenditures and items to a minimum, so as not to burden his conscience. Let each one look after the Society's property well, the goods of the house which are entrusted to him, so as not to break or damage what is given him. And I must lay down that no one incur needless expenses.

Therefore, secondly, you must work together so as not to incur superfluous or needless expenses. Thirdly, you should work with all your might, each one according to his ability – by study, by his words and especially by prayer – and each one take care not to waste time or indulge in leisure lest, God forbid, he should bring harm to the Society. Oh! Work then, keep the rules and constitutions of our Society. Keep strict observance of poverty in the area of common property; work with all your might. Let each have a fear lest he bring a curse on the Society and on himself. If there is anyone among us who brings a curse on the Society and not a blessing, we will let him go. ...

Think about the exceptionally large expenses the community incurred last year: over 140,000 francs! And if you include everything, you could say it comes to 200,000 francs! How much this comes to for each individual here! We should ask for 1,000 francs from everyone! Thus you can see what charity is required for you from the Society from the first to the last member!

How can we help? If we seek to avoid all sin and everything evil and anything that could harm the Society; if we see to it that we do not waste anything entrusted to us or given for our use; if we avoid unnecessary expenditures – and these I forbid for everyone. Furthermore, you should work as hard as you can at your post, and all actively cooperate doggedly until we are out of this pressing situation. But for now it is especially important and necessary for you to discharge your duty, and I hope you will! You must consider carefully, it is already exceptional that God has sent so many graces (money). But something must still be missing, otherwise God would be sending even more. Let everyone examine whether perhaps he is to blame for this!

1898/01/28

That which our Lord Jesus Christ so greatly wished for, that all might be one, is of the greatest importance for a religious institute, a religious family. It is vital that all should be one, unanimously joined together. You know that little things grow where there is concord, and where it is lacking great things fall apart. How often have you heard, and heard again, the need for unanimity and concord, and how often have we offended and failed in this! The one who is peaceful and united, those who are peaceful and united, build up and gather together, while those who are not peaceful and united cause disturbance, scatter, destroy! The one who is peaceful and united works to the best of his ability to keep peace and unanimity with his brothers, to make the bond of fraternal charity ever stronger, not to break it. The one who wants concord and unanimity must sacrifice his own opinions for the common good.

“Oh, how good and beautiful it is, that brothers should dwell in unity.” But where is the beauty where people do not live in concord? The ancient enemy tries to bring discord among the confreres, and he knows how to do it. If there is unity, they make progress on the road to perfection and they work for the glory of God and the salvation of souls and of the Society. This is my greatest desire, that all be one, and that you should reject any discord. It is concord which contributes most, most of all, to the glory of God and the good of souls and of the Society. Oh! How greatly do they who are not at peace contribute to harm and therefore to destruction, who by word and deed sow seeds of discord, who are not at one. Examine yourselves and see the great harm which discord brings! The one who only looks after his own interests, clings to his own judgment and only looks after himself: such a one is the enemy of concord and unanimity.

See therefore, seek the glory of God, the salvation of souls, the common good! Our Holy Father Leo XIII says well how much concord contributed to the unity of the Franciscan Order. If you read that, you will see how important it is to have concord! You are aware how much the other branches of that order achieved, and still the Pope asserted that there would have been a greater abundance of fruit if they had all been united! You know how much those holy men, the reformers, men like St. Peter of Alcantara, accomplished for God’s glory and the good of the church.² They made much progress and did much for the good of the church, and His Holiness lists the deeds of the most outstanding men of the Franciscan Order and says that their fruitfulness would have been greater if they had been very closely one! If those divisions had not taken place there would have been more fruitfulness, because virtue is effective in proportion to its unity.

Therefore, seek after concord and unanimity, agreement in everything, and flee from discord and flee [pro/per sententias]. If we are all closely bound by the single bond of fraternal charity and remain always in agreement with our superiors, we will always accomplish many great things. Oh, how many things are lost because of discord! How great and how wonderful the things that concord achieves! How much greater the things we will be able to accomplish if we have unanimity and agreement! And in eternity we will see how we have hindered great achievements by our dissent! Therefore, fulfill the desires of Our Lord; fulfill our rules and, like the apostles, have unanimity with regard to the purpose of our Society!

² The editor of the Ansprachen surmises *uti [litate]*. Perhaps more plausible: *illi sancti viri, reformatores quantum fecerint pro gloria Dei et ecclesiae, uti S. Petrus Alcantarus, quantum profecerint*. DSS XXII 1 p. 204 par. 2, ln. 8.

What is it that most of all leads to this concord? Fidelity and harmony! You know if you are faithful (I do not mean in your vocation, which I already presume) but faithful in the true sense with the head, unanimous in the Society, harmonious in the Society! And if you are not in agreement with the head, there you have discord! So then, if you wish to have concord and unanimity, be in agreement! The Most Reverend Patriarch Cassetta of Antioch said when he was here that we with our present number of members could convert the world! We achieve so much, if we are in harmony; but if we are not, this is a hindrance and the devil, the enemy, the ancient serpent, the author of discords, will rejoice and perhaps we ourselves and the souls which we ought to bring to heaven will have perished! Be faithful, be faithful, and not in a hidden way, but be openly faithful to your superiors. Be strong with your head and a blessing will be yours. How can you expect a blessing unless you are tied by a sacred bond and know that he who acts in some way against his father will not go without punishment.

1898/02/04

Why have you come? Ask yourself that question often! Why did you come, to which society did you come? What purpose did you have in mind? Read the rules carefully and you will find why you came! You came to cling to God alone! You left the world and all things so as to cling to Christ and to battle with Christ. Reflect and consider carefully how you have kept to your vocation; see how you have clung to Christ, see here how you have left the world! Your vocation is a sublime one and if one lives according to one's vocation and according to our rules, he will do great things! If you have left all things in fact and with your will you cling to Christ alone, then you will convert many to Christ, then you will achieve great things! What a great calling!

Listen to what the famous Fr. Faber said: If there are just six holy and perfect men [or women], who seek after, not the world or anything earthly, but only God's glory, they will move mountains! And what St. Chrysostom said about the apostles, that they didn't convert the world through the miracles they worked, but because they had a true contempt of fame and money. What else do we seek through our rules than what St. Chrysostom spoke about!

See therefore what you can accomplish if you live according to our rules! In those words of the famous St. Chrysostom and Fr. Faber you can ponder on your vocation. So if just six of you can say that they have left all worldly things and that they seek God's glory and live entirely according to the rules, they will move mountains! Oh, would that you would always live according to the rules of our Society and you will see how much you will accomplish for your salvation and for the glory of God!

Today especially, on a day of recollection, you must assess your vocation and see how faithful you have been to it. So if you have done the opposite you are at fault, very greatly at fault! So therefore, please consider your vocation well, to what vocation have you been called, why you have come!

Oh, how happy and blessed you will be if you keep your rule! If we do not work miracles, we will work greater miracles if we live according to the rules and the spirit of the Society! Then we will convert the world! A few are enough, if they have the spirit of the Society and live according to the rules. And if we have accomplished little so far, it is your fault, your negligence. And so, always be mindful of your vocation, your aim, our purpose, the reason why we have come! Oh, let each one ask himself every day, Why did I come? For what purpose? To which society? To what vocation? To accomplish what? Reflect and consider! What consolation you will find in this reflection! You will be stronger than the world if you are observant, and there will be a great reward for you. We will sit on thrones and we will judge peoples and we will convert the world.

If we are observant, we will do great things for the glory of God! Oh, become active! Oh, come alive! Work mightily for God's glory and the salvation of souls, in accordance with the rules, the rules of our institute. Console your father [Jordan], because here is the greatest consolation. How consoling, if I see you living and acting after the example of the apostles! Oh, read the rules often, especially about our purpose and think well on what they say and demand. And if because of circumstances we cannot always renounce in deed and in heart, let us at least renounce everything in our hearts, lest the devil find any hold in us and so that we may be free in heart and in spirit! Oh, break all the ties, no matter how difficult! O break all ties, if they

are there, so that you may leave everything and follow Christ!

I would like to remind you once more of the important mission entrusted to our Society. Reflect often on the fact that you have been called to a society whose mission is to follow the example of Christ and of the apostles by leaving everything behind as much as possible, to follow Jesus. I cited two examples for you, Faber and St. John Chrysostom. They both talk about people who leave everything, who look for nothing more than God's honor. Faber said that if there were only six such people on earth looking only for God's honor, they would move mountains. Chrysostom said that the apostles didn't convert the world through miracles but through their contempt of fame and fortune.

Therefore, if you must use temporal things, try never to depend on them. Be completely detached from them so that the devil finds nothing [inappropriate in your use of these things]. Live according to the spirit and the rule of the Society, and you will see that you will accomplish great things for God's honor and for the salvation of souls! Therefore, seek to leave everything, so far as it is allowed, and depend only on Christ. Be like the famous Faber. You will move mountains and save many souls!

Also reflect more often on the fact that your greatness, your honor, the honor of the Society, consist in being true followers of Christ and the apostles! The task of the Society is complete detachment from the world, to follow Jesus Christ and the apostles as far as that is possible for us! If you do this, then you will more easily come to know what it means to follow Jesus Christ. Then, I hope, you will win that solace and inner joy which the children of this world are denied! Just do this and you will achieve it soon.

Break all bonds which still tie you to this world, to earthly things, and fight bravely under his banners and for his sake.

1898/02/11

de diebus carnevalis, “concerning carnival season”

During these coming days we must be very greatly inflamed with zeal for souls and with hatred towards the ancient enemy. We are soldiers of Christ, called to fight with Jesus Christ against Lucifer, against Lucifer’s army. Especially during these days he is going around to slay immortal souls! For us, these days are the strongest spur to struggle against the enemy of immortal souls. Let us remember that in these days especially we are called to a spiritual struggle under the standard of Christ against the enemies of salvation, against Lucifer and his followers. And how can we fight, how can we attack this enemy?

I especially commend to you great faith, hope and charity, and a renewal of your vocation; to be careful in observance, to struggle against the passions, to make acts of humility and confidence in God. If soldiers catch sight of their enemy, how they will kill their brothers, how they become inflamed and alive with hatred. We who are called under the standard of our supreme leader, we who during these days see so many souls perishing, so many souls being slain by our enemies – immortal souls whom we are called to save – let us be fired then with zeal for immortal souls. And let us be on fire to wage a holy war and battle against their enemy, especially renewing our observance of the rules, being urgent in prayer, making frequent acts of humility and striving to have the greatest humility!

Our enemies fear this very much, they fear good works, they fear humility, they fear observance of the rule. Cast arrows at our enemies by your works of humility, doing good works for God’s glory and the salvation of souls, sanctifying yourselves, especially opposing your

passions. Our arrows are our good works done for the glory of God and the salvation of souls! Oh, fight against the enemy, do not cease to assault him with acts of humility, devotion and prayer! How greatly soldiers are inflamed with zeal when they sight their enemy: how can it be that we who are soldiers of Christ the Supreme Leader should be surpassed in zeal by them? Should not we be fired with zeal more than they? Charge! Soldiers of Christ fighting against the enemy. Trample Lucifer's head! Let us engage with the ancient serpent. Do not fail in this battle. I commend to you St. Ignatius [of Loyola's] parable of the two armies.

Meditate frequently on the army of Christ and on the devil's army, if you have in you a fervent zeal for souls! Therefore, fight with great faith, with fidelity, great trust, with your vocation, with the greatest humility! Oh, if you knew how the enemy fears the free exercise of humility, you would willingly, most willingly, practice it! Let each and everyone perceive how our enemies fear virtuous acts of faith, devotion, trust, observance, patience – then how willingly all of you would perform acts of this kind! Therefore, cast your weapons against your foe, and by your prayers save the souls which he wishes to destroy, and be set on fire with greater zeal. You will find weapons in the rules: grasp them! Fight bravely with them, soldier of Christ! Live according to the rules and you will win victory in the Lord!

Particularly in these days [of carnival] when the hellish enemy with his retinue and under his flag the whole flock of hellish spirits prepares so much disaster, kills so many souls, destroys so much innocence, in these days, I say we must be especially inflamed by holy zeal and remind ourselves of our vocation. We are enlisted as soldiers of Christ to fight under the banner of Jesus Christ, especially in these days, when [the devil] uses more of his strength

to prepare disaster. And it is our duty to pull together to fight by suppressing the passions and by practicing good works, by [religious] observance, and especially by what the enemy fears most: purity of heart, firmness of faith, and humility.

In these days remember your holy vocation and consider yourselves soldiers of Jesus Christ, enlisted and rallied under the flag of Jesus Christ. And in these days when you see the enemy killing so many souls, if any zeal remains in you, you must be inflamed, I say not only now but your whole life long. *Vocationis vestrae memores estote.* “Remember your calling!” Remember that you are a soldier of Jesus Christ summoned to fight! *Pugnate usque ad mortem, et Deus dabit victoriam!* “Fight to the death, and God will give the victory!” Fight and struggle! Kill the passions through zealous, humble prayer. Especially in these days, through acts of faith, hope and love of God, never stop asking to attain great trust, which you can achieve if you strive for purity of heart. And as you know, if you are not striving to attain purity of heart, you will lack proper trust as well. You can't expect to have trust in God if you are always offending God! Therefore, by zealously observing your duties toward God, seek to become acceptable, and have great, strong trust!

1898/02/18

That we may labor most fruitfully in the Lord's vineyard it is necessary for us to have a great faith, because faith is the root and foundation of all the virtues. In everything let us be ruled by faith, and let all the works of our Society be governed by faith! Be strong in faith, the Apostle [St. Paul] says. For you to do great things in the Lord's vineyard, let us be strong in faith and fight against the ancient serpent!

It is essential that we have a great faith, especially in our own times. We must believe what Christ, the Son of God, has said, whatever the Holy Roman Church has proposed for our belief. We must firmly hold to our faith, and how must we do it? First of all, we must firmly believe whatever Christ and the Holy Roman Church puts before us for our belief, always and everywhere. Secondly, we must have faith: let us pray that God will increase our faith. Thirdly, let us be enlivened, let our thoughts and actions be enlivened, and let us be directed in every case in accordance with the truth, with the teaching of Christ. Let us practice our faith. For example, if we see a poor person and a rich one, what does faith suggest to us here? Even an insignificant poor person has an immortal soul for whom Our Lord suffered greatly and poured out his most precious blood; and the lowliest human being has an immortal soul and a guardian angel! As St. Catherine says, his soul is so precious that we should die a hundred times, to save a single soul!

And then, what does it tell us if we are troubled by illnesses, if we sustain some other inconvenience, we should always praise God. And if difficulties, troubles and seemingly insuperable obstacles come to us, we should remember that Our Lord governs the world: he governs us and if we trust in him, he will help us. Let us believe in the truth, let

us live according to our teaching, let us give testimony in accordance with the teaching of Christ.

It is especially important for us as apostolic workers to be completely firm in our faith, to hold firmly to the holy church, to everything Christ and the church teach, and to reject everything contrary to this. It is important in our prayer, in our actions, in our endeavors and labors, in our sufferings, that we should be thoroughly animated by this faith, and thus make it an integral part of ourselves. For example, when we see the destitute, the most abandoned, lowest person, that we see in him an immortal soul for whom Christ died and shed his blood – whose beauty is so great that St. Catherine said she would gladly die a hundred times to rescue just one! So let us look and see that each human being is an image of God!

Let's look at everything from the right perspective, and interpret in the light of faith such things as abandonment, wealth, honor, etc. And remember that we are particularly called to live according to faith and to the principles and perspective of faith, and that the effectiveness of our subsequent actions and endeavors flows from that faith. You can be sure that a preacher who lets himself be guided by the light of faith will accomplish much more than the one who wants to demonstrate things through teachings and science and philosophy.

Become men of faith, solid and unshakable in the true belief. Remain men of the holy church! If you live from faith you will also look quite differently at events that come your way. You will trust in God and will be simply doing your duty as you should, and leave the rest to God. Accordingly, I admonish you, whatever may come

your way, even if it may seem wholly disadvantageous, simply desire to fulfill your duty. Cast all your cares on the Lord and soon you will discover that the Lord directs things to the best outcome!

Trust in the Lord! Believe in Divine Providence! Ah, when in old age you look back on some disturbing past events and compare how sadly you received them with how you later saw that God directed everything to your best advantage, ah, then you will judge things quite differently!

Live as men of faith. Become quite solid and strong in faith. Pray that our Society never embraces erroneous doctrines; that teachings against the church never creep in; that we always hold to the church's teachings and let ourselves be guided by her; that our actions and our effectiveness flow from faith! Oh, may we be rooted firmly in faith! May the storms strengthen us as they strengthen the roots of a tree! May we be firm and unshakable in faith and always remain so!

You should ground your outlook on faith and not on public opinion. The world often judges quite incorrectly! See how two people examine the same object – how different are the judgments of an unbeliever compared to a faithful Christian! Live from faith! Then you will also judge differently. When you must obey a superior, if you view him as God's representative, then you will obey gladly and joyfully. If, however, you do not live by faith, how difficult it will be for you to obey a superior!

Train your faith more and more! How many opportunities there are to practice it! If you do this you will discover what happiness faith gives you. How happily, how easily you will work. How easily

you will excel in observance if you are completely penetrated by faith and live completely by faith! May God grant that you all live by faith and appraise things wholly by faith. Oh, and how very much you will respect your confreres if you consider what a single immortal soul is; how very much you will respect a person consecrated to God – a priest! Look at a priest in the light of faith. There you can linger in contemplation for days. Then you will recognize the value of living by faith!

1898/02/25

We said last time that faith is the root and foundation of all the virtues. We must judge things, not according to their appearance, but how as they are in God's eyes. We must always have faith, I say, a firm and uncorrupted faith, to believe in what we ought to believe: whatever Christ and whatever holy mother church proposes for our belief. Hope comes from faith! We must have great faith, and without great faith we cannot have hope, or confidence in God, or hope in the Lord!

One must be diffident about oneself and not have confidence in one's own capacity, but one must place the greatest hope in God. Those who trust only in their own powers will accomplish nothing great for the glory of God. We must trust in divine providence, as an infant does its nurse, we must trust in the Lord in all things. The one who has trust will not fall, and the one who puts all his trust in the Lord will have the Lord on his side. How many times you have heard and read in the scriptures of what is promised to those who have hope. They have hoped in Me, they have hoped in the Lord, they will not be confounded. "In you, O Lord, have I hoped, I will not be put to shame." "Because he hoped in me, I will set him free: I will protect him because he has known my name."

Oh, how often have you found hope in the holy writings! Oh hope, which in the words of St. Justinianus is "rest in toil, coolness in heat, consolation in sorrow." But surely we must not tempt God. Act in accordance with your hopes in the Lord. If you do not do what you should do, if you neglect to do what you should, you cannot have hope; if you offend God, how can you have hope in him? We must do what we ought to do, and let us hope in the Lord! So let us not

trust in ourselves, not have trust or hope in princes, but hope in the Lord! He will help us. He himself will protect us! As far as possible let us imitate the faith and hope of those who excelled in those virtues, for example Cotelengo. How great was his faith and hope, and how much he accomplished because of this! Have hope even in difficulties and in problems; if you are bereft of human resources, put all your hope in the Lord. You must toil and work and hope in the Lord. He will help us and free us. But do not trust, have no trust in your own strength, in your own abilities. So, let us be men of faith, of trust, if we want to accomplish great things. It is essential to have faith and very great hope.

Look to those great figures in the church, how much they accomplished, what great hope they had: how they faced tasks which seemed insuperable. They were filled with the greatest confidence and by God's grace they overcame. Imitate them, and think often of their example, and especially of their deeds. Are they not all great people, who accomplished so much in the church, those who flourished and who were leaders in the New and in the Old Testaments – Abraham, Moses, they strove their hardest with very great hope and trust in the Lord! How I wish their example would come alive in us as far as is possible! Pray that faith and hope may be enkindled in you. Do not think that you will achieve great things in the Lord's vineyard if you do not have great faith!

Remember how you should have great, pure faith, and how you should be men of faith! If you want to accomplish great things you should also have great trust, great hope in the Lord! Hope originates from faith, and if you want to accomplish great things – mighty deeds for God's honor and the salvation of souls – oh, you must have great trust and great, powerful faith!

Review often the examples found in sacred scripture and church history! Imitate their faith, hope and trust! What firm confidence these people had to undertake such great projects, which others abandoned and derided. Even though people pointed out the impossibility of their undertakings, they succeeded. They accomplished great things! Ah! Let us imitate those who preceded us in the church, through great trust and great faith! St. Justinian says that hope should be peace in our labors, refreshment in the heat, and solace in our mourning. And how easy it is to endure everything if you are filled with great trust! Look at people like Cottolengo and, ... how they trusted in the Lord and how the Lord disgraced their opponents and detractors. And look at many others, what deeds they accomplished, what trust they had, and how the Lord rewarded them!

Trust in the Lord. Trust in Providence: *Quis est, qui speravit in Domino et confusus est?* “Who has ever trusted in God and been confounded?” Don’t trust in yourself or in human aid. Don’t trust in princes or influential people. Trust in God! But how can you have great trust in God? If in your work you want to have great trust in God, then above all do your duty! How can you have great trust in God if you don’t fulfill the duties of your vocation? How can you hope if you don’t live in accordance with your position and instead jump into big projects following your own will? How can you have trust in the Lord there? So, do your duty and cast all your worries on the Lord. He will help you and rescue you!

If you do your duty, then fear neither the waves that may crash over you, nor prosecutions on all sides, come what may! Trust in the Lord and go forward. Do your duty and you will see that the Lord will help you. It is unworthy for an apostolic religious and

confrere of our Society not to walk the straight path! Let us trust in the Lord and do our duty. Walk in the Lord and he will protect us!

1898/03/04

Our Lord Jesus Christ says: "Whoever wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." And our rule tells us that we must follow Christ through the faithful imitation and following of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World! Let us who have been called deny ourselves, particularly in our holy seasons of Lent. And although for certain reasons the Holy Father has this year given a dispensation from fasting, we should still practice mortification!

Especially let us practice perfect mortification by our obedience towards all superiors, obedience in will and in execution: that is the practice of mortification! Then let us practice abnegation of our will. Be perfectly observant, keeping each and every rule and constitution! Oh, that is excellent practice of mortification! Thirdly, mortify yourselves by humiliations, especially doing those things which are customary to us, such as begging the prayers of the confreres, kissing the ground and other such. Fourthly, deny yourselves of something nice, out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ. Fifthly, do penance! It is erroneous to think that the hair shirt and other such penances are forbidden in our Society. Anyone moved by the Spirit may use them, always with the advice of spiritual director or superior.

However, I command each and everyone not to use these practices without the advice of spiritual director or the superior! If penances of this kind are imprudent they do more harm than good, and sometimes lead to perdition! So that they may lead to perfection, ask and consult your confessor or spiritual director. But they are not forbidden. Quite the contrary. But let them be used well, used according to God's will. So, get advice about more serious penances. It is necessary to consult one's confessor or superior and spiritual director. Sometimes, for

some, there is a danger not only to the body, but also to the soul. Sixthly, mortify yourselves by putting up with opposition, weaknesses, persecution, calumny and other such things, especially in this time of Lent.

Diligently observe mortification and deny yourselves, remembering what Our Lord Jesus Christ says: "Whoever would follow me, should deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." And we who wish to follow the Lord Jesus should mortify ourselves. This applies in relation to the rules, because all the rules apply (not only in the house but also outside) as far as is possible, always and everywhere. Also article 6 [of the constitutions] applies always outside the house, that is, "Smoking is not allowed." Therefore it is a breach of the rule if someone is with outsiders outside the community and for whatever reason smokes or uses tobacco. This is for your guidance, in case anyone says otherwise. Therefore the law applies everywhere and always. If, however, there are legitimate reasons the superior will give a dispensation. This is the case in India, for example, and in some other places where this rule cannot easily be kept. But this dispensation is not granted in Italy or in Germany. Therefore, mortify yourselves by your obedience, by your observance, by humiliations, by giving up something enjoyable, by penances (with advice of the superior), by patiently accepting opposition, humiliations, sickness, calumnies and other things.

This holy Lent observe and especially cultivate mortification. Strive for what the Divine Savior says: "Whoever wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me!"

We who are called in a very special way to follow the dear Savior, let us practice mortification. Let us do this especially through

prompt obedience to superiors, to prefects, and to all who must direct us, and to whom we are subject. Let us practice mortification through prompt observance of the rules and constitutions. Let us further exercise mortification and self-mastery through humiliations and penances such as we practice them in the Society! And let us not be shamed! Furthermore, let us out of love for God withhold something from ourselves which is allowed, something we would be glad to have.

And let us practice greater works of penance, albeit with the consent of our confessor and of the superior! Among these greater penances is the *cilicium* [hair shirt] which no one is advised to use without asking one's confessor or spiritual director because it can harm not only the body but also the soul. However, no one should think that its use is prohibited in our Society – just the opposite. Whoever feels himself urged on by the spirit of God should use it.

Furthermore, especially this Lent let us practice mortification through patient endurance of disagreeable things – sicknesses, sufferings, humiliations, slanders, and whatever we will encounter. And if for special reasons fasting has been dispensed with, then practice mortification in other ways. One such example is through strict observance of all the rules and constitutions; because observance is certainly a mortification, and God will especially reward those who act out of obedience.

1898/03/11

Let us celebrate tomorrow the feast of St. Gregory; through it may we be reminded of our apostolic vocation. We know that although St. Gregory suffered ill health, he accomplished such great things for the salvation of souls. In this way we who are called not just for our own salvation but for that of others, are reminded of our calling.

Would that each and every one would rise up, as others have done, as a blazing fire and with words like torches. Would that each and every one, in proportion to his task and his ability, may be able to say at life's end: "I have made your Name known, I have glorified you on earth." May we all be able to say at the end of our lives: "I have made your Name known. We have worked, we have striven in our vocation that all may know the true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent!"

Our vocation is to strive that all come to know the true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Our preaching should be as though we have come from on high, like angels descending from heaven. Indeed let us arouse and excite all peoples, all those who are asleep, as the angels summon the dead to judgment by the trumpet. A sublime vocation, what a sublime vocation is the apostolic vocation! And we are called to save souls. How I wish, therefore, that each one, toiling according to his ability, would fulfill his vocation in every way possible. Let us avoid everything that is not in keeping with our vocation. And indeed we can easily stray from the path which leads us directly to the attainment of our purpose of bringing heavenly tidings, of being angelic messengers from heaven. Your life must be in Christ.

Our apostolate must in the first place be our example because, as you know, example attracts, and you will prevail and succeed more

by your example than by your words. St. Gregory expressed it very well, as you heard in the reading today. St. Gregory says something which those who are aspiring to the priesthood must understand well and think upon: that we must be the salt of the earth. If we are salt, we must season the souls of the faithful. You, therefore, who are pastors, consider that you are feeding God's flock! We are not the salt of the earth if we do not season the souls of those who listen to us. This seasoning a pastor genuinely provides for his neighbor if he does [not] leave him without the word of God being preached to him. But then we also rightly preach to others, when we show our words by deeds and by example. My dearest brothers, I think that God will be more demanding in judgment of priests than of anyone else, when he sees that those whom He has sent to correct others are themselves giving examples of wickedness; when we, the people who should overcome sin, sin ourselves; [when] we do not try to win souls, but take a holiday from our daily study, desire earthly things, and eagerly reach out for human glory.

And by the very fact that we are in charge of others, we have greater freedom to do certain things, we [risk] turning the blessed ministry which we have received in the direction of our own ambition. "We abandon God's cause, we spend our time on worldly business. We took on a task of holiness, and we are taken up with worldly doings." Let us preach, therefore, by our example, our words and our deeds! Take care that what can happen easily in our own times does not happen to you, that is to slip from the right way, abandoning the right way to reach our goal. How I wish that everyone, as far as is possible, would strive directly to preach and to glorify God! Each one who is a priest is warned that by his example, his words and his writings, he should preach and act so as to follow the example of Jesus Christ. Whoever is not [yet] a priest should use all suitable means and form

himself so that when the opportunity comes he will be able to preach robustly and efficaciously. And, as I have often said already, it is most of all necessary to preach first by example, then with words!

By example first, then with words, because example attracts, and even those who cannot preach can still by their words and deeds preach and accomplish great things. The pastor of some church, how can he set his people on fire if he does not preach by example? You must preach all the time, first by example then by your words. If the example [you give] contradicts the words, how can you accomplish anything?

And let the brothers not forget that they contribute to the apostolate through humbly and patiently collaborating to God's honor with those who are called *evangelicare praedicare confessiones audire*, "to proclaim the gospel, to preach, and to hear confessions." May you always perform your work with good will, devoted to God in humility and patience. Never think that you accomplish less. Be confident that through good intention, through your hidden work, many great things are happening; and that you advance much more safely, exposed to many fewer temptations than the one in the pulpit. He is perhaps exposed to great temptations and runs headlong into dangers, like preachers who, after preaching to others, needed to hear the same sermon themselves, or who, as one great man said, after opening heaven for others, unlock hell for themselves. So let the brothers with their holy vocations collaborate through their prayer and their works, mindful that they are exposed to many fewer temptations and have many fewer responsibilities than priests and clerics. May you at all times work in such a way that you spread the word of God as much as possible, because exactly through your labors, you accomplish so much! Therefore, all of you, including the brothers, should do your duty

according to your position and abilities. And if we all work together, oh, how much we can do!

However, let us consider the needs of the world. In the single prefecture of Assam which is entrusted to us with its population of more than 7,000,000, each hour 30-40 people die without baptism, departing this life without the only true faith. And then consider how many [such souls] there are throughout the world, near and far! How much good we could do. So, forward! First through good example, and then through preaching.

1898/03/18

For good preparation it helps greatly that we should frequently check on ourselves with regard to our observance, with regard to our life, with regard to the rule. Let us look at our rules and constitutions and we will see how our religious life stands. Let us ask ourselves how we have observed holy poverty, whether we observe it as the foundation of the Society, whether we are free of earthly things, or do we cling to created things; how do we keep poverty in relation to our use of things, whether in our rooms or on our desks. Let us consider whether we possess this or that item with the superior's permission or not, because we must give an account of each thing. Examine your rooms and desks; scrutinize everything, so that your guardian angel could visit you [unashamed]. Examine everything you have for your use.

Then you can examine whether you are thrifty in your observance, whether we waste things, or lose them or destroy them; whether we try to the best of our ability to preserve things and work for the Society as best we can, or not.

Then, as regards the vow of chastity, whether we avoid the occasions of sinning against chastity. I especially recommend to you those three articles of this chapter, not only here in the religious house but much more if you are engaged in the outside apostolate, because if one article is neglected, even if without sin, it could lead to your ruin.

As regards obedience, [examine] whether we obey always in mind, in will, and in deed. Judge first of all how you stand as regards fulfilling the commands of the superior, or as regards doing his will. Would

that you would all know how harmful it is to make excuses. They end up harming you, and at the very least they lessen the superior's confidence in you, because superiors know well whether someone has a genuine reason from being excused or just a pretext. This does not just hold for the Society, but also in relation to any ecclesiastical superior. Know that if anyone, especially a superior, finds [you fabricating] a pretext, you will not win confidence. Obey perfectly, therefore, with your mind, your will, and your deeds. As regards the Divine Office, consider whether you always fulfilled this obligation, or whether you were absent without the superior's permission.

Examine whether you prayed the Office with attention and devotion. Carry out what is holy in a holy manner: the one who recites the Office in a careless manner recites it badly. As regards the spiritual exercises: [examine] whether you make your meditation, visits to the Blessed Sacrament and whether you give to each of these exercises the time allotted to them. As regards Confession, [examine] whether you are faithful to it in accordance with the rule; as regards the apostolate, recall whether you were always mindful of your vocation, or did you perhaps slide into secular and profane activities rather than apostolic ones. In connection with discipline, whether there were particular friendships, aversions or disruptions; whether you showed due reverence to others, because one can sin against charity in this area too. We must show due reverence to all.

As regards your conversation, [examine] whether you were always true religious, or were you perhaps scattered, undisciplined and not mortified in your conversation, in your moving, in your talk, in your acting and in your deeds. Be mortified in everything! What a sad thing it is, and how scandalous, to see an unmortified religious.

As regards silence, especially in the refectory, on the stairs and in other places where talking is forbidden and where the silentium strictissimum holds: consider and examine, each one for his own office, whether you observe every rule or not. And if something is lacking, correct it as quickly as possible. This way all will be joyful and straightened out for the paschal feast. Use this holy time for correction. First the defect must be known; one who does not know his faults, cannot correct them. Examine [yourself] therefore, and let each consider in relation to his own office, in what ways he has been lacking. Think about this for your own good and for the good of the Society and of holy church.

Especially use this time of [Lenten] preparation to examine in detail how you have observed the holy rule thus far: whether you have lived up to your vocation particularly as regards holy poverty – whether you own or use anything without permission; whether you are inordinately attached to this or that. Concerning chastity and obedience, and concerning your spiritual exercises, whether in everything you fulfill the obligations. Remember that great damage arises from not holding to these – in fact you can perish. So hold fast to observance, all of you without exception! Then you will see that God's blessing will come down upon each and every one of you!

Experience will show you that obedience is rewarded by God. It doesn't matter very much what a particular rule is for, only that you observe it well. And even if one rule applies today and another one arrives tomorrow, cling to it. Everything depends on observing the rule! Some societies have the most splendid rules. Nevertheless, they do not flourish because their rule is not observed. If it were simply a matter of having rule, these would be the biggest, most

splendid institutes! Be assured, progress depends on observance! Therefore, take care to observe the rules strictly and exactly. And don't think this or that could be organized better. Observe them exactly and think always of what I told you: it is not the order that has the best rules that will achieve the greatest things, but the order whose members observe its rule the best!

1898/04/01

Do everything with a right intention! Oh, how important it is always to act and to do things with the right intention. What a difference there is between the one who acts with a right intention and the one who acts with a bad one. The former gathers treasure for heaven; the latter gathers and prepares himself for fire. Would that you all, in whatever you do, would always act with the right intention. And so, compose a good intention frequently throughout the day, whether you are eating or drinking, or whatever else you may be doing. Do everything for God's glory! "Not to us, Lord, not to us, but give the glory to your Name." "To the immortal and invisible King of the Ages, to God alone be glory for ever and ever!"

What a difference there is between the one who has a good intention and the one who has a bad one! Here are the two: one accomplishes splendid things and wins praise, he is honored by people; the other acts in hidden way and lays up great treasures for himself. Always act with a good intention, therefore, so as to have treasure in heaven; never act with a bad intention. What great and splendid treasures you can harvest if you do all your deeds and works with a right intention. Do everything for God's glory. Do not act or do things so as to be seen by men [and women] and be praised by others: otherwise you have received your reward. How I wish you would all consider how beneficial it is always to have the right intention. Do not neglect making constant progress!

Then, that person has a good intention who acts for God, who does things for God's glory. That one has confidence and trust in God. Look at the person who places his confidence in people: he accomplishes a lot but see how his spirit fails if people abandon him,

if difficulties arise. But if one acts with a good intention, he is working for God and he will take refuge in God. Therefore, whoever is correct in his intention and actions will have trust and confidence and he will be helped by God.

Always work with the right intention; never do anything with a bad intention. Do things for the glory of God! I will act for God's glory, for You, for You I have persevered, I have done everything for love of You. Let each one examine himself frequently as to what intention motivates his actions. If difficulties and adversities arise, then it soon becomes clear whether his intention is very pure. Always, therefore, have a pure and right intention and you will be strong. If you have this right intention you will accomplish great things, you will have great confidence in God. And whoever has confidence in God will be helped by Him.

Today especially I recommend that you always work with a good intention. Do everything to God's honor. Do it with a good intention, and do nothing with a bad intention!

“Everything you do, eating or drinking or whatever, do all to God's honor!” What a big difference there is between the one who does everything with a good intention and the one who doesn't. One piles up treasures for eternity, while the other gains nothing. And most important, those who live and work with a good intention have this advantage: they easily trust in God. Those who trust in God will never go to ruin! Therefore, you must always have a good intention! So, trust and hope in heaven!

Be conscious of these opportunities ... how precious they are, and especially of this good intention which on the day of judgment

will be a great consolation for you! On the day of judgment how different your judgment will be from ordinary people. Perhaps those whose works were respected and whom the world lionized, if they never had a good intention, perhaps they will hear that they have already received their reward from people. And another who was hidden, disdained and despised in the eyes of people, but whose work was done with a good intention and who performed everything to God's honor, he will reap a rich reward.

Let us work, suffer and endure everything for God's honor. Beware of being motivated by bad intentions! Everyone has had the experience of doing this or that with a good intention but receiving in return all manner of suspicion, opposition, and slander. Ah, then he feels so impelled to take refuge in God. “See Lord, I worked for you!” With true trust he will take recourse in God and, be assured, he won't be disgraced! Therefore, good intention and trust! Remember this your whole life long: no action is ever insignificant. Sanctify them all through good intention!

1898/04/08
Good Friday

The memory of the suffering and death of our Divine Savior Jesus Christ is and should be for us a powerful incentive to live up to our holy vocations, particularly to live as observant religious, and to strive to become useful instruments for the salvation of souls. When we see how God's Son died for us, if we see the worth of a soul, if we see what God's Son does for human souls, ah, how motivated we must feel to work for immortal souls! If we penetrate more deeply the worth of one soul!

Let us consider that God's Son died for us, that he died for the people. And let us consider also the words of St. Catherine of Siena: if we would see the beauty of a single soul, we would gladly be ready to die a thousand times to rescue one. What beauty and grandeur the soul must possess! Therefore, what a great enterprise it is for us to work to rescue souls.

Let us consider what the God-man suffered for souls. And we, we who are called through his mercy to rescue and lead souls back to him, should we not live up to this vocation? Let us consider our culpability if we fail to follow this vocation, our vocation. I would also like to say, everyone who is called to work in the Society who does not serve this purpose but the opposite: oh, that you would never have been called!

Let us consider our responsibility if we were called yet do not follow this vocation! Let us analyze, especially in this holy time, whether we really try to save souls in accordance with our vocation, making ourselves useful tools in God's hands, whether we used

everything to God's honor and the salvation of souls. Oh, how much a single individual can do through sufferings and persistent effort. But how much also a single individual can obstruct!

Resolve to follow your vocation faithfully so that we never need to say: *Utinam non esset vocatus! Melius esset si non esset vocatus!* "Would that he had never been called! It would have been better if he were never called!" It should make us recall the suffering and death of Christ, and motivate us, spur us on to rescue souls according to our purpose, to God's honor, following the holy rule!

Ah, how many souls we could lead into heaven! It may be that the salvation of so many is tied to our works and sufferings! So we must do as much as we can – I would go so far as to say, even if we have to die a thousand times for one single soul. Use every means to rescue souls: work, suffer, endure, obey! In particular, be observant! In eternity you will see things quite differently, and once you grasp the value of one immortal soul and see what the God-man did and suffered for them, you will be completely committed to work and suffer for the salvation of souls.

I am convinced – my heart often tells me – that our Society, if you conform to God's will, will win many souls for heaven (and woe to us if we don't). You also know how much good can be obstructed. And we, everyone at his place, must admit that we have all stood in the way, more or less. Having made this confession, in the future let us strive and work and suffer together, and so accomplish the mission of the Society! I believe the Society could have thousands and thousands of priests working for the salvation of souls in the not too distant future, if only we would perform our duty fully and completely! But, oh, let us never look for ourselves or for our own honor!

God became a human being for us to redeem us, to rescue our souls. Therefore, let us seek only the honor of God and the salvation of souls. Let us do this in every way possible! Let us not be deterred by any cross, by any discouragement, any suspicion, any persecution, ingratitude, invective, or anything! But remember, if you work for the salvation of souls, if you follow the God-man in this, you will receive more or less the same lot as the dear Savior!

Therefore, I admonish you not to inflict anything on your confrere. Yet if some such injury comes your way rejoice as much as possible and do not slacken in your suffering and efforts! As much as you can, hold together! May the dear Savior who died for us today, reward you with the love of souls; may he open your eyes to recognize what one single soul is worth, strengthen you in suffering, strengthen your trust, and strengthen you in temptations!

In various circumstances try to recall: “this is my task: to do the will of the One who sent me!” To what are you called? You are called to rescue souls! Ah, that each one of you might be able to say in the end: “I achieved the goal!” Consider the remark of St. Paul: “Woe to me!” Yes, woe to us also if we do not preach through word and example! Shame on us if we are called to such an exalted task and do not conform to our duty! Therefore, use all means to live up to your vocation so that it need never be said about one of us: *Utinam non esset vocatus!* “Would that he had never been called!”

1898/04/15

Prohibentur in nostra societate omnes res pretiosae, etiamsi solum videantur esse pretiosae, nisi quae, ad cultum Divinum spectant. “In our Society every costly thing is prohibited, even if it only appears costly, unless it is connected with divine worship.” It is especially important that we not only observe the vow of holy poverty but also that [we observe the style of] poverty which really distinguishes religious, and which becomes all too lax over the course of time!

Today, therefore, I would especially like to stress this rule to you and to explain it so that in the future you can more easily avoid deviations. I have for a long time considered the question of chains, watch fobs, etc. Now I have decided not to allow these in the Society! I cannot explain all the reasons to you, but be assured that God’s will, God’s honor, demands this! If we don’t establish this boundary it would be easy for things to degenerate! Therefore, regarding watches, if they are not too expensive (though made of precious metal) you may use and carry them. However, you are never allowed to carry gold watches, never ever! The same goes for individual parts made of gold. On the contrary, a watch, as it is used in ordinary life, may be allowed to individual superiors, administrators and prefects. Instead of a watch chain, a strong string of wool (and *not* of silk) will serve, since that is especially fitting for a religious! I ask you, if any such chain should be found among you – though I never expressly prohibited *Petersketten*³ chains. In and of itself I have nothing against wearing *Petersketten*; but in view of the [appearance it gives of the] Society, you can no longer wear one. For it always

³ It is not completely clear what this expression means, but it does refer to a watch chain.

happens that you start with a [simple] *Petersketten* and end with a silver one! Therefore, use a string; that should be decent, fitting for a simple, poor religious.

It is the same with many other things. The world is so rich in inventions, in modern gadgets, and how easily this can lead to deviations in a religious house! Certain boundaries must be maintained, especially so that one doesn't follow this principle: what lasts longest and is most practical must be gotten! As soon as you apply this principle you are already deviating. Then you will buy for yourself costly instruments, the best quality of fabrics, etc. Therefore, this is not allowed! It is difficult to specify exactly in individual cases, whether this or that is better or more in keeping with poverty. But in general be careful about new inventions. One must ask advice in individual cases! I'm not saying that we exclude them all, but we do not follow the principle that we must have, or must surely allow, whatever lasts the longest and is most practical.

Today I come to speak of another point of great significance for us, for the individual, the community, and also for superiors. First, I would like to recall the important saying: *Non progredi est regredi!* "Not to progress is to regress!" I would like to admonish you, *ne incipiatis a via perfectionis in munere sacerdotii declinare...* "do not start to slip back from the way of perfection in [your] priestly ministry...." This is a terrible truth! Therefore, the seminarian, the professed member, should stride forward all the way to the grave and never think that when you are priests sitting on high you should strive less – oh, then strive much more! [Now from Latin] *How many aspects of the priesthood there are which spur us to make progress on the way of perfection; oh, what great aspects of priesthood there are, that each one should give himself more earnestly to the*

search for perfection! And what if you begin to fall away in that search? Oh, how many priests have fallen headlong into the abyss, how many they are! How many scandals there have been in the church because of this, starting from Judas Iscariot and up to the present time. If you who are honored with the priesthood do not make progressBe fearful, be fearful, if you have not responded to so many graces. What a great responsibility you have! If you are not always making progress in perfection you begin to fall away in zeal for it.

Oh, I ask you all, from the beginning of novitiate all the way to the grave, stride forward! Never consider the priesthood the apex of your striving, so that when you are in the priesthood *you begin to slide, and perhaps even slide as far as hell, because not to progress is to regress. If God rouses one from the sleep of sin, there is salvation; but maybe the sinner will go on sleeping right up to death. There is reason for fear, reason for fear if a priest begins to slacken in his wish for perfection. Let each one examine himself, whether he is making progress or not.*

Oh I ask you, I beg and implore you, move forward. Show that you strive for perfection more and more, and most of all when you arrive at the priesthood *incipiatis celerius progredi*, "may you begin even more rapid progress." *What right have you not to make progress? The failure of a priest is the worst of all! If a priest, a religious, begins to fall away from the search for perfection, it will be a bad failure; and things will get worse by the day. See the scandals in the church in our time, in our community, look, look at others, are they not almost all priests and religious who have given such great scandal! Always advance in perfection, therefore, right until death. If one is ordained to the priesthood, he must be more diligent in meditation, in prayer, in administration, in celebrating Mass, in communicating, in everything!*

It is the same with brothers. There is always a danger that one starts well in novitiate, full of eagerness, and that just after profession he continues to show zeal for making progress. But as they say, once he is “all set up” he immediately starts to be less perfect. This [continual striving for holiness] is not only a great obligation for priests: no, this is also true for brothers! If you remember the many graces, the holy sacraments, the instruction, the vigilance of the superiors, and if you nevertheless don’t move forward, do you think you have not incurred a heavy responsibility for all this? You who are dedicated to God through your holy vows, do you believe that you don’t incur a great responsibility for these many graces? Do you believe that you easily go astray if you become indifferent in this matter? You who so often received Holy Communion! So search your soul conscientiously to see whether you are striving for perfection more and more from the day of your profession onward; and consider that as you grow older you will have many temptations you don’t have today when you are young. Woe to you if you don’t strive for perfection!

Therefore, I admonish you all, *imprimis clericos et sacerdotes* “first of all clerics and priests” and then also the brothers, always to strive for perfection until your last breath! Never let up, and tremble! Consider, especially when receiving the sacraments more frequently, how easily God’s punishing hand can intervene! Therefore, strive continually for perfection. And if you make a mistake, get up again immediately. Never become indifferent to the holy sacraments, especially to the Holy Eucharist where the God-man lives among us! Oh, think about what you do, and always strive for holiness!

1898/04/29

The month of May begins tomorrow, offering us the opportunity to pray for the needs of our Society and for our individual needs! Among other needs, you should especially ask our heavenly mother to beseech God to maintain zeal for souls within each of us. Truly we are called to work for the salvation of souls. But how can we who are called accomplish this if we have no zeal!

Reflect on this. Look at people through the centuries, how much they accomplished through zeal for souls. Take them as models. Remember what the dear Savior himself did to save souls! Consider what the holy apostles, particularly St. Paul did to save souls, and on up through all the centuries! Consider the zeal that filled St. Francis Xavier and so many others! Therefore, you must have zeal for souls and you must not forget the words of St. Catherine of Siena whose feast we will celebrate tomorrow! She says that if we saw the beauty of a single soul, we would gladly die a thousand times to rescue it.

Therefore, zeal for souls! And how should we develop zeal for souls in ourselves? We should become salt of the earth, *sal terrae, lux mundi*; “light of the world.” We should excel in holiness and learning. So never neglect these two means. Oh! Let us strive for holiness through conscientious compliance with the holy rule, and continual attention to the duties of our vocation. Never relax in striving for holiness! And at the same time, never neglect learning even if the circumstances are such that you cannot achieve what you could have under better circumstances. Ah, don’t conclude from this that learning is somehow unnecessary.

I especially recommend theology to you, the sacred science. Study theology conscientiously and well. And once you are priests don't let up. Study your whole life! You must also be *ignis*, "fire." And if you are not salt of the earth, neither will you be *lux mundi!* Ah, Providence, Providence! If once you looked you would see for yourselves: *ad quid valet: sal terrae; quod si sal evanuerit, in quo salietur? Ad nihilum valet sal infatuatum, nisi ut amittatur foras et calcetur ab hominibus!* "What good is salt of the earth if it loses its flavor, how can you restore it? Such insipid salt is good for nothing except to be thrown out and trampled under foot." And what is the religious, especially the priest, if he is no longer the salt of the earth, no more the *lux mundi*? No longer paying heed to learning, the world regards him as an object of contempt! No longer striving for perfection, he becomes a *scandalum ecclesiae*, "a scandal to the church," a bad religious!

So if you desire to be *lux mundi*, and *sal terrae* always desire to find ways to increase your zeal for souls. And you will surely see that if you are not the one [*lux mundi*], the other [*sal terrae*] will be of no use. You will be despised in this world and perhaps be lost eternally. And if you are not *sal terrae* you will be "trod under foot," certainly a strong expression! Despised, contravened, as one despises something of no account. Therefore, zeal for souls modeled on our [patron] saints. Zeal for souls and holiness, conscientious compliance with the duties of our vocation, and a continual quest for learning!

Therefore, again and again I recommend zeal for souls! Oh, that you would be led by obedience, *quia vir obediens loquetur victorias!* "because the obedient person will be victorious!" And if you are not led by obedience but by your own will, there is the

danger that instead of having great accomplishments you will have a great fall! Therefore, obedience according to the holy rule! Consider St. Francis [Xavier] your model! How full of zeal he was for souls in Asian countries, what he accomplished in the areas entrusted to him. What successes he achieved, what brilliant prospects he had. However, on the first command from his superior he left it all in order to go to Europe!

We too should be completely permeated by obedience. If obedience calls, we should follow the example of the saints and leave everything! Therefore, *zelus animarum, sanctitas et scientia*, "zeal for souls, holiness, and learning." Ask the dear Mother of God to attain these three graces for you, especially in the coming month of May: zeal for souls, holiness, and learning!

1898/05/06

It is so important to our holy vocation to be filled with zeal for souls. If not, we will not accomplish our mission. *Qui non ardet, non incendit*. “Whoever does not yearn does not burn.” To acquire zeal for souls you need only ascend into heaven and descend into hell and to Calvary. In heaven you see the reward promised to those who were saved, in hell the penalty, and at Calvary you see the divine scales. There you see how the Heavenly Father *proprio Filio non pepercit, sed illum tradidit*, “did not spare his only Son, but handed him over.”

These three meditations should inflame our zeal for souls. To these let us add a fourth: the misery in the world, around us about which St. Gregory says: *ad tantam messem operarii pauci, quod sine gravi moerore loqui non possumus!* “So few workers for such a great harvest, something we cannot contemplate without great sorrow.” If we reflect on this misery we must become inflamed by zeal for souls, particularly if we think about the many thousand and millions who are lost. Yes, as leaves fall from the trees in autumn, so people are drifting to hell! Ah, it’s not for nothing that St. Francis [Xavier] cried out: “Oh shame on you, that through your fault so many become lost to salvation.”

Therefore, may we always flare up with zeal for souls and consider the words of St. John Chrysostom: *Sufficit unus homo fidei zelo succensus totum corrigere populum – unus sufficit*. “One person zealous for the faith is enough to convert an entire nation – one is enough.” But if one alone suffices, then what will many [be able to accomplish]? Yet how should you practice zeal for souls? Precisely by preparing to become good apostolic priests pleasing

to God, and most of all by eagerly seeking holiness, through obedience, strict observance, and especially through willpower. *Vince temetipsum!* “Master yourselves!” by patiently enduring all the many sufferings you have – all the difficulties in the spiritual life, and all the efforts in your studies. Brothers too may participate in saving souls by working, and thus become true *coadiutores*, collaborators, in saving souls.

But above all scholastics (and brothers too) should not forget the quest for holiness. Therefore, you must pursue the study of holiness. All should strive for holiness, particularly those called to the high priesthood! They should not neglect to prepare themselves through zealous study and through good use of their time, to acquire a solid grasp especially of the theological sciences!

These two points: *sanctitas et scientia* “holiness and learning” I would like to recommend to you as especially important – that you acquire these two necessary qualities! Show your zeal for souls in this way, so that later when the call comes you will be considered useful tools for the salvation of souls! You have already had ample opportunities to actualize your zeal for souls, and only God knows how much some of you can accomplish through patiently enduring your spiritual sufferings, through prayers and sighs, perhaps without ever being recognized by people – but God knows what you are doing and suffering. Therefore, don’t be discouraged. Work, suffer, endure, have patience!

I especially encourage you to inflame your zeal for souls by contemplating heaven, hell, and the Divine Savior on Calvary. Then you will feel motivated. Seek especially to enkindle this [zeal] by distinguishing yourselves through seeking holiness, through strict

observance, and most of all through obedience. Take as your example the Savior and become like him who *obediens factus usque ad mortem, mortem crucis*, “became obedient even unto death, death on a cross.”

Oh, never neglect the habit of learning as far as time and circumstances allow. Never pass up the opportunity to acquire the necessary theological knowledge! Everyone who resolves to follow as apostolic workers should possess these two characteristics: knowledge and holiness! If you have these, God will sustain you materially. He will send us the necessary means, and then what one important man said quite beautifully will prove to be true: if you, if your people, keep observance holy, then you will not lack support and help from above! Then you will also be happy in the future. Furthermore, the number of apostolic workers will increase because the resources will come. Good example itself will inspire so very many and will attract them to follow and to join you! (He also said, however, that if you don’t keep to it [i.e., holy observance], support will be lacking!)

Therefore, employ all *sanctitatem et scientiam*, “holiness and learning” and let the brothers always strive for holiness and diligence by humbly performing their assigned duties with a good intention. Never think: this work is menial! Whatever is done with a good intention is great in the eyes of God! Even brothers can accomplish great things, some even greater than priests! Everyone, therefore, should work at his place! Ah, what a reward awaits you if you follow this design. What happiness here below, what peace of soul, what joy! You should not seek the honors of this world. Instead you will be mighty, great in the eyes of God, and great in the sight of others! But most of all, [seek] the reward hereafter!

Remember that the glory of the blessed is increased to the degree they rescued souls! Therefore, consider that if you saved ten, twenty, thousand of souls, then the glory will be ten, twenty, or a thousand times greater. Therefore, zeal! And consider the words of St. Catherine of Siena: “If you saw the beauty of one single soul, you would gladly die a thousand times to rescue one!” Oh, be filled with these words, and you will discover what bliss it is if you are truly on fire for the salvation of the souls.

1898/05/13

I would especially like to admonish you to observe community *silentium* properly! In a religious house where silence is maintained one can also assume that observance and discipline are good. But if silence is not observed, one must fear that additional evils will easily arise. More specifically, if silence is not observed, if the tongue is not mastered – this organ St. James describes as *inquietum malum, plena veneno mortifero* “an evil thing full of deadly poison,” then gossip and criticism and many other such bad things erupt. This organ will sow disaster if it is not mastered! Therefore, take care that this same tongue, which announces God’s praise, builds up the neighbor, and should announce God’s word, that this organ, which is dedicated to God, is only used in God’s service!

Certainly it is difficult to master the tongue. As St. James says: *Qui in verbo non offendit, perfectus est vir*. “The one who does not offend with his tongue is perfect.” We must endeavor to master our tongues, and one especially important means is *silentium religiosum*: “religious silence.” Through it the opportunity for some sins is reduced.

Therefore, observe silence. Force yourself. Overcome yourself, and be confident; *in quantum vim intuleris, in tantum proficies*: “the more you work at it, the more you will progress” if you master the tongue! Certainly, how much disaster the tongue has already brought about! Read the Letter of St. James and see what he says about the tongue, what an organ it is!

Further, as preparation for the feast of our heavenly patroness, *Regina Apostolorum*, Queen of Apostles, I would like to stress good

example. Take this to heart in a special way and consider what good example is and how much good it accomplishes, how powerfully it works! If you desire to preach, admonish, etc., you won’t get far without showing good example. Nothing will work out! But there is nothing good example cannot do! From the beginning, from St. John the Baptist, how much he accomplished through his mortification, his example! How much the saints influence us when we read their lives and consider their example! How strongly are we emboldened to follow their example. Consider how much the example of St. Francis Borgia accomplished, so much that even those who couldn’t understand the language in which he preached were stirred by his example! *Vox verbi sonat, vox exempli tonat!* “Words rumble, example thunders!” And St. John Chrysostom says the apostles did more through their example than through miracles. They converted the world through their contempt of honors and riches!

Religious who observe their rule quite conscientiously in and outside the house, are a living sermon. And what mighty things they will accomplish when they minister as priests! One can say about them what the Council of Trent said: *continuum, perpetuum praedicandi genus*; “[they are] a kind of continuous, ongoing preaching,” and what the pagan Seneca said long before: *plus creditur operibus quam verbis*, “actions are more credible than words.”

A religious once said that when a priest walks to the pulpit, the sermon is already given. Where did it come from? From his good example! You accomplish part of your apostolate in the same way. If you give good example you are already doing so very much. This is how you can prepare for our heavenly mother’s feast! This is exactly what you yourselves should do, always and everywhere:

give good example especially through strict observance! Don't think that the authority you have entitles you to violate the rules simply because you must be engaged in activities with others in and outside the house. In fact, you will heighten and extend your authority only when you observe your rules exactly and conscientiously! How powerfully you will work! Ah, even if there were only one, a single religious, who made his way through the world, living the rule to perfection, how effective he would be! One bishop told me recently: "Give me one of your members so that he might travel around [with me] so they would point to him and say: 'See, this is one of them.'"

In the same way, wherever you go, wherever you appear, people should be able to say about each one of you: "See, that is one of them. That is how they should be in the *Societas Divini Salvatoris*." Take pains and be sure not to give bad example, ruinous business! If you could see the portrait the world makes of you, which now and then comes out in letters, if you could see what good or mediocre example accomplish or hinder, and how much harm bad example does, ah, then how diligently you would work to give good example!

So bring this offering to our heavenly mother. Firmly resolve always and everywhere to give good example through strict observance, and to live as true Salvatorians. Conscientiously fulfill your holy rule, obedience, your vows, and never flirt with what the world and others want. Rather stand firmly and unshakably on your rule. In this way you will work effectively – and more nobly through your authority – accomplishing great things!

Therefore, good example! I wish everyone of you, wherever you go and whatever you do, might be able to say with St. Paul,

Imitatores mei estote, "Be imitators of me!" Then you will be attractive, and you will awaken so many vocations. How many consciences you will prick when they see how you live contentedly with God! How many you will awaken to be converted! You know what St. Augustine says: "If so many virgins can do this thing, why should we be unable?" Here too is an example! Good example provided the last stone to the great building, leading to his conversion!

All of you should, so to speak, personify or embody the rule in such a way that whoever sees you immediately knows you belong here. That you are members of the Society of the Divine Savior in the true sense! Therefore, bring this resolution to the dear Mother of God and carry it out. Take pains that all of you exercise good example!

1898/07/01

[This chapter talk could not be fully or perfectly transcribed because Reverend Father and Founder was not feeling well and spoke so softly that even those next to him could hardly catch what he said. The last section has been omitted because it didn't touch on very important matters. Fr. Capistranus M. Theol.]

I would like to share with you something about my last trip so that you also may be informed about the Society's activities!

Leaving here I went first to Tyrol to the Most Reverend Prince-Archbishop of Trent. I arranged matters there and secured permission for a foundation in Meran. After attaining this important approval for the Society, I went to Meran to view the site, the neighborhood, and attend to other remaining conditions. On May 24 the community was opened. As you know, 12-14 confreres are there now.

Afterward, I went to Bregenz for visitation. As you know, the community house there has been greatly expanded. This year we purchased a big house along with much property. On the whole, the community progressed very quickly and they possess so many resources that at least ten members can reside there full time.

From Bregenz I went to Simbach and from there to Vienna where I held the District 10 visitation. Of course, I also visited the cardinal bishop and vicar general.

Afterward, I went to Meseritsch for visitation there. From Meseritsch I went to Silesia; in particular to Jägerndorf, Troppau. If no further obstacles arise I hope to begin a house there. I believe

that radiating from that location the Society will have a great future! From there I went again to Vienna to continue the visitation.

From Vienna, I went to Hungary, to Budapest [a long interval followed which was difficult to understand. Rev. Father stated that he had been invited by a bishop for a meal and that he had discussed a foundation and then traveled farther.] And we hope that we can soon erect a house there [the name of the place could not be understood] and I hope it can be done yet this year. From there I went to [unable to understand] and from there the parish will be handed over to our Society. From there I went to Budapest in order to arrange the necessary steps at the government ministry. I was received very well there and was satisfied. So now we can come to Hungary.

From Budapest, I went to Vienna, from Vienna to Munich, Stuttgart, Freiburg im Breisgau. There I took care of business involving the Society and I was also with the bishop. ...

From Freiburg, I went to Freiburg in Switzerland for visitation and at the same time to inspect matters regarding the new house, since in all probability we will get from the state a significantly bigger and better living accommodation nearer the school. This [school] should be transferred to us. It is frequented by children learning trades there. The school will come under our management and we will get an important compensation from the state for subsidies.

From Freiburg, I drove next to Drogens for visitation there. It has been expanded so that now the number of these boys could be greatly increased.

From Drognefs I went to Freiburg, to France, to Chablais – where St. Francis de Sales once worked as a priest. It is certainly possible that we will establish a foundation there. Two difficulties remain to be cleared up. When they are, we can establish the foundation. We could occupy the house in two months.

That is a very short summary of the trip I made until I came back to Rome.

Now, I can tell you that the confreres out there are doing much good, especially in the confessional. This is particularly true in Vienna where it is a great apostolic endeavor to have so many children and such big schools. On the other hand, the situation in Vienna is very promising and above all the set-up is quite monastic. In District 10 they have a big house that is quite suitably furnished to accommodate monastic observance. If God wills, a church will be built for us sometime through the church building club and the construction of a cloister will begin. In District 2 the priests are quite diligent! You can tell from the statistics that the achievements of the confreres are very great – and it is also very big. The confessions of children run into the thousands with only one priest. And others told me that the dean is also very pleased. Religious are so necessary, above all in pastoral ministry in various localities. And how easily, *quam facile homines confiteantur* “how easily people confide” in religious!

Now, however, I would especially like to stress another point. I found in Vienna how people watch religious, and how important it is to give good example. We should preach *exemplis*, “by example.” That is the most important thing. If you could not preach at all with words, example alone is already a mighty sermon that

would capture the spectator. Because a religious who lives according to the holy rule can accomplish great things. But this also entails being manly out in the world. The dangers there are great, particularly if one doesn't know them, and if one is overly confident.

A diocesan priest alerted me expressly to this: that religious and religious priests, since they are observed so keenly, must be on their best behavior especially at table, during the meal and while drinking. The same priest told me that for a long time a certain priest was considered a saint, and simply because he once made a remark during a meal: “I don't like this, it is not well cooked,” he lost his reputation completely! Mark what scandal a priest, a religious, gives if he behaves this way and says such things in the outside world! But on the other hand, how much is accomplished by good example! However, as a religious, as a religious priest, you must know that if you are no better than a good diocesan priest, then you are not living up to your calling. As religious you should strive higher than diocesan priests.

How important it is, therefore, to preach through good example, and especially to behave yourselves in dealing with the world and with other priests, particularly during meals and when drinking. In short, mortify yourselves everywhere. Be religious who master themselves. This sermon is so powerful! Oh, how your good example should shine! Oh, if only you could hear what people say, how they judge! Even if one simply reads his breviary, they already judge! Remember this your whole life long: always give good example. Always be *lux mundi, sal terrae*, “light of the world, salt of the earth.”

1898/07/08

To progress in the spiritual life it is not only necessary to avoid the big mistakes. We must also be especially faithful in small things! Today I would particularly like to urge you all to be quite faithful in the small things! First, you should be faithful because it is God's will; but also and especially because if you are faithful in small things you will be protected against greater mistakes! Whoever is faithful in small things won't fall easily into serious errors. Furthermore, those who are faithful in small things have God's blessing in what they do; this faithfulness in small things is blessed by God. Furthermore, those who are faithful in small things can expect a great reward in heaven and happiness in this world!

Those in religious life who become faithful in small things, who are prompt and exact, progress in more than just the spiritual life. They will also be promoted by the superiors and be placed over big things. Because they were faithful in small things, greater opportunities will be offered them to accomplish even greater things! But whoever is not faithful in small things easily falls into serious mistakes and is in danger of being lost eternally. Whoever is not faithful in small things is already lukewarm! Those who are not faithful in small things won't be happy either. They will not be happy religious. They are at risk not only of falling into serious mistakes, but of losing their vocations.

Of what does this fidelity in small things consist? It shows itself in everything, most especially in observance! One is not faithful who lightly dismisses small matters, disregards them, violates rules if they are not strictly obligatory, or doesn't observe silence exactly, not to mention, *quoad officium et Missam, perfunctorie et*

superficialiter ea agere, "as regards carrying out Mass and Divine Office in a perfunctory or superficial way." Yes, it turns out that if one is not faithful in small things, if one performs prayers, even the Sign of the Cross, superficially, if one doesn't pronounce the words when praying ... these are the many things which reveal whether one is faithful. Everyone should examine his conscience. This is especially valid regarding poverty: that you should be faithful in small things! Here you know our rules and what God demands! Never violate this rule, not even in inconsequential matters! In a religious house which abandons strict observance, peace is also difficult to preserve! Therefore, if you want to become good religious, make progress in the spiritual life! If you want the Society to accomplish great things, be steadfast, be faithful in small things!

Estote fideles, "Be faithful!" Faithful in small things! This will bring you great peace! If you are not, what use is it for you if you work for days and accomplish seemingly great things! Therefore, heed this concerning the holy vows, obedience, the instructions your superiors give you; and see that no one ever has to order you formally or "under obedience" to do something. A wink from the superior is always enough to evoke obedience!

Regarding poverty, dispose of nothing without permission; take nothing without permission! Be exact when it comes to holy poverty. I would like to say: regard everything you have illegally as poisonous snakes; and a venial sin is worse than a poisonous snake.

In our Society I maintain it is especially important that you concentrate on being faithful in small things, so the Society will become solid inside and out. So, fidelity in small things! Because that is the main means to achieve peace among ourselves and with

God, and to call down God's blessing on the Society! Therefore, again and again, faithfulness in small things! And don't hesitate to mortify yourself even many times a day. Be faithful in everything: faithful in observance, faithful in the vows, faithful in work, in the duties of your vocation, in your striving, faithful in everything. Everyone should search his soul to see whether in his position, in his office, in his vocation, in his work, he is faithful in small things! So, be faithful in everything!

1898/07/15

More than anything else I would like all of the members of our Society to be men of prayer. Each and every one should know what it means to pray! How much one attains through prayer, if you pray properly! First, prayer is so necessary! Where does our help come from? What good is it to work all day, to sweat and to suffer, if blessings are lacking from above? Without help from above we cannot even invoke Jesus' name with merit! And how shall we accomplish our task, our own sanctification? How can we rescue souls in view of these great difficulties the enemy prepares both inside and out? What good is it to work and work if God withholds his blessing? What good is it to undertake even the most promising endeavor? If God doesn't help, what use is any of it?

So let us recognize that by ourselves we can do nothing. *Deus dat incrementum! Non nobis Domine, non nobis, sed Nomini Tuo da gloriam!* "God gives the increase. Not to us, not to us O Lord, but to your name give the glory!" Let us not presume to believe we have done anything! No, because our help comes from above. We must always be convinced of this and act in such a way that we never put our trust in people. Our whole trust in God alone! We are able to do nothing by ourselves, and we have so many needs for ourselves, for the Society, and for our mission!

Therefore, become men of prayer! Pray often, as often as possible. Imitate our Divine Teacher who prayed so much and of whom scripture says: *erat pernoctans in oratione*. "he was spending the night in prayer." You know how he prayed on the Mount of Olives before his passion! Therefore, model yourselves on the Divine Savior by becoming men of prayer. Pray often and properly,

consciously, with deep humility, remembering that by yourself you are able to do nothing. On the other hand, however, you must pray with great trust in the Lord from whom all help comes. Through this trust you will honor God and will move him to help you!

Therefore, humility! You must pray with great humility, conscious of your need, and at the same time [you must pray] with great trust. You must pray with great purity of conscience. Each of you should endeavor to have a pure conscience! You should do everything with a good intention: *omnia faciant cum recta intentione, quia Deus pensat magis ex quanto agant quam quantum faciant*. “Do everything with the right intention, because God heeds more what you intend than what you accomplish.”

Therefore, pray much. Make it your habit so that you may all be called men of prayer! Our times require men [and women] of prayer. And what good is all our work and struggle, all our preaching and writing, if God doesn't help! Be assured, time spent in prayer is never lost; and the time we [actually] spend in prayer is by no means sufficient. We pray often, but we must pray even more to progress, to make even greater progress! We should become an army of “pray-ers.” First and foremost be men of prayer! And you know how each one can do this. You don't have to be a scholar. You know how some lowly, maybe obscure, even despised religious, if he prays humbly and with trust, may accomplish more than ten or twenty others.

Pray and pray again, *petite et accipietis*, “ask and you shall receive.” These are God's words! How often we are admonished to pray, and how beautiful are those places in sacred scripture that encourage us! How we will regret it some day when we [come to]

realize all we could have accomplished through prayer! In all your concerns have recourse to prayer! Everyone, I repeat “every one” should become a man of prayer, in imitation of the Divine Savior who prayed *pernoctans*, “through the night!” Everyone should pray as much as possible. You should pray especially during these vacation days when more opportunities are available than during the school year!

Use this time properly for prayer! You should pray everywhere: *oportet semper orare*, “you should always pray,” especially ejaculations! You know how the great ones like St. Francis Xavier prayed. With prayer, however, I would like you to combine mortification and possibly penance. As far as possible, combine prayer with penance! Pray and do penance! Do penance and pray! And I am sure the degree to which your success will match the degree that you are men of penance and prayer!

1898/10/04**Nameday of the Rev. Father**

[Address of Rev. Father and Founder Francis of the Cross after being congratulated by the community.]

I thank you for your love and participation! At the same time I express my deep wish that you become precisely what we prayed for in today's Holy Mass: that you too will boast in the cross! My chief wish for you today is that all of you seek to immerse yourselves more deeply in the mystery of the love of the cross; that you love suffering! If you do this, I have reason to hope that you will hold out against everything, attain your crown, and lead very many souls into heaven! But if you seek to take another way, I tremble!

Therefore, I long for your happiness, peace here below, salvation, welfare, and blessedness. Moreover, I wish that you would study the cross and suffering more and more, and that all of you would page through the scriptures and come to know the grandeur of suffering. In your future work this will convince you that the fruits of salvation flourish only in the shadow of the cross. Even if you seem to accomplish so much, work upon work, if you don't suffer greatly, then don't count on, don't expect anything! Because our work is something quite different from that of the world! We should lead souls to God, and for this [God's] blessings are necessary!

Through suffering, through patient suffering, you will call down blessings from above! It is a well known principle: an apostolic religious always succeeds in proportion to his sufferings! Therefore, if you hope to make progress in the spiritual life, to be happy, to

persevere, to save many souls, then become lovers of the cross! May God fill you more and more with love of the cross. Thus, you will become happy, you will have peace, and you will put the wicked world and hell on the defensive! Oh, the cross! *Fugite partes adversae, quia vicit leo de tribu Juda!* "Enemies, flee! Because the Lion of Judah conquers!" Suffer! Unite your sufferings with those of the Divine Savior. I wish that everyone would follow the dear Savior in suffering just like St. Francis did!

You know the dear Savior redeemed the world through his passion! Do we want to choose a different way? Therefore, this is my wish for you: that you strive to penetrate it more deeply! Carefully study the cross, this love, and always live convinced that if you want to accomplish great things for the salvation of souls, you must suffer greatly! May the good God make of all of you true and constant lovers and imitators of the cross!

1898/10/07

Through your hearty participation in my nameday celebration you have expressed your devotion and your fidelity both to the Society and to me. Today I would especially like to focus on a few special points that will continually foster all these attitudes: perseverance! Always stride ahead to attain the crown that awaits those who persevere. Certainly it will take a great struggle, and it is likewise true that if you don't fight seriously, if you don't live up to your holy vocation, neither will you attain the promised crown.

Above all I would like to stress that you be united among yourselves and with your leaders both here at the Motherhouse, as well as wherever you may be in this wide world. Be certain that if you are not somehow united, you are removing the very ground from beneath your feet! And something else you mentioned on my nameday, that through unity, *concordia parvae res crescunt, discordia maximae dilabuntur*. "Small things grow where there is harmony, but great things fall apart where there is discord." This is particularly true with us. Even when some undertaking seems to prosper very greatly, you can be sure that if unity is missing your work will decline sooner or later!

Therefore, unity! This is what God, our Divine Teacher, asks of you: to be united among yourselves with your leaders! In order to protect this unity, however, it is necessary that you mortify yourselves, that you overcome yourselves! Without mortification and self-mastery there will be no unity in a community, not even if there are only two members, because something will always come up! *Alter alterius onera portate!* "Bear one another's burdens." Without mortification and self-mastery your claims to unity will

be mere flattery. The main means to unity is strict observance. Because through strict observance you always practice mortification, self-mastery!

A central point is to avoid misguided principles! I'm not talking about sins exactly but about liberalizing tendencies in the Order. You who are already striving for perfection in religious life will recognize these false orientations. They appear mostly in those who do not continually strive for perfection, even though they also occasionally appear in good members [i.e., those who are striving for perfection]. These false principles set the stage for the decay of discipline and observance. As a consequence you become dissatisfied, and this leads to a waning of the grace of vocation!

Flirting with a certain spirit of accommodation to various secular principles is even worse. This is how one becomes lukewarm, and as a consequence is spit out! Therefore, stick to positive, solid and confirmed principles of religious life and of spiritual masters, and ascetics. Never desire to cozy up to the world! How vast the world is, and how cold: *sine caritate frigescit mundus*, "without love the world freezes." This same thing happens to your vocation when you draw near to the world; your quest for perfection grows cold and the Order becomes cold. The result will be what sacred scripture says: "Because you are neither hot nor cold, I want to spit you out of my mouth."

Furthermore, persevere in your vocation. Perform your spiritual exercises, especially regular meditation. Don't just contemplate, but contemplate in such a way that you strive after perfection even in your choice of books. Even as regards meditation one can hunt around for material that seems less radical. But the

one who seeks perfection honestly, the one who looks for holiness, will find the right material. While whoever seeks to avoid it will never find it!

Another point especially demanded from each priest, particularly from apostolic religious, is *caritas* “love.” St. Gregory says that only those with *caritas*, fraternal charity, should undertake an apostolate. Without love you have little hope, no hope, of accomplishing much! Oh love, love will keep the Society upright. Oh, that you yourselves would love truly, and not treat each other severely or harshly. Therefore, love! Whoever does not have love is never a religious in the right spirit and should never assume the office of preaching. He will build and in one day it will be torn down again. *Qui caritatem non habet, nullatenus praedicationis officium suscipere debet.* “Whoever lacks charity should in no way undertake the ministry of preaching.” How much irritation, how much disaster follows in the wake of a single unloving act. How much disaster follows from a single irritation! And who starts all this? The one without *caritas*! Therefore, take pains to observe this point as much as possible, and you yourself will reap the greatest benefits.

When you no longer strive honestly for perfection you may actually drag yourself forward a little. But sooner or later, when the wind comes, a little shaking will reveal that the house is not built on a rock but on sand! And this will happen to every one of us who does not strive honestly for perfection! If we don’t truly strive for perfection, we should fear. And if we’re not afraid we should fear even more because we are ignorant of the danger! So strive for perfection with all your strength, and then I am at peace. I don’t need to say much to you if I know that you are striving for perfection. Then I would say: Do whatever you want! And it will

reveal that the Society is on the right path. Do what the Society stipulates for you, and you will see what fruits you will produce for yourselves and for the salvation of souls! But if you don’t strive honestly for perfection, you will seek to avoid discipline and observance.

So again this is my advice. At the same time my thanks again for the love you showed at my nameday celebration. And be assured that I love you! My greatest joy is that you all strive for holiness. Because if you strive for holiness you will become happy here below and in eternity! What good is anything else to me if you don’t strive for perfection? Others will harvest what we have sown! We, therefore, need men who are real men, who are strict in observance so that you are not spit out!

Oh, strive for perfection! I’m talking about the persistent quest for perfection! Do this and you become a sight for people and angels! So if you want to be really happy already here below, strive honestly after perfection. And if you don’t, fear that you will be punished already here below. If you strive for holiness I have no fear for the Society.

But it is something typical to see and it makes quite an impression everywhere, that those who are known by the authorities to be striving and well-received ... these are the ones who in general are strong in their calling and in their observance. Therefore, all I can say is seek God, who is good and perfect, and you need not care about other needs. Then you will hold out!

1898/11/11

Redde rationem vilicationis tuae. “Give an account of your stewardship!” Let us imagine this summons being aimed at each and every one of us: Give an account of your stewardship! How good it is if throughout life we ask ourselves this question more frequently; consider this challenge put to us, so that we can appear before the Judge without anxiety and render an account: *redde rationem!* “Give an account.”

First, to give an account of your vocation, of how you have used the many graces bestowed on you; to give an account of your office; to give an account also of whatever position you may hold. Everywhere you have duties. Review them and think: can I calmly give an account of these things? Then give an account, *redde rationem*, of your use of time. Have you always used it according to God’s will! *Redde rationem* of your use of goods, spiritual as well as temporal. Have you always used them according to God’s will? *Redde rationem* also of temporal goods. This is especially important for our Society, which lives largely or completely from donations given with the specific purpose to be well-used, and often received from the poor! Therefore: *redde rationem!* Everyone should search his soul to see whether he has used them according to God’s will.

Furthermore, everyone should ask himself whether in his vocation, specifically in his post, he fulfills his duty, starting from the most recently professed up to the oldest person. Everyone – brother, cleric, or priest – everyone in his place should ask himself. And how many duties everyone has! And the more duties, the more one wonders: can I render an account? Did I use the time, or did I do the good that was required of me? We must think more

frequently of *peccata omissionis*, sins of omission, because in daily life more weight is usually put on the *peccata positiva*, sins of commission.

Therefore, let us ask ourselves this question more frequently (I recommend every evening!): *redde rationem!* How did you administer your office today, your post? How have you used your talents, your time, your resources? In a word, everything which God has given you? Ask yourself whether you used them in line with your duty. This is a very important point to which I would like to alert you: use well all the resources God sends us through our benefactors, and always remember that we receive such means from the sweat of others to be used for good purposes. So we must use them accordingly. We should be thrifty! Even in the world people have the obligation to be thrifty. How much more thrifty must we be if we have been given resources for God’s honor! Therefore, be thrifty, everywhere and everyone in his place, whether a brother, cleric or priest! And how many times one can come into the situation where he can either use resources quite well, or use them in a way contrary to God’s will.

It is especially important always to act with a good and proper intention and always to perform our tasks in such a way that, as far as human limitations allow, we can always say: I do this only for God! As religious, always do everything with a good intention, knowing that we must give a strict account of it – of spiritual things as well as material resources, especially time! Use time and other material resources well! Consider often the words of St. Catherine of Siena: “If you could see the beauty of one single soul, you would gladly die a thousand times to rescue one.”

Ah, but the Society exists to save souls. So if one would die a thousand times for one soul, how much more should we who are called to rescue souls not use every means to win as many as possible. Why should we not joyfully do more than duty requires? Each one should consider how much time he has, on the one hand to fulfill his duties, and on the other hand to do even more! How many merits we can garner, how much even a single individual can do!

Therefore, remember that you must give an account of your vocation: of graces (particularly the grace of a religious life) as well as of material resources and of time. Furthermore, I wish so very much that you would also do more. I would like to say what St. Vincent says about Paul: “Do all the good which is compatible with your position!” You have such great opportunities, everyone in his place! You can and should work especially through prayer, observance, good example, and admonitions! You have so many means! And the more you want to show your zeal, the better you will use them. In this way you will increasingly win the trust of your superiors and thereby attain more and more resources! Therefore, do your duty, and do even more.

1898/11/25

To prepare for the beautiful feast of the Immaculate Conception and at the same time for the foundation day celebration, I would like to admonish you again. Do your best to be able to accomplish much, and to grow more and more zealous for the Society. That way it will become stronger and stronger both inside and out, especially through the self-sanctification of each individual member!

First and foremost, I admonish you to engage your zeal for self-sanctification! *Quaerite primum regnum.* “Seek first the kingdom.” Always seek God’s greatest honor, your own sanctification, and to lead as many as possible to the Divine Savior in heaven. Take these three points as your goal, as the greatest things: *maxima gloria Dei, quam maxima gloria Dei, [quam maxima] sanctificatio, quam plurimorum salvatio.* “God’s greatest honor, the greatest possible glory to God, [the greatest] sanctification, the salvation of as many souls as possible!” Renew these good intentions often. I would like this to serve as a kind of motto for our Society.

On the other hand, be quite active. I beg you to work for the Society as much as you can! Look at the ants and the bees. How they work together, how united they are among themselves, how great, how industrious is their zeal, how resilient and courageous they are when they meet an obstacle. So let us sometimes look at these little creatures and take an example from the ants and bees. How harmoniously they work together toward their goal; how they are so single-minded for the same goal! Oh, let us not be shamed [by them].

In addition to this diligence I would like to set before you something else that is so essential: *concordia* “harmony.” *Concordia parvae res crescunt, discordia maximae dilabuntur.* “Small things build harmony, discord ruins even great things.” I would also like especially to recommend this unity, since we are an apostolic, contemplative/active order!

I would like to admonish you not to underestimate this meekness, this humility, modesty, the culture implicit in general politeness. Do not acquire these qualities in order to please the world but to be more effective! Let this genial spirit become a habit of yours. But don’t think that I am asking you to affect the worldly mannerisms of some people. I simply mean modesty, purity, friendliness, humility, meekness, mildness, *mansuetudo*, *humilitas*, *humanitas*, *benignitas*, “mildness, humility, human goodness, kindness.” If I’m not wrong there is a saying: friendliness is a compass that guides one through the whole world, through all countries! This illustrates how important modesty and friendliness are: with them one gets along everywhere.

Even the greatest enemy and uneducated person appreciates meekness and patience, and even the wildest animals become calm in their presence! Let’s seek to appropriate this *mansuetudo*, *humanitas*. There are so many variations: the creator has given some so much that they must struggle to stay within bounds; others have much less and must fight and struggle to acquire them!

Look, if you encounter a big, powerful enemy, if you advance softly and mildly, perhaps you will have already broken his fury and turned him back. Harsh conduct can do great harm, particularly in ministry! A pastor can alienate a whole parish merely through

harsh, alienating conduct! Therefore, you should always be quite *mansueti*, *humiles*, *benigni*, *humani*, “mild, humble, kind, full of human goodness”, and always show a holy modesty, a humble friendliness, especially where danger threatens you!

Always pay attention to the chapter *de castitate*, “on chastity.” Because while in this matter there is always room for a certain amount of reserve, on the other hand you are always to be quite friendly in your dealings with other people! Take one example: we send 4 or 5 out to beg. One is quite stiff and not very attractive – he gets nothing. People close the door in his face. Another is friendly and has a holy modesty. When he asks, people end up giving him something. And it is the same in ministry as it is in temporal matters. If a priest by being friendly to a sinner shows that he respects him, perhaps he will convert him; and the opposite.

Therefore, show that you are working to sanctify yourselves, that you are quite *operosi*, “hard working.” Work for the Society like bees and ants, especially on this last point. Throughout your whole life never underestimate this, and consider it as a way to accomplish good things. So again, everyone should seek holy modesty and friendliness. Use this modesty, humble conduct, to do good things for God in order to win souls for your holy mission.

1898/12/02

One purpose, one element of the main purpose of our Society is the press! As you know, the purpose of our Society is self-sanctification and the sanctification of our neighbor. However, if we want to achieve the sanctification of others, this always demands above all that we sanctify ourselves. Therefore we must never think that because we are called to the apostolate we are any less called to the spiritual life or that we should curtail self-sanctification. I say exactly the opposite: because we are called to the apostolate and must therefore be exposed to quite different dangers, in order to sanctify others we ourselves must be holy!

So don't get the wrong idea that somehow because we are called for the apostolate we need less contemplation, prayer and mortification. Look at this great apostle whose feast we will celebrate tomorrow [St. Francis Xavier]. Do you think he would have accomplished so much if he had reduced his contemplation and prayer to a minimum? Therefore, self-sanctification first!

Then, I would like to point out what the main purpose of the apostolate includes: it embraces both the apostolate at home and in the foreign missions! We are still not primarily destined for either our homelands or for foreign countries. The press is one way the apostolate is carried out, and at the same time it is a means with which we can help our Society very much!

I would especially like to stress this point today, which is very important to find in every organism, in the church, and in each order: that we hold together with the superiors and founders. If you stray from the spirit of the founder, everyone will develop

according to his own spirit and we will have a Babylon instead of a church. If even in the holy church, where matters involving faith and morals are infallible, we see such painful things arise, how much more in religious groups can this happen! Look at what devastation was wrought by Schellism and Americanism! There you have an example of what could also occur in the Society! If it can occur in the church, it can occur in the order. [There followed a section in Latin that is roughly in German:] One bishop also told me, that any religious order would have disintegrated if God had not intervened, *quia iam in initio generalatus alii volebant progressum et alii volebant stare in mente fundatoris, et sic capitulo generali omnes declinantes a mente fundatoris depressi sunt et omnes electi manerunt in societate, et sic salvus factus est ordo* "because already at the beginning of the generalate some wished to move on while others wanted to stay with the intentions of the founder. Thus at the general chapter all who were in favor of abandoning the intentions of the founder were filtered out, and all those who were elected to office remained in the Society, and thus the order was saved."

You can be assured that if you no longer hold to the spirit of the founder, you will sink to the bottom. Therefore, I want to warn you that each of you assumes responsibility if you deviate from the spirit of the founder! If you deviate from the uniform spirit of the founder, you go astray! Even in religious congregations, in individual houses you will find those with definite personal opinions on certain matters. Precisely here, if a uniform spirit is not firmly adhered to, various dangers lurk! And don't imagine that it stops there; it will draw even further consequences. Everyone will find supporters for his own opinions, as nowadays Dr. Schell and Americanism have important supporters. Just as everyone wins supporters for his own opinion, so each religious will find people

in the community to back him up!

The first defense, therefore, is to hold firmly together in the spirit of the founder! The second defense, the spirit through which our Society should particularly work, is looking toward the center. Here the main point is to keep the center, the principle seat, the *robur societatis*, “the strength of the Society,” the heart of the Society, in Rome. As soon as we give this up, the Society is partially destroyed. It is established for the whole world, and as soon as we remove it from Rome it would become tainted with a national character. It would rise or fall with the fortunes of one nation! Nations are like actors on the stage. They come and go. And there is always a danger, *quia influunt etiam in religionem opiniones publicae*, “because public opinion even influences religious matters.”

An especially important reason to have the center in Rome is unity, uniform discipline, uniform doctrine. Here that doctrine is taught under the very eyes of the Holy Father! I don’t want to say that there is no proper teaching outside of Rome, *sed generatim loquendo Roma manet centrum et fons!* “but generally speaking, Rome remains the center and source.” Admittedly certain matters in Rome are disadvantageous, for example the climate, etc. If we focus on this we could ask: why did the All Wise, Omniscient Providence select Rome as the center of the holy church where everyone converges? Why did God not choose a health resort? We see that the great Pope Leo XIII, despite the unhealthy situation in Rome, brings all theological colleges here from around the world. You can see that great sacrifices in health are connected with this decision. But Leo XIII looks into the distance, stands on the watchtower and considers the matter quite differently from us – we who view things from the bottom! Therefore, Rome shall always

be the center, the *robur societatis*, and so we must also work to see that discipline is followed as perfectly as possible!

There is another reason why Rome is so important to the Society. In other communities where a certain current prevails among the nationals, it is unavoidable that even religious succumb to it. And we have enough evidence that some religious fell! Do you think that if *in America si centrum esse, illis quis posset resistere?* “if the center [of the Society] were in America anyone could resist them [i.e., proponents of “Americanism”]?” A very devout religious told me that the consequences are already appearing in the communities. I believe that Leo XIII sees this! It is very important, and I believe that our Holy Father Pope Leo sees that here we are uniform; and in a manner of speaking, as the blood goes into the veins from the heart, so the members should go out into the world, into the individual communities from Rome. And there they should hold on to and defend the spirit of the Society! *Quid, si unus haereticus inventus fuerit in societate nostra; quantum damnum inferre potest.* “What if one heretic should arise in our Society, how much damage he could do.”

One means through which we should work particularly for the Society is still the press! It is unbelievable how much one can accomplish through it, *et nemo est, qui hic operari non possit. A primo professo usque ad senem religiosum quisque potest; in his nullus excusari potest! Si e.g., tam professus quam philosophus et theologus unaquaque hebdomada quascumque lineas scribat, mox erit scriptum; et deinde: quantum Ecclesiae, saluti animarum prodesse potest et etiam per sustentatione societatis! Sunt ephemerides, redactores, qui libenter per unaquaque linea solvant, dummodo eis mittatur articulus; hoc est bonum per sustentatione societatis.* “And there is no one

who cannot do this work, from newly professed all the way up to the oldest religious. No one should be excused. If for example someone professed as a philosopher or theologian writes a few lines each week, soon a book takes shape, and from there. ... How much can be done for the church, for the salvation of souls and even for the maintenance of the Society. There are magazines and editors who will willingly pay for every line, provided they are sent material. This is good for maintaining the Society.” And I was told recently that one of us, who is no author, gets so and so much for the Society for each line, *et quis est qui studiis vacat qui non possit laborare, et qui non potest scribere potest colligere et, ut ita dicam, cum forbice.* “And who is there who free from school could not work to write or cut things out with a scissors.” I know an author who writes and publishes books this way. *Si aliquis contra vitium aliquod sive ad propagationem virtutum operabit, ad conversionem peccatorum, et colligit exempla ex libris per ephemeridibus, o quantum prodesse potest, et quis est qui non possit? Aut ille celeberrimus. P. Pesch, qui laborat et qui nil aliud facere potest, quam scribere, quantum prodest per Ecclesia!* “If one works to eliminate faults, another to spread virtue, or to convert sinners by collecting illustrations from books to be used in pamphlets, oh, how much good can be produced! And who can not do this? Or what about that most celebrated Fr. Pesch who works and can do nothing else but write? Who does more for the church than he!” I will talk about this point later. *Tantummodo hoc dico: nemo potest excusari in nostra societate quid non possit laborare! Est finis principalis in nostra societate; sed nemo erit bonus scriptor, si non est subiectus humilis. Oportet corrigere scriptorem! Sicuti in ceteris operibus, ita etiam in his oportet esse humilem!* “So I say this: no one in our Society can be excused from doing this work. You should submit your writing for correction. Just as in other apostolates so even in this one, you

should be humble. This is the principle aim of our Society. And no one will become a good writer if he is not humble.” You should write, and the brothers should disseminate! *Quantum bonum offert, si quis scriptor scribat unam tantum paginam et publicat etiam in ephemeridibus,* “It does so much good if even one writer writes and publishes even one page even in a pamphlet” and maybe have a hundred thousand people listen to what he speaks and preaches! *Minus periculum est scribere quam praedicare.* “There is less danger to write than to preach.” Because often, it occurs that a preacher, while he opens heaven for others, opens hell for himself! *Minus periculum est in scribendo; quamvis ubique est periculum, tamen mihi videtur minus esse periculum in scribendo! Ergo nolite timere!* “There is less danger in writing than in preaching; however much danger there is everywhere, still, as I see it, there is less danger in writing. So don’t be afraid!” In this way everyone should practice and prepare himself for this kind of apostolate! *Utinam quisque ex vobis scribat unum, duo, tres articulos in mense; o quantum bonum esse per Ecclesia, per salutem animarum et per societate! Ergo facite!* “How I wish each one of you would write one, two or three articles a month; oh, what a great thing for the church, for the health of souls, and for the Society! So do it!”

1898/12/09

Our task is to live as much as possible in the spirit of Jesus Christ and to follow the holy apostles as closely as possible! Today, however, I would like to alert you to a point that is of greatest importance for your welfare, for the welfare of the church and the Society, and yet is easily underestimated. It is this: that everyone is willing to assume the work, or the office, or the activity that Providence instructs through his superiors, either by a command or by a wish. Oh, how important it is that everyone, as St. Vincent de Paul says, carries out each good work compatible with his station. And in a lifetime, even if it is not long, a single individual can perform so many works and activities for the honor of God and the salvation of souls if he doesn't strive for great deeds and high offices but accepts and does every task entrusted to him by Providence!

Pay attention to this, it is an important point. You also know St. Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, plied his craft! This is also an easy way to instill humility in us at the same time! I would also like to cite examples for you, but *caritas* prohibits me. But be assured that the order which aims too high, if it neglects the humble work *evangelizare pauperibus* "of evangelizing the poor" and other works, and if it doesn't perform them in the spirit of the institute, sooner or later the whole enterprise will falter! Therefore, willingly undertake the works assigned to you. Seize them, wherever something good can be accomplished, whether through writing or any other work – and how many [such works] there are in the Society. How many works, how many opportunities present themselves!

A second means through which you should particularly work, as I have already said, is the press! There are so many tasks in a community and everywhere else, where you can accomplish so much good. Among these is particularly the press, through the pen as well as through travels for disseminating magazines! If great men, secular priests, undertook such tasks and didn't hold it beneath their dignity, how can we religious, who should exercise humility, feel ashamed? So never forget the importance of the press, call it to mind again and again. Each one should make himself fit and qualified to preach the Word of God in the pulpit and in school, as it is needed! Oh, that all of you would devote yourselves to the press. None of you engaged in studies should find this impossible. Everyone can do it – just remember to do it in submission, in obedience, and under strict supervision! Oh then how much you can accomplish; how many moments and how many free periods you can use for this!

There are so many tasks at which you can work. But all of them should proceed only from true humility, from true zeal for souls, and you should be permeated only with love of the Society! You will find work, more than you can handle; and how important it is for us to work much! Each of us is assigned the hour when we must die; our days are numbered. Within this [remaining] time we can work and get things done, and then we are finished. This is a talent we can use, but who knows how long he still has to work! It is certain that our time is limited! Maybe it is many years or maybe only a few, maybe only months, maybe only days or hours! So why not use every moment here in order to do good! Let us, therefore, use our time well and not be choosy about the work! This is a powerful means to promote love, brotherly love, and to secure the good opinion of the superiors! Don't underestimate this, it is an

important element. And on the contrary, if you are choosy in your works, you will always have difficulties wherever you may be.

Therefore, all of you should always be ready for any and every work! How profitable some hours can be now and in the future if we use them effectively – especially those spent busy with the press! One skillfully crafted word can perhaps be so beneficial. Only in eternity will you finally see how much good our publications, our magazines have generated! You can already calculate approximately 400,000 subscribers for our magazines! We can, therefore, say that we have an audience of many hundreds of thousands! And how happy a preacher is if he has a thousand listeners! But one doesn't want to speak of a hundred thousand. Oh, the precious time and the good that we can do! How will we answer the Eternal Judge when he demands: "Give an account!"

I would like to stress another point: direct your works and your studies to God's greater honor and for the salvation of souls, for the church, and for the Society! If people study years and years and then remain like locked libraries, and if they go into eternity without having done good, how will we be able to justify this? Do we simply want to acquire things for ourselves that we can never use, while there is still so much we should do? Let us strive as much as possible to work in obedience, because then we proceed more surely! It is good after all to stress that you should learn the kinds of things that will help you work in the spirit of the Society, and to achieve its purpose. None of you should bury your talents!

Finally, be ready to undertake every work that is for God's honor and for the welfare of the church and of our Society. Never aim too high, and never be ashamed. May the Society never rise

too high. For then it will shrivel and maybe worse! I think of this so often when I see such small, ordinary creatures like sparrows. They multiply everywhere and are cheerful and happy! On the other hand, look at creatures like the peacock, who are certainly quite beautiful! They are admired and ogled. But one is soon bored with them! Become as active as ants, sparrows, bees and other such animals. Model yourselves more on these birds than on those that are more resplendent and which bring more joy, but whose benefits are few.

1898/12/16

We celebrated the foundation day of our Society a few days ago, and took that opportunity to look back. 17 years have passed. Through these 17 years the Society, aided from above and shielded by heaven, weathered all storms triumphantly. We cannot thank heaven enough for the great, great help it provided the Society in these 17 years! If we wanted to list all the enemies and all the storms, ah, how much would be written there! Storms from outside, enemies within and without. And how often I thought: now it's finished. Nevertheless, now we can say that the Society only becomes stronger and presently has "a clean bill of health!"

I know the Society. And you must never imagine that a time will ever come when the Society will be so strong and solid that some sluggish members won't be found in it. That is human weakness! Just as people have faults and frailties, these will also occur in a society. It will never be as perfect as it should be. I really wish that everything which happened in these past 17 years could be written down – there are so many things!

If you knew how repeatedly circumstances arose before me where I had to say: here only God can help! As I said earlier, one [Vatican] congregation assured me: If you had not enjoyed protection from above, the Society would have been sunk long ago by these difficulties. And how many things that some people wanted to do to me! At the very beginning of the Society a priest came to me and said it was best for me to leave Rome. He assured me that in two years I would be dead – and now twice as many, five times as many years have passed, and still God lets me live despite my weak health.

Some even wanted to merge the Society with another. Not a good idea, as the experience of history shows that such matters don't succeed. This request seemed to me like tying up two trees to make a single one. This protection from above which we experienced in these 17 years (you must realize it is not a matter of days but years) was very great, and all the while storms raged both inside and out! I don't know whether there was one authority to which they did not turn – from the emperor up to the pope, and down to the humblest member of the Society. Nevertheless here it stands. In eternity you will finally see all this!

Someone told me that this person or that person has already written it down that the storm would descend on the Society, and within a few days he was in his grave. The danger was sometimes so great, the need so big, that I could only pray to God for help. Nevertheless, however high the waves of the sea piled up they subsided again without inflicting any damage. How many had already believed the Society was really finished. Yes, the time came when they could say: "Now, it is dissolved!" Nevertheless it stands, it walks, it strides forward!

Yes, it even came to the point that some considered the destruction of the Society a good thing! Do you think that without protection from above, without help from above, the Society would still exist? This protection from above must only strengthen our confidence that the Society is from God. It must fortify and encourage you to fight and to endure, and above all never to relax your zeal, and to battle against all dangers. And as for a weapon, I especially advise you simply to put your trust in God. When for example critics or others fainthearted souls arise, whatever may happen, remember: *Adjutorium in Nomine Domini*. "Help is in the

name of the Lord.” Or if someone leaves [the Society] or if several fall: *Adjutorium in Nomine Domini*. Or if any need or another distress comes where you don’t see any way out: *Adjutorium nostrum in Nomine Domini!* “Our help is in the name of the Lord!”

In all this, however, never pass judgment about any individual. We have no right to judge individuals! Therefore, if someone falls, or leaves, or agitates against the Society in any manner – even if one sees it as his duty to work for the downfall of the Society – the truth will come out by itself. Let’s not pass judgment on individuals, but let us excuse where we can. Judgment belongs to God! When you enter the world, the apostolate, how many opinions, etc. you will hear about our Society! Always remember *Adjutorium nostrum in Nomine Domini!* How some will shake you with their criticism, maybe shake the whole tree. Still: *Adjutorium nostrum in Nomine Domini!* Always, in all situations, stand firm in all needs and dangers! Be solid! Never rely on people but: *Adjutorium nostrum in Nomine Domini!*

1898/12/23

We are approaching the most holy Christmas celebration when the Savior of the world, *Salvator mundi*, appeared and brought us peace. Now in this feast of Christmas, I too would like to wish you peace – peace with God, peace with your superiors, and peace with your fellow human beings, your confreres. You should use this short time remaining before Christmas quite well to restore peace if it is disturbed or missing somewhere.

First, I wish you peace with God. Seek to remove all that could disturb this peace! I wish you peace with the superiors if it should be disturbed, and peace with your fellows. You must know that if peace with God and neighbor is disturbed, this is damaging. How many bad things happen for example, if peace with one’s confreres and superiors is disturbed! How difficult it will then be to progress! So if peace is missing somewhere, put everything back in order! Be assured, however, that peace sometimes means sacrifices! If you want to have peace with God you must fight – fight strongly against the enemies of your salvation! If you are not willing to fight, you will never attain peace with the superiors! You must be able to withstand something! If sometimes God himself chastises people he loves so very much, there will also be times when the superiors must impose orders that don’t sit well with human nature! And then you must also realize that those superiors are people too! *Alter alterius onera portate!* “Bear one another’s burdens.” We must be able to endure something in order to have peace with our fellows!

More than anything else, being overly sensitive endangers peace! If we are too sensitive we will never preserve peace! But once you yourselves have attained this peace, as I hope you will,

firmly resolve especially in this time, to live according to the rules and orders of the superiors. And try to do all you can to bring peace to your fellows and to be at peace with them!

Consider the many million hearts that are without peace, that are either deeply mired in sin, in mistaken beliefs, or in lack of faith. We should bring peace to these. The Divine Savior became a human being for their sake! Thus, we should take peace to the most remote countries, to those heathens who still sit in the shadow of death. No place, no nation, no sex, and no people should be too distant for us. Nothing should be too difficult for us to convey this same peace. We want to bring peace to all, from Eskimos to Africans. Nobody should be out of the question as far as it is possible for us with God's grace!

Now, however, when you still cannot get out to announce this peace, at least do what you can here [in the Motherhouse], whether through letters or in any other way. Even from here we have to exercise a great apostolate and we can do much if we are full of God's spirit!

If we want to bring peace to people we will find the way! And since Providence has arranged that material resources are necessary to develop these works, so in the same manner do what you can right here! In this way you put your zeal into practice. Just imagine how much you will be able to initiate if you would do whatever you are able to do. How many more priests would perhaps venture forth, and how many hundred thousand more [souls] could have been rescued! How many could have been gained for heaven, how many could have received this peace!

Therefore, I wish you peace with God, with your superiors, and with your fellows. Then at this very holy feast of Christmas, if you have peace with God and neighbor and are filled with strong zeal, I hope that you will do everything you can to strive for self-sanctification. Each one should be a channel of this zeal. Each should be *vir pacificus*, "a peaceful man" who takes peace everywhere he goes or lives; who takes peace everywhere. Where it is ruptured he restores it, and where it exists he strengthens it. *Estote viri apostolici, viri pacifici!* "Be apostolic men, men of peace!"

1898/12/31 Saturday

At the close of the year it is appropriate to glance back at the past and to ask ourselves: what kind of advances did I make this past year? Among these advances I count three kinds: one is an advance toward eternity; another is the advance toward heaven; and the other toward hell.

Surely we have all done the first! Every one of us has moved one year closer to eternity. So each of us wonders: toward which of the other two did I advance? Toward heaven or, God forbid, toward hell? Is it possible that there is danger along the way I have been traveling, such that if I continue on this path I will never arrive at my goal? The other path is toward eternity. We walk this way safely, not knowing whether this year is our last or not! So let us not wander the path to hell but [the path] to heaven, remembering the old saying: “where the tree leans, there it will fall.”

So in the year ahead let us work to lead a conscientious life fulfilling the duties of our vocation. This way, at the end of the next year (if we are granted another year) we can say: I journeyed on the way to heaven.

Another point I would like to stress is that you always remain grateful children. Be grateful above all to God, your greatest benefactor, then to your superior, and to all of your benefactors. And don't forget that it is easy to sway God with gratitude. God especially hears a prayer performed in grateful memory of benefits received. The same is also true with human beings: if we are grateful, others will more easily respond to us. Be grateful to your superiors because that is your duty. And your gratitude will prompt

the goodwill of your superiors. Every grateful act is an incentive to goodwill.

Another point that is so important to apostolic religious, especially in terms of their activity, is brotherly love! The devil will disturb brotherly love wherever he can. Therefore, resist him and heed St. John's words: *Filioli, diligite alterutrum*. “Sons, love one another.” Remember this. It is so important. For the Order, the community where one must endure so much, it is so necessary. In the community where there is so much to endure, you should help one another through mutual love to endure patiently whatever comes your way. Mutual forbearance is always required even if everyone were so good: *alter alterius onera portate!* “Bear one another's burdens!” Therefore, whatever comes your way, endure it, and don't always suspect [others of] a bad intention.

Also bear with your superiors if something should befall you, or if they must refuse you something in accordance with their sacred duty: *Oportet magis oboedire Deo!* “It is necessary rather to obey God [than man].” Remember that superiors sometimes come into situations where they would gladly grant you this or that, but higher authority says: *non licet* “it is not permitted.” In such a case don't push superiors too much, because otherwise you change yourself into persecutors of your superiors, so to speak, and offend against justice.

Therefore, endure one another, including the superiors. You should anticipate each other. Each should make the other glad and not inflict unnecessary sacrifices. Everyone should anticipate the other, yes everyone should obey the other. Love one another *re et veritate*, “in deed and in truth.” You must be grateful in word

and deed. Indeed, you should show your love through perseverance; and you yourselves know how much there is to endure. Everyone should carry the other's burden and ease the other's load as far as possible.

Therefore, look back for a moment and ask yourself what advances you have made, and always be truly grateful, especially at the end of the year. Remember your duty to be grateful to God, to the benefactors, and to the superiors. In the year ahead, especially distinguish yourselves in love, particularly love among yourselves and love for your superiors, *re et veritate*, "in deed and in truth," through mutual forbearance and patience. And so far as your duty allows, do not make life burdensome for one another.

1899/01/13

I have already repeatedly stressed maintaining unity among yourselves and with your spiritual head, *ut omnes sint unum*, "that all may be one." This unity is so important for a congregation, for a society. Through it you will become strong and powerful and accomplish great things.

Now, however, one precondition for this unity is surrendering one's own opinion, subjugating one's own judgment, and adopting the judgment of one's spiritual father and following him. In fact, this is true for the Society first of all as regards its purpose and in respect to the means for achieving its mission. It is equally true as regards studies, contemplation, and spiritual exercises. Oh, I just wish you could grasp the significance of this unity. I can't even put into words what follows from the one and from its opposite! But after some years the truth will reveal itself. One must follow the same approach when it comes to conforming with the Founder's intention to fulfill the apostolate.

I'll use only a few examples from history to show you how necessary this unity is, touching those cases where the ones concerned held their own considered opinions. You know that both St. Ignatius and St. Cajetan were founders of religious orders. They both founded orders, but they were so far apart they held virtually opposite principles. St. Cajetan prohibits begging. He expects everything [to come] from Divine Providence. But St. Ignatius expressly ordered (with some few exceptions) that all should be quite financially sound. Furthermore, we know how strict this divinely illuminated founder was towards those who held to private opinions. You know that he drove one house superior out of the

community at night, not wanting to live under the same roof with someone he knew followed a private opinion. We also know that he simply dismissed the sole philosophy professor in the Society because he followed a contrary opinion in philosophy. He did this because, inspired by God, he recognized how important this unity is.

Let's look at our present day, examining Turin. Here we also see two founders of societies. The venerable founder Cottolengo left everything to Providence, and still today, 4,000 people live in one house supported only by Providence. The other, Don Bosco, begs throughout the whole world by writing. Nevertheless, both are led by God – by one and the same God. And if these principles now were to be reversed, neither society would achieve its purpose.

Therefore, unity! And where this unity is missing you can be sure of failure. Each congregation has its own spirit, and as soon as you stray you go down the wrong track. An apple tree is not a pear tree; a Franciscan is not a Dominican; a Jesuit is not a Trappist. And it is the mind of the Church that after the death of the founder, she calls attention to the spirit of the founder. Survey all the orders and you will see clearly their many different approaches. Then it will be easy for you to say: this [combining of things] can't work; it is as if one wanted to graft two trees – to form a Dominican in a Jesuit order! Yet both are orders of the Catholic Church; both are tolerated in it; one cannot judge the other.

So now what does this subjugation of judgment involve? Younger religious profit more readily from it than older religious. The more experienced [religious] find it all the more difficult, although it remains so necessary even for an old religious. If you have this unity and subdue your own opinion, conforming to the

spirit of the founder, you will have peace with the superiors and with yourself. You will be happy in this life here on earth, and will make many others happy. If we don't focus on one goal we will have a Babylon, and Babylon fell. And if from pure love we subjugate ourselves to God's will, we will find the greatest solace when dying. We will be able to say: Lord, I did what your Vicar told me. However, the others, those who trusted their own will, will be unhappy. Without wishing it, they are dogged by strife and in the end, what is even worse – I don't want to say!

Look into nature and into history! There you will find ample proof of this. And I admonish each superior, each formator; and if he doesn't do this he is working against the Society. This is true regarding the means to the end, and the method and the means to implement these means, even in the area of studies. One wants the curriculum of the Jesuits, another that of the Capuchins or Franciscans. Church authority allows freedom; but they [members] should follow their founder. Therefore, unity and again unity! Think of how you harm yourself through the opposite [disunity]. Success or misfortune, peace or strife, joy or remorse are in your hands.

When the Society started, a great spiritual man asked me: Did you yet attract to yourself one who lives completely according to your spirit? And I responded: I do have one who submits completely to me. And he told me: The Society is now established. And that was true. And that man is still in [the Society] precisely because he submitted, and he is Fr. Bonaventure [Lüthen]! Therefore, unity, and I say again unity, and again unity!

1899/01/20

We talked last time about how necessary it is to agree with one's superiors in everything and to subjugate one's own judgment to that of the superior. I would like to alert you to another point today: that you also subjugate your wills, especially concerning what you do in your present and future apostolic work. This is so important, yet it can be so easily overlooked. It is, therefore, the spiritual father's duty to alert you to the dangers of not doing so and the advantages of doing so.

First, you should submit concerning your sphere of activities, your tasks. Accept and carry out what the superior assigns you. Do it willingly and eagerly, *totis viribus*, "without reservation" whether the task is agreeable or unpleasant. This is how you should conform yourself to the instructions of the superior. It is above all necessary to mention here that no one should force himself into any particular activity or office by pressuring the superiors directly or indirectly, even though each member is allowed, and it is his duty when difficulties occur, respectfully to explain to his superiors his reasons.

No one should impose himself; the reasons for this are clear. First, the superior is your superior. Although he is and remains a human being, still he represents God and can count on God's assistance in managing things rightly. Furthermore, he has normally at least, a better knowledge of individuals, both their good and bad qualities. Moreover, he knows better how to judge what contributes most to God's honor, to the welfare of the individual, and to the good of the Society. Furthermore, sometimes the superior comes into the situation where he must transfer someone to a very different position; if the person concerned holds to the

one assignment, he won't come to the other. So the superior knows the circumstances better, knows better the dangers that threaten one individual more than another. Furthermore, it is important that one subordinates himself to the superior's judgment because then one can expect God's blessing. Then if dangers arise, you can pray quite differently to God if you are able to say: I did not come here on my own, your vicar sent me here.

But how vastly different it must be if one has to admit to himself: I forced the superiors to send me here, and now here I sit, abandoned by God and people. I would like to fill out this picture, which I have so often before my eyes. Look at the moths at night, how they fly round and round the flame until they burn their wings. And how easily human beings can come into this same situation. They let nothing persuade them, superiors must give in, until the one concerned burns at least his wings.

Therefore, I beg you always to submit in whatever you do. That way you can expect God's blessing and can say: God sent me here. But this does not exclude the fact that, if you have difficulties, you should not share them with the superiors. I could tell you some dreadful incidents from history when people shirked their office. However, I need not cite incidents for you from history; it goes without saying.

What I undertake in obedience, I can expect that God will bless and I can hope that it will turn out for the best. If the opposite is true, then I cannot expect God's blessing. Already now it is so important that everyone submits himself to the superior and gladly accepts even the lowest position that may be given to him. If you don't accustom yourself to this now, how will you act in this situation

later? Then you must truly fear that sooner or later you will be derailed. But if you can master yourself now there is hope. But don't imagine that later it will be as easy as it is now. Therefore, follow your superior everywhere; abandon yourself to Providence and do your duty.

In closing, I would still like to admonish you not to insist, God has willed it this way or that. Let the superiors test it [i.e., your idea] and submit willingly to their judgment. That is another important point for unity, a point to which I now return. We must have unity in order to accomplish great things. And look, if one of you has a position where he seems not to accomplish much, you will do great things by just holding together harmoniously with the group. Therefore, follow your superiors both in what you do and in what you desire. Practice this now: *ecce paratus sum ad omnia*, "behold I am prepared for anything" and: *Non mea sed tua fiat voluntas!* "Not my will but yours be done!" And what solace you will find at the end of [your] life if you can say: I fought the good fight on the battlefield where Providence put me. But what can you expect if straying from the will of the superior, *sine consilio* "without consultation," if against his will you stray in the fight and fall in danger of defeat. Then carefully consider that most probably you will not be one of those [found living] in the rule, *ex quibus facta est salus*, "one of those who are saved."

1899/01/27

This month many reports came in about the work and apostolic activity of the confreres, some of whom are wonderfully effective. This must fill us with solace; thanks be to God! Certainly all of you also want one day to be active and to work zealously for the salvation of immortal souls. However, realizing these wishes depends on various factors.

One main condition for beneficial and fruitful apostolate is zeal for souls. Therefore, zeal for souls! If you want to work effectively you must have great zeal for souls. But how can I stimulate my zeal for souls? How can I by myself acquire great zeal for souls?

First you must have a living faith! Furthermore purity of heart! Pay special attention to this: [both] pure zeal for souls, [and] purity of heart. Because zeal can also be present in other forms, and then great danger creeps in by itself.

A third point I would like to stress to arouse your zeal for souls is meditation, most of all contemplating the value of one immortal soul. You know, I have already repeatedly told you, that St. Catherine of Siena claims that if one saw the beauty of a single soul, one would be ready to die a thousand times daily in order to rescue it.

Another stimulus is contemplation on the sufferings of Christ. Consider what the God-man suffered for the sake of souls!

The examples of the saints should be for us another incentive;

in these days look especially at the activity of St. John Chrysostom [January 27] and St. Francis de Sales [January 29].

Another spur for you should be the future reward of heaven. Oh, consider well the glorious reward, the crown in heaven for a priest who is zealous for souls: *multiplicabis coronas quot animas salvabis!* “You will garner crowns in proportion to the number of souls you save.” Remember that the more you rescue souls, the greater your crown becomes. Therefore, pay proper attention to this in contemplation and fathom it deeply! Living faith and purity of heart.

Finally, one more means: prayer! Ah, many prayers! Yes, pray with living faith and purity of heart. Pray much!

And then the worthy reception of Holy Communion! You should leave the communion rail *tamquam leones ignem spirantes* – we leave this meal like lions spewing fire against the demons!

Therefore, meditate on this and think about it to the end, how awful for hell and for the demons is a priest zealous for souls. Therefore, you should try so hard to use the means to become true apostolic workers, zealous for souls! Therefore, zeal for souls, and look for all the means to acquire this!

1899/02/03

We spoke last time about how to acquire zeal for souls. Now let me add to the last talk that zeal for souls is also acquired and increased by the exercise of the same. So if you want to strengthen and increase your zeal for souls, then practice it even now as far as that is possible. Admittedly, it is for the most part not yet possible for you publicly to fight on the battlefield and to appear against the enemies of salvation and to snatch souls from the enemies. Nevertheless, all of you already now have, more or less, the opportunity to practice zeal for souls, and among all these opportunities I mention prayer.

Through prayer you can already now practice great zeal for souls, not merely within the community but to the ends of the earth. First you should practice zeal for souls by praying much for the Society. Pray quite earnestly that the Society fulfills the mission it set for itself, and consider how much the Society can accomplish for God’s honor and the salvation of souls. So first of all pray for the Society. Then, however, pray for its members, especially for those who are hovering in danger and who are to a greater or lesser degree exposed to great dangers in their work. Pray for our members, especially those in the missions, so that they remain on guard against these dangers and have the blessing of heaven on their work. Then pray also for sinners, pray for the conversion of humanity; oh, there is so much you can already do here [in the Motherhouse]! Pray, therefore, pray! Use this weapon in your zeal for souls. By doing this you will at the same time exercise and enkindle your zeal for souls.

Consider, too, what great things you can accomplish through

it [i.e., prayer] and look at those heroes – St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis Xavier, [the Divine Savior] – who prayed through the night. Look at so many saints, St. Boniface, etc. Pray that the Lord blesses your work. Pray for those for whom one day you must work, suffer and fight. Pray with great trust and deep humility. Pray earnestly! Oh use this means, what they call the coin minted in heaven with which one purchases heaven. Therefore, always pray. *Oratio penetrabit nubes et donec perveniat ad thronum non quiescit*. “Prayer will pierce the clouds and not rest until it reaches the throne.” Oh, if you once recognized what a heroic medium God had given us in prayer! Oh, always pray: *assiduitate orationum*; “pray fervently.” See to it that you pray constantly, continually! *Orate et nolite cessare*. “Pray and never cease.” And no one of us can say that he can’t. Every one of us can pray. Therefore, let us pray for sinners, for our confreres who are in dangers in their apostolates, who are in danger, and pray for souls. And once again, pray for the Society. And imagine what a holy phalanx, an army of soldiers for God’s honor can do. One single good member can bring so much blessing; a single individual can convert a whole nation. *Sufficit unus, totum corrigere populum*. “One is enough to steer an entire nation.”

Therefore, pray! Pray for the Society, for sinners, for the confreres. Do this with an eye to the example of the saints and of the Divine Savior in the Garden of Olives who *pernoctans in oratione*, “spent the night in prayer,” of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis Xavier, and be confident to the end. If you want to be great men you must become men of prayer. Pray, therefore, and pray again!

1899/02/10

Tomorrow’s feast [the Apparition] of the Immaculate Conception should remind us again of our special task as members of the Society to promote the veneration of the Most Blessed Virgin, *verbis et scriptis*, “in word and in writing.” In fact, even now we should practice this apostolate as far as possible, and later [we should practice it] in an expanded manner in the field.

But now, how should we help carry out this apostolate of the veneration of God’s mother? Today let me stress this to you; in fact, it is exactly the same point which occurs in tomorrow’s Office. It is reciting, praying the rosary. Although it is true that this [devotion] is not stipulated in our rule, however, I would not like to give the impression that one who doesn’t say the rosary is a good member of the Society. Search your soul, therefore, whether you really always say the rosary. When you pray it in common, of course that doesn’t indicate anything special. But see that you also say the rosary in your mission stations, or if you are alone, or if you are no longer required to pray it in common. Oh, that you say it regularly then. I attach so much importance to this. And I would like to add that by this [whether or not you pray the rosary] one can tell whether you are on the way up or down.

The rosary is such an important matter – about this there can be little doubt if we look at the examples of the saints: Francis of Assisi, St. Francis de Sales, who never came home too late to pray the rosary. Blessed Hofbauer claims that if he was administering Extreme Unction, as long as he was able to recite the rosary, normally the soul was saved.

Just look at today's Office, look to God's vicar [the pope] who repeatedly asks all Christians and Catholics to pray the rosary. And we, we who should especially be engaged in honoring the Mother of God, should we not say it? Therefore, heed well this indicator: if you say the rosary it is a good sign; however, if when left to yourself you don't say it, that is not a good sign.

But now, how should we pray the rosary? *Distincte, attente et devote*, with attention and devotion, actually the way every good prayer should be offered. And this with a view to the life and sufferings of our Divine Savior, so that by contemplating our Divine Savior we become like him. In addition, I remind you urgently to pray the rosary for the intention of the Society, and at this opportunity I would like to ask you to follow the *Intentio Societatis* daily just as it appears in the book (*Manna Religiosum*, page...). This too, I would like to say, is a compass that always reveals where one is standing! Perhaps you forget once or twice. But if you omit it out of indifference you can be sure this is not a good sign. Therefore, pray the rosary for the Society and make the daily good intention, the *Intentio Societatis*. Then, say it [the rosary] for your own special intention, for those personal concerns and other concerns for which you are obliged to pray.

Oh yes, pray. Pray the rosary! We wear it publicly before the whole world. So commit yourself always to saying it up to the end of your life. Pray the rosary everywhere. Let us never omit it and let us recite it well, *devote, attente et distincte*; let us say it for the Society. This one prayer strengthens and unites us. Pray over the temptations and concerns that everyone has. "If two or three pray in my name I am there in their midst." Never omit praying the

rosary even for one day until the day you die. And especially on this feast, and each year when you come to this place in the breviary where it deals with the rosary, remember never to omit praying the rosary each day of your life, and above all to pray for the Society and for your own concerns.

1899/02/17

It is my fervent wish that all of you be imbued by the correct spirit of the Society. So much depends on this, yes, perhaps the salvation of thousands and millions. Therefore, today I would like to stress what must always be regarded as an essential component of our society: universality. *Omnibus et ubique* “to everyone and everywhere.” I would like to address this point today.

The Society is universal! There are orders and institutes that serve a limited purpose, that work only at home, or are very localized in one country or diocese or nation. However, other orders in the church are universal, like the order of St. Francis. Now our task, the mission of our Society, the spirit of our Society is this: *omnibus et ubique*. Therefore, it is important that you, each and every one of you, be imbued with this spirit: *praedicate verbum Dei omnibus creaturis*, “preach the word of God to all creatures” as expressed daily in the *Intentio Societatis*, “Intention of the Society”, where the purpose and the task, the universality of the Society is expressed.

Always hold on to this universality. Keep focused on the *ubique et omnibus*! Thus, the Society is not destined for Italy or Germany. It is for all countries, and each one in his place has the task, the duty, to participate in spreading this spirit. We shut out no nation. And it is also the spirit of the Society that people of every nation are admitted. This is a very important point. And if you stray from this you depart from the spirit of the Society. In addition, as the Society is not narrowly limited either to place or social class, so we should work with the educated and the uneducated, with the sophisticated and with the simple and uneducated. No nation, no

people, no situation is beyond consideration. It is especially important for you to heed this. Therefore, don't always concentrate on where the greatest success is to be found. Everywhere there are souls, there we must work. This is what I would like to leave you as my testament.

Don't deviate from this. Especially those who govern the Society and must work together should heed this. And take seriously that if you deviate from this, then you stray from the very essence of the Society. The opposite of this spirit of the Society is borders, bias, nationalism, whatever one may call it, preferring this or that nation, or looking down with disdain on these or those people! Therefore, among us as members of the Society there should be no nations. All countries!

Seek to learn and to study the good qualities of each people. Become interested in all people, and at times you will find some good about people whom you had viewed with prejudice. And if you arrive at the Himalayas, or South America, or into the mountains, or into the wilderness – think everywhere: that is my brother [or sister] who I must rescue! Therefore, seek to protect this spirit of universality!

On the other hand, try to nourish this universal spirit, and as far as possible in a serious way so that you get to know other peoples. Always try to nurture this spirit. And so pray that God gives you the needed strength. And if tomorrow the call comes to go to a savage people, go joyfully and don't worry whether you will have much success or not. *Omnibus*! “To everybody!” It is quite possible that you will work for years without bearing fruit, and that only another will see the fruits.

I never forget the words Fr. Liebermann directed to the first missionaries he sent to Africa: “You must save Africa through the sacrifices you bring.” We see nowadays that the Holy Ghost Fathers have accomplished so much. So I tell you: the sacrifices you bring should contribute to saving souls both here and abroad. And once again in closing: remember never stray from this universality. This is my deepest wish that I want to see firmly grounded before my death, so that maybe later the *horror difficultatum* “the fear of difficulties” won’t arise [within our Society] to the great detriment of the church.

Therefore: *omnibus!* To whatever country you will be sent, each one of you should embrace as my testament that the Society is called for all peoples. It is called to admit members from all nations if they can meet the necessary conditions. And if you stray [from this testament], be careful lest you inflict great damage thereby. It is particularly important of course that you never foster repugnance or sympathy toward any one nation. But remember that you are brothers, whatever nation you come from, whatever you may call it. And I want you to remember you are all brothers and to work accordingly. Each and every member of the Society, Italian or French or German or Chinese is a brother and belongs to the Society. And everyone should esteem him as his brother.

1899/02/24

Today is the feast of St. Matthias when we remember Jude and Matthias, two important representatives of the apostolate. We want to look briefly at St. Matthias, in fact at one chief quality of any apostle: the spirit of sacrifice. The spirit of sacrifice is very necessary for an apostle. To be an apostle demands the spirit of sacrifice, and the Divine Savior says to his apostles when they demanded honors, ... [that they would have to be able to drink the cup]. The holy church says: *Euntes ibant et flebant mittentes semina sua. Calicem Domini biberunt apostoli.* “They went out full of tears sowing their seed. The apostles drank the chalice of the Lord.” Therefore, an apostle must have the spirit of sacrifice. Experience shows us that.

If we go through the whole roster of apostolic workers, all were tortured from the apostles until now. Where is the apostolic worker, the apostle, who didn’t need to suffer greatly? Look at the members of the church, the foundation on which you walk, what innumerable sufferings they underwent, so many martyrs! Then, also go through the individual countries, Germany and other countries, how much they suffered, for example St. Boniface and others. They sowed with tears. And look at other countries that were won for Christianity – what sufferings it took to conquer them! Look at the mission countries!

Therefore, the Divine Savior teaches us that the apostle must have the spirit of sacrifice. This is clear! Because whoever starts out saving souls, whoever undertakes great things for God’s honor and the salvation of souls, hell will be outraged against him. As much as it can it will direct its aggression against him. Then, comes

human passion, that also works against apostles, and against which the apostle must fight and wrestle. Then come the trials in which God permits inner sufferings, failure in one's work, yes maybe what happened to St. Paul even happens to you. Therefore, the spirit of sacrifice is necessary. This is what we are taught by the church, by the dear Savior, and by our experience and circumstances.

It is, therefore, important that even now you get used to sufferings. Appropriate the spirit of sacrifice, and exercise it insofar as virtue and obedience allow. Whoever does not stand firm in sufferings, or does not possess the spirit of sacrifice is in danger of collapsing when he arrives on the battlefield. So practice even now! Practice meditating also on the sufferings of Christ and find there your strength in suffering. He is our model. Each and every one should think, when God calls you to a great apostolic labor, that he is also saying of you: "I will show him what he must suffer!"

You know that an apostolic laborer accomplishes more through sufferings than through effort. That is why the Divine Savior said: "I will show him how much he must suffer," not how much he must preach, how much he must work, or how many he must convert. Oh, that during your apostolic service none of you will flee Mount Calvary, desiring in vain to live only on Mount Tabor. Whoever doesn't want Calvary is useless. If you want to accomplish great things, be ready to follow the Savior and to die to the world ... to follow not just to Tabor, but all the way to Calvary. Get ready, therefore, and train yourselves by contemplating the sufferings of Christ. Get your strength and power and zeal there, so that you will be able to endure everything for the honor of God and the salvation of souls.

1899/03/03

The Divine Savior said to his apostles: *Nisi efficiamini sicut parvuli, non intrabitis in regnum Dei*. "If you do not become like children, you will not enter into the kingdom of God." Now if the Divine Savior already demands that a true Christian becomes like a child, this [command] is all the more important for a religious, a Christian who wants to leave all things and to practice Christianity in its perfection. Therefore, the religious should become *sicut parvulus*, in fact simple like a child, open like a child, humble like a child, modest like a child, obedient like a child, faithful like a child, etc. In the novitiate the religious should be introduced to this spirit, and in the second novitiate this spirit should be reinforced so that it lasts one's whole life.

Among these childlike qualities I especially want to point out to you the childlike relationship to one's superior, which exists in reverence, in trust, in full confidence, in full love, full of attentiveness, fidelity, etc. I am not talking about reverence to my person as such, but in relation to the position Divine Providence has given me. So protect this childlike spirit. Especially nurse the spirit of openness, humility, modesty, obedience, fidelity, devotion and love.

If you practice this you will also enjoy good results. In particular you will then comply with the orders of the superiors much more easily than if you were not childlike. And if you are like children, *sicut parvuli*, you will become happy in your vocation. Because when the father's relationship to the child is untarnished, the children are happy, and you won't injure your vocation. If you go to the superior with openness you will resist temptations more easily. *Ergo, efficiamini sicut parvuli*. "Therefore, become like children."

If this is already required of any true Christian, it is required from you all the more: you who desire to practice Christianity in its perfection. Especially remove the greatest obstacle: pride, which makes things so difficult for some people.

This Lent, especially study the Divine Savior. Look at his humility, how he, *humillimus – humiliavit semetipsum*, “was the most humble, he humbled himself.” And behold the mother at the foot of the cross, how she humbled herself; look at the beloved disciple John under the cross, how he endures innocently at the foot of the cross. Therefore, be like the dear Savior to the end, the humble one who humbled himself. Pray that the holy apostles and St. John and the Blessed Mother will always protect your childlike spirit, which brings you so much good. And if you should not possess it [this childlike spirit], take the trouble through prayer and humility to acquire it so that you will also possess the treasures it brings.

1899/03/10

St. Joseph is one of our special patrons. Therefore, it is fitting to venerate St. Joseph in a special way. Already we pray monthly in his honor, and tomorrow the novena will begin.

Now how should we venerate him? I answer: 1) through prayer, especially through the prayers you are now conducting with great devotion; 2) that during this time you yourselves try to appropriate love, and especially those virtues which are so important to a religious.

First, you should develop a deep love for Jesus and Mary! Then, particularly for poverty, obedience, and silence. From St. Joseph learn silence, obedience, humility, and especially the love of Jesus and Mary! Furthermore, while praying this novena you should attend to its particular purposes, first of all are the needs and concerns. Everyone will have more than enough to pray for! But during this novena pray also for the Society, for its concerns, especially that it grow stronger and stronger within and that it spreads. Pray also that we arrive at the situation where we are again able to admit more members. In addition ask St. Joseph, the patron of the poor who helps us so gladly, to procure for us also the resources we need.

In closing I would still like to recommend the veneration of St. Joseph your whole life long, especially that you submit your personal concerns to him as you do the concerns of the Society. And I hope you will never regret it! Just remember what St. Theresa says: she never took refuge in St. Joseph in vain. Let us imitate her and we too will discover the powerful protection of this heavenly patron.

1899/03/17

What is the highest praise for a religious? Is it learning – if people say you are scholarly or possess great knowledge? Or is it usefulness; i.e., that you can do everything in any offices, and are useful in every undertaking? Is this really the most praiseworthy thing to be said for a religious? Or is it piety? Certainly, these are splendid qualities. However, the highest praise one can give a religious is not that you are scholarly, useful, or devout!

The highest praise one can give a religious is to say you are observant; i.e., distinguishing yourself in the very thing that makes you a religious! Therefore, to be called observant is the highest praise one can give a religious! But what does it mean to be observant? In fact, the observant religious is the one who observes the rules, all the rules, both the important ones and the less important ones, because all are important! Therefore, whoever observes the rules, all of them, is observant and deserves the highest praise!

Why is being observant so praiseworthy? Because it is an unending sacrifice. Because there are many rules to be observed. Continuously throughout the whole day we meet the rules, and observing them calls for self-mastery, it calls for fighting against self-love, fighting against pride. Yes, observance is a ceaseless struggle, an unending sacrifice, a fight against self-love, against unruly inclinations, an unending sacrifice, and therefore honorable, and praiseworthy! How I wish you would, therefore, always bear this hallmark, the most beautiful characteristic of a religious. And how I wish that the first thing people would say about you is: he is observant! Your highest praise is simply this, it characterizes what you should be: good religious.

Oh yes, you should seek to be observant at all times, for God's honor and for the salvation of souls. And may all of you observe what the rule stipulates so that people can say this most praiseworthy thing about every one of you: there goes an observant religious.

1899/03/24A

We saw last time that observance is so important, that the highest praise a religious can hear is: there goes one who is observant. Today I would like to tell you that observance is also useful, it brings God's blessing. *Observantia est utilis*, "observance is useful" mostly in fact for the individual. Observance generates personal contentment, a good conscience, and happiness. In short, observance makes the religious happy and content with his life. Furthermore, observance generates the goodwill of the superiors. What joy, what solace for the superiors, if they can think: this and that one are observant, they observe their rules. What joy, what solace for the superiors! It makes governing so easy when there is holy harmony between superiors and subordinates!

Furthermore, observance generates the goodwill of the good confreres! How popular an observant religious is, how gladly others interact with him, how gladly they make him a companion in their sufferings, works and efforts. Yes, observance wins the respect of the confreres. Observance makes for good agreement, that strong bond of brotherly solidarity and united effort! How much could be said about this point!

Observance pleases God. An observant religious calls down God's blessing! God desires to bless his works; God wants to give him many graces. God wants to comfort him in his affliction, and even when he is troubled the observant religious desires to take his refuge confidently in God! So many good things you draw to yourself as observant religious!

And finally, observance fortifies your holy vocation. Only the

one who observes the rule can know whether it [one's vocation] is from God or not. He will taste the benefits to which he is entitled through following the vows, yes he will persevere. Whoever keeps these injunctions will recognize whether they [these injunctions] are from God; and this fortifies the observant religious in his vocation since he will know they are from God.

Therefore, observance is useful for everyone. It begets joy, peace, contentment, a good conscience; it generates contentment in the superiors and confreres; it generates goodwill and good feelings and calls down God's many blessings; and finally it strengthens one's holy vocation! Each of you should put all your effort towards being quite observant, and should seek to find all your happiness now and in eternity only in observance. Whoever up till now has not done his duty – he should not despair. He should start now with all his strength to be a very observant religious. If he tries this, he will soon realize and enjoy the benefits! Therefore, never tire in your efforts. Never regret the sacrifices with which you strive with all your strength to become very observant religious.

1899/03/24B

A religious wins tranquility and peace of mind from the observance of the rules. An observant religious is happy and content in his vocation. His superiors trust him and most easily govern those whom they know to be observant. They are filled with joy and consolation as a result. An observant religious is an example to his confreres; he is greatly esteemed and dearly loved by them. It will be easy for each of them to have him as a companion in their troubles, in getting through both prosperous and difficult situations. It will be apparent to all that one is bound to the other by a bond of fraternal charity.

Moreover, an observant religious is accepted by God, who favors him, gives him grace and increase, consoles him in adversity and difficulties, as long as the religious himself turns to God with full and perfect confidence.

By his observance this religious confirms and strengthens his vocation: only the one who strictly keeps the rules, understands that they come from God. Strengthened in his vocation, he will persevere to the end.

Would that you would all devote all effort and care to be strictly observant, that you not seek your own happiness, either earthly or spiritual, in any other source than in the observance of the rule. However, if someone has neglected it so far, let him not be cast down in spirit but take care by every means possible to become a most observant religious. In a short time, he will reap the fruits. Make every effort therefore to be observant of the rules!

1899/03/31

We have the duty to follow exactly the teachings the Divine Savior gave us while he walked on earth! So how much more should we heed what the Divine Savior said shortly before his death, especially his wishes and requests. One of these excellent requests made by the Divine Savior marked for death is that all be one: *unum sint*. Unity, unity, this was the dying Redeemer's fondest wish. And we who have the special task of imitating the holy apostles, we must consequently fulfill what the Divine Savior asked his apostles to carry out: namely love. We should be of one heart *sicut Apostoli, unum cor, unamque animam habere* "like the apostles, having one heart and one spirit."

Especially for us, to be one is our specific task. We should be one with the spiritual father, one with the superiors and those in charge, one among ourselves. I would particularly like to develop this final point today. This unity among ourselves is particularly fortified by brotherly love, *caritas fraterna*. Brotherly love is a duty that flows directly from the obligation to love our neighbor. The more closely the bonds [of religious life] draw the members into relationship and connect us with each other, the more we are obliged to mutual love. And the bond among religious is so close. We are one family, with one spiritual father, one purpose, one common duty, one habit, one rule. Therefore, we have a special reason to practice brotherly love continually: on the one hand because of this deep bond, and on the other hand because of the specific purpose of our Society: to imitate the holy apostles.

However, brotherly love should be self-sacrificing. Yes, I would like to say that it should be like a mother toward her child: alert,

patient, sympathetic, impartial, not one-sided but embracing all. If it is not extended to all the confreres it will do harm. But if our love is from God, we will love everyone; if, however, it is merely human, there is the immediate danger that we won't love everyone. And this impartial love is especially indispensable in a quite specific way for our Society, which is meant for all people.

Oh, let us hold fast to what we really desire and to our mission of following the holy apostles. That is why we must have brotherly love. *Hoc est praeceptum meum, ut diligatis vos invicem sicut dilexi vos.* "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you." *Hoc est praeceptum meum*, that we imitate the apostles in their love, in fact in their love toward all. Therefore, your love must be sympathetic, true, self-sacrificing, alert, full-hearted, in word and in deed. Love is the hallmark of the Christian.

For the most part, brotherly love accounts for the well-being and advance of the Society. Yes, in large part these depend on brotherly love. In the first place this brotherly love will give us a good reputation outside. "See how they love each other!" People feel drawn to enter the Society when they see how love reigns there.

Furthermore, brotherly love brings about the happiness of individuals. It eases the load, the burden entailed in religious life. Oh, how light the burdens become if brotherly love truly prevails in a family. How easily one will make sacrifices if one knows sincere mutual love prevails. Therefore, brotherly love will make individuals happy, ease sufferings, and help one carry the cross that burdens religious life. Therefore, brotherly love!

To close, I would like to stress one point: at the hour of death

if one didn't practice love, this will be one of his sufferings. Therefore, I admonish you, practice brotherly love in life now so that it doesn't dawn on you for the first time when you lie dying.

Therefore, love! Despite frailty, despite faults and unpleasant dispositions, despite clumsiness, despite moral lapses! Love everyone! Everyone has his failings, more or less. But you should exclude no one from your love. Consider the words St. John so often recommended and which I never forget: *Filioli, diligite alterutrum*; "Sons, love one another." Again: *Filioli, diligite alterutrum*. And you know how he answered the question, why he then repeats this order again and again: because the whole law is contained in it! Therefore, love one another. And may love prevail more and more among us, that really *inter nos et societatem regnat caritas*. "that love reigns among us and the Society."

1899/04/07A

We spoke last time of the usefulness of observance. Today we want to look briefly at the consequences of carelessness in observance, in fact the bad consequences that follow.

At first, careless observance robs the religious of peace of mind, it makes him unhappy. If a religious is no longer very observant, neither will he be happy.

Another disadvantage is that good confreres become saddened by those who are not observant. The confreres who no longer strive for perfection to a greater or lesser degree cause a breach that contributes to dissatisfaction and unhappiness. Thus the peace, the joy, the contentment among the confreres is obstructed and disturbed through carelessness.

Another bad consequence of careless observance is the loss of the pleasure of one's superiors. Instead of giving his superiors joy and solace, the [non-observant] religious makes them sad and anxious; he forces them to reprimand and punish, and so little by little a rift that can widen into a gulf will be created between superiors and subordinates, where a deep relationship should prevail between them.

A fourth disadvantage, a serious evil that follows from careless observance, is that it robs one of God's pleasure. God will withdraw his solace and grace. The religious will go backwards little by little. If he no longer finds his joy in God he will turn elsewhere. As St. Augustine says: the human being must have one joy, *aut in summis*

aut in infimis – either in the highest things or in the lowest; but at some point he must have joy!

A final evil then follows: religious who don't observe the rule properly fall, according to St. Bernard, into serious mistakes: *qui spernit modica, paulatim in gravia decidet*, "the one who neglects small things little by little will fail in serious matters." The careless religious becomes lukewarm, he becomes weary, he no longer finds joy in the spiritual life, he will make more and more mistakes. If God's grace retreats, he will simply fall little by little into serious errors. In this way he becomes unhappy in his vocation. He is divided, unhappy, at odds with his confreres, estranged from his superior; he is no longer on good terms with God. And what misfortunes can then arise, since in this way he embitters the sweet yoke of religious life for himself. [He does this] by throwing himself out of the safe harbor of religious life onto the open sea, to the chagrin of those who remain, to the vexation of the Society and of the confreres. And it is doubtful whether he will save his soul at all, because he began to backslide and who knows where it will end?

Consider, therefore, not only the advantages strict observance brings you, but look also at the bad consequences [of non-observance] even if they seem small. May you never learn this through experience. Learn instead from admonitions, the forceful admonitions above, and never from experience. Therefore, be very observant so that the dangers that threaten a careless religious never befall you! Whoever is observant will persevere and be happy. Whoever is not observant – what dangers lurk for him: failure to persevere, and an even greater danger, loss of his own salvation.

1899/04/07B

A religious who is not observant, the Most Reverend Father says, lacks joy of spirit and is an unhappy person. He gives scandal to his confreres, he causes them bitter sorrow and he destroys harmony; he loses his superior's confidence and, instead of being a source of joy and consolation to him, he brings grief and sadness to him; he forces the superior to reprimand him often, with the result that little by little the one is alienated from the other. But most of all, God withdraws his grace and takes away his joy, having been negligent and careless in small matters, he falls into serious ones. A negligent religious is lukewarm, his religious life and vocation no longer have their sweet flavor. After a greater or lesser time, laying aside the religious habit, he will leave the safe harbor of religious life, to the great sorrow of the Society and of his confreres.

Therefore, learn from the facts and highly esteem the advantages derived from religious observance; consider the loss which comes from their neglect. How I wish you would listen to these warnings with wisdom, lest you have to learn from experience, to your very great disadvantage. Hold fast to this: the observant religious is happy and persevering; the negligent one puts his soul's salvation in jeopardy.

1899/04/14A

In earlier conferences we have seen the blessing that strict observance of the rules brings to individuals, and the damage and curse that neglect of observance inflicts on the individual. Today we want briefly to look at the advantages and blessings observance brings to a community, and the damage careless observance inflicts on a community.

If in a community all the members observe the stipulated rules, if the superiors and the prefects, whoever has an office or an administrative post, if each subordinate observes the stipulated rules exactly, then a harmony develops like [the harmony] you find in an organism. And as this harmony, this order becomes all the greater, this organism will be all the better, the stricter the observance is! The whole community together forms an organism. It's like a machine. And if each small wheel, if everyone in the organism does his job well, all will go smoothly. Harmony and order are like clockwork. This order and harmony in turn generate peace in the community – the greatest happiness that can be granted to a community!

What a surpassing blessing this peace is, this harmony in a community! How easily one can work there, how easily one progresses and fulfills his task, how easily the mission of the whole community is achieved! Thus, good observance generates harmony in the Society, and order and harmony generate peace! You probably know that precisely through concerted effort, through peace, the work and the mission of the Society is achieved. And the greater the peace that originates from observance, the stronger and more powerful the whole community becomes! Furthermore,

observance in a community leads to mutual edification, with one supporting the others through good example. Oh, it is so beautiful and exalted when one builds others up through his observance, and when one supports his superiors, when one helps others to progress.

Observance in a community makes us exclaim: *Quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum*. “How pleasant brothers living as one!” However, constantly strive to be promptly observant, to observe the rules faithfully. Then this harmony, this beautiful accord in the community will advance you considerably and build mutuality. *O quam jucundum est, habitare fratres in unum!*

Careless observance – not observing the rules, not fulfilling one’s duties – brings into a community the very opposite of what was just said. At first, disorder, disharmony, disturbance, and strife crop up. Where does this strife usually have its roots in an order? In not observing the rules. Therefore, without observance no peace; without observance no order, no harmony.

Further, the neglect of observance not only kills peace, harmony and good order, it also poisons the religious life of those members who are still observant. In a word, nonobservance, careless observance of the rules, begets the abhorrence of religious life!

When observance disappears, even worse things follow: decay sets in! A community that has given up observance or that no longer observes well, will inch toward its ruin. I beg you to make strict observance your hallmark as the rules direct. If you find observance in a house or in a community, that will indicate that all is going well, and [signal] whether it will achieve great things or not. And if

you don’t find observance there, you can be sure this community harbors the germ of decay in itself. It won’t succeed without observance. And if you want to discover all means and to accomplish so much – if there is no observance, what will be your compass? If one part of a machine no longer functions – what devastation!

I would like in the end for you to pray, to pray, always to pray. Always to employ this powerful means. Pray especially that strict observance prevails in all the communities of the Society! Ah, then you will become happy, strong and solid. You will achieve great and mighty things, commanding the respect of the world. Pray, therefore, and pray again, that not only the individual attains this blessing, but that the whole community becomes observant. Pray, therefore, and pray again! That is the means by which you can achieve so much!

Realize how powerful prayer is! If you don’t pray properly you won’t be observant. How can you desire to be observant if you don’t have the grace? And how can you desire to have the grace if you don’t pray properly? If we desire to fulfill our mission, if we desire to become great and powerful, then we must pray, pray a lot! So, observance generates order and harmony; and order and harmony generate love and solidarity. And where there is peace and order, where there is good observance, there is edification and mutual support, and it is a joy and bliss to be in such a community. And where there is nonobservance, there is no joy, no peace. Instead there is strife, anger, and decay! Pray, therefore, and pray again. Pray, pray much that observance will flourish in all the houses.

1899/04/14B

If superiors and their subjects and those who hold some office each observes his own rules and regulations they further good order, good organization, harmony. And the stricter the observance, the greater and the more perfect it is. A religious community can be compared to a watch: when all its wheels are working well everything is all right, but if something is out of order, then that is a different matter. Nothing is a greater source of credit to a religious community, nothing nurtures and nourishes observance, piety and steadiness more than concord.

One spurs the other on and motivates him. Therefore, all are committed to each other; there is great mutual esteem. Thus, all can exclaim, "O what a lovely and pleasant thing it is that brothers should live as one together!" And on the contrary, at least ordinarily speaking, neglect of the rule is the root and cause of every disorder. Where the rules are not observed, there is no peace and no concord. Indeed, good religious grow weary of religious life, and decline and ruin [enter] the entire community.

Regular observance shows that all is well with the community and it brings the confident hope that it will achieve great things. I ask you, therefore to pray and to pray without ceasing, that observance will flourish in the Society. In this way you will be happy, truly great, strong and courageous and without a doubt you will achieve great things, so that people will admire you. Where there is prayer, there is grace; prayer is your strength! Pray that observance of the rule will flourish and grow in all the houses of the Society.

1899/04/21

The further the Society extends, the more important it becomes for us to follow this principle: operate always and everywhere according to the spirit and regulations of the institute as observed in the Motherhouse. This has a very great meaning for unity and discipline and for the health of the Society. Today, we want to look at the spirit of the Motherhouse, which should be observed and preserved everywhere. We want to touch on one point: the observance of holy poverty.

Holy poverty should be observed everywhere [just] as it is observed here in the Motherhouse. It should be the same observance, interpreted in the same way. That is to say, we should not observe poverty because we are poor and have few means. But [we should observe poverty] because the spirit of the Society demands it. Therefore, when we no longer live in the Motherhouse but are stationed on one continent or another, we should hold the same spirit and the same observance as in the Motherhouse – and this is particularly applicable for those who become superiors or who must assume responsibility for an isolated mission.

It would be against the spirit of poverty and against the spirit of the Motherhouse if, for example, you begin to deviate in clothing, in equipment, in meals, and in different matters – for example finer clothes, a finer breviary, taking trips, accepting gifts, etc. Therefore, if here or there one acquires much or an abundance, and if one then no longer lives according to the spirit of the Motherhouse or the standard set by our rules, this would be a deviation from the spirit of the Society and would bring about its downfall.

Therefore, generally everywhere you should hold to this observance, realizing however, that in each country one must partake of its customary foods. We have good reason to live quite poorly in accordance with poverty. Regardless of the fact that we who have taken the vow of holy poverty, who must live according to the spirit of Christ and according to the spirit of the apostles. We must also live quite poorly especially because, for the most part, most of the resources that come to us are alms – money earned perhaps through toil and sweat. And even if we come into abundance or even become self-sufficient, we still remain committed to fostering the spirit of the Motherhouse, to practicing poverty and thrift, and to using the resources we collect according to the orders of the superiors. If poverty is observed in this way throughout the Society we will no longer live in great need, and the Motherhouse itself will be in a better situation.

Therefore, live poverty everywhere according to the spirit of the Society! And never refer to this or that [other] order! Each order has its own spirit. Some orders observe strict poverty in certain matters, and perhaps on other points they are not so strict! If you remain everywhere loyal to this spirit of poverty in our Society, and live *in mente Societatis*, “according to the mind of the Society,” you will have God’s blessing. Where poverty and thrift are observed, there blessings reside. And be assured, if any house no longer observes poverty according to the spirit of the Society, it will go down!

For this reason, keep the spirit of poverty as it is now fostered in the Motherhouse. If you observe poverty you will be a bulwark, like St. Ignatius says. However, I always presuppose the correct observance of holy poverty. I don’t exclude acquiring those things

necessary to conserve health, etc. Misunderstandings, therefore, are quite impossible!

Still another point that can be so easily disregarded: heed the spirit of the Motherhouse while traveling. If you observe the spirit of the Motherhouse on trips, you will build, people will hold the Society in high regard, and you can do so much just through example! When we are out in the world we should think back to the Motherhouse with love and joy. The Motherhouse should be your point of reference so to speak! Each good child loves his mother – and the institute, where you endured your first struggles and sufferings, must be holy for each truly good son. And so it should be. You should esteem the Motherhouse wherever you go in the world, and should keep it in mind. This is God’s providential will. These are connected: whoever respects the Society highly will also love the Motherhouse.

I sometimes thought: the place where the Society was established, this house [the Motherhouse] was so abandoned. And God so arranged things that this place which was abandoned by others was transformed by other pious religious into a cloister, into a jewel, and that in this process the Society was given a good omen. Maybe you will only recognize this later, how Providence saw to it that this place was reserved. Therefore, again: the Motherhouse should be for you a model of poverty and thrift, and this will become all the easier for you if you love and esteem it.

1899/04/28

Soon we begin the month of May. Therefore, I would like to remind you again of our duty to venerate God's mother in a special way. This is just the place, this holy city [Rome], the city of the Blessed Mother, where she is venerated in a special way. For us, however, for religious, this is especially applicable because religious who strive for perfection must venerate the Mother of God! In addition, we are obligated to promote the veneration of the Blessed Mother in a special way because of the special purpose of our Society. All this must encourage us to celebrate our May prayers especially well. First of all we should be present quite devoutly at common prayer in the chapel, and in private as well!

Particularly in this month no one, according to the measure of his needs, etc., should neglect venerating the Blessed Mother first of all through meditation. He should also see what faults he still has and completely lay the ax to the root in order to eradicate any existing faults! Especially in this holy month dedicated to the Blessed Mother everyone should strive for purity of heart! Therefore, root out faults! This is how everyone will show his special devotion.

Then, everyone should venerate God's mother by practicing the virtues. Precisely this month, everyone should plan to promote this or that particular virtue in honor of God's mother. Furthermore, everyone should include in his public and private prayers the request that she spread her protective mantel over each individual member and that she aid the sanctification of all members. Furthermore, that she would help us and see to it that the Society grows stronger and stronger inside and out, and that it reaches its lofty goal, and

that it spreads more and more to the honor of the Triune God and of the heavenly mother.

On this occasion I would like to suggest that whenever possible you list your resolutions, whether it be the elimination of faults or the increase of virtues! It is such a praiseworthy practice to write down special *lumina* "insights" in order not to forget them and then later to review them to see whether you really carried them out! How many good resolutions are quickly made but forgotten just as fast! This is one means [not] to forget them slowly. So I would like to suggest that you write them down and look them over from time to time.

Therefore, venerate the Blessed Mother well through public and private prayer, particularly through eliminating faults and acquiring virtues. And be sure to recommend to the heavenly intercessor in a special way the sanctification of all the members and the strengthening of the Society inside and out!

1899/05/05A

Tomorrow when we celebrate the feast of St. John the Apostle. The gospel relates how the Divine Savior asks his disciples: *Potestisne calicem bibere, quem ego bibam?* “Can you drink the cup from which I will drink?” From this you see that the Divine Savior asks whether they could drink the cup he drinks, whether they could endure the sufferings he endures, in a word, whether they are ready to endure sufferings. We see from this that sufferings are the central factor in the life of an apostle.

Still we have the task of becoming like the apostles. Therefore, we must above all else cling to the cross and be ready to drink the cup. I would like to say your main task is: *bibere calicem, quam bibit Dominus noster*, “to drink the cup which our Lord drank.” And how should we drink it, where, why, how will we receive it? We are walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, we seek to extend his kingdom, we seek to become like the apostles, we seek to spread the teachings proclaimed by the apostles, we seek to oppose the vices against which the Divine Savior and the apostles labored – that is why we will receive the cross. But how will we receive this cross?

First we will receive it from hell, from the opponent of salvation, from the fierce enemy who hates everything which is from God, from the opponent who hates us and pursues us when we work to destroy his empire and spread the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Therefore, he will pursue us in all directions, as far as he can. So we must engage him in battle! But this cup is one of the easier ones to endure.

A more bitter cup comes from evil people. That is the second point: to be pursued by those evil people who attack us because we confront their passions in our desire to restrict their lack of restraint when we want to bring them under the law of Jesus Christ. And the wicked enemy will strengthen them, and these people will be worse than those who come from hell itself. We must drink the cup presented by evil people.

A third cup an apostolic person must drink and which is even much more bitter is the one prepared for him by good people when they misunderstand him, his plans and his intentions; when as a result of this people believe they are doing something good when they obstruct them [his plans]! The Divine Savior even says: One will believe he is doing a service to God when he pursues them! Therefore, you must also be ready to drink this cup, the cup of good people who mean well but who do not understand you well; that is, the cup they hand you. That is the third cup, but not yet the most bitter.

The last, if God should pass it to you, is when even those appointed by God to support and guard you, even the church authorities, lay obstacles in your path. This is the fourth and most bitter! But God can insist that you drink this cup also. And if you were to ask a St. Francis or a St. Vincent which was the most bitter cup for them, they would say it was when I was forbidden by the superiors to preach.

Therefore, if you desire to be apostles you must be ready to carry the cross. You must be ready anytime to drink the four-fold cup of suffering. Ahead of you the Divine Savior stands as your

example, along with those on whom he bestowed his grace – the holy apostles and tomorrow’s saint, John. Grace will support you, and you will receive solace even if every suffering should overtake you. Don’t despair, but endure the sufferings, remembering him for whom you suffer! Fight and struggle like the holy apostles, and you will see in the hereafter that you will be supported by grace and will attain an exalted crown.

1899/05/05B

The members have entered the Society to drink the chalice which Christ, our Divine Master drinks. Therefore, a threefold chalice is put before us to drink.

One is the chalice of the attacks of the devil, who hates and persecutes whatever is of God, who rages against those who destroy his kingdom by teaching heavenly doctrine. Another chalice is the persecutions of wicked people whose vices we reproach, whose unrestrained license we hold back and who we bring under the yoke of Jesus Christ. The third chalice is persecutions from good people who, because they do not understand our good intention, think that they are doing God a service by opposing and hindering what we intend to do.

So, apostles, drink the chalice of adversities which are so great and so numerous! Take up the cross! See, Christ our leader has given us the example and he gives the grace. Do not fail in spirit; put up with hardships, struggle on, strive as the holy apostles did and you will have a crown in heaven.

1899/05/12

Erant perseverantes unanimiter in oratione. “With one heart they persevered in prayer.” Today [just before Pentecost] let us turn our gaze into the Cenacle, the upper room where the holy apostles and our heavenly mother are gathered. It is our special task, in a particular way we are driven to follow the holy apostles in their virtues. Therefore, let us also seek to imitate their expectation of the Holy Spirit by preparing ourselves in the same way *unanimiter et perseverantes*, “united and persevering” to receive the Holy Spirit in this time of preparation. I would like to alert you precisely to this *perseverantes, unanimiter*.

We should anticipate the one who forges our unanimity to follow the apostles in oneness of heart – something the holy rule also imposes on us. So we should prepare ourselves for Pentecost *unanimiter et perseverantes*. We should pray united together. When only two ask for something united in heart, they attain it. How much greater are one hundred and fifty! If they pray *unanimiter* they will attain it! If we, therefore, pray for the Holy Spirit single-heartedly we will obtain him, we will receive him.

We all need the Holy Spirit, each one of us in our temptations, in doubts, in darkness, in weakness. We have so many needs, so many occasions to ask the Holy Spirit to stand by us! Oh come, *Consolator optime, Lux, Paraclitus!* “Best Consoler, Light, Paraclete!”

So we should entreat the Holy Spirit to accompany the Society and each individual member. We should beg the Holy Spirit to strengthen the Society more and more, inside and out, and to extend

and empower it! Oh let us recognize more and more that we can do nothing by ourselves! Conscious of this, we ask for the Holy Spirit to come to us.

Furthermore, we ask the Holy Spirit especially for those members who might be somewhat lukewarm. May he descend, ignite us with holy fire, ignite all, that they imitate the holy zeal of the apostles in striving for holiness, that they hold out *perseveranter*.

Therefore, we, each individual member, ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen the Society inside and out. And we particularly ask the Holy Spirit to guard the church and increase it! We pray, therefore, *perseverantes*. And particularly these days you should employ silent prayer.

Remember the holy apostles and the Blessed Mother as they were in the Cenacle *unanimiter orantes* “praying with one heart.” And we can expect if we pray *unanimiter* and *perseverantes*, that we too will receive the Holy Spirit.

1899/05/19

[Schärfel notes: Many words in the introduction cannot be translated literally because they were only partially understood. This is only an approximation.]

Today I would like to refer again to the upcoming feast of Pentecost. Prepare yourselves to receive many graces with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Use these last days well to prepare yourselves worthily to receive the Holy Spirit through deep and zealous prayer. You should especially pray for yourself, for the Society, for the entire holy church! Oh, how necessary the Holy Spirit is! How much there is to heal in the world! How much among Catholics! Oh, how necessary it is for the Holy Spirit to be poured out!

So call: *veni Sancte Spiritus; veni Pater Pauperum; veni Consolator*. Call on the Holy Spirit to come, to pour himself out over the Society. How very much the Society needs the Holy Spirit to enlighten, guide and govern it. Oh, how necessary are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. How then should we pray?

First, double your prayers. And on the most holy feast of Pentecost itself and throughout the whole octave pray with deep fervor the hymn *Veni Sancte Spiritus*. Furthermore, in this period we should immerse ourselves in the spirit of the Divine Office. Therefore, don't just pray, but delve deeply into the mystery so far as possible, especially in the Holy Mass!

Veni Sancte Spiritus, et emitte caelitus, lucis tuae radium! Come, Holy Spirit! Yes, come down, come down, Holy Spirit on me and

on the Society: *et emitte caelitus, lucis tuae radium! Veni Pater pauperum; veni dator munerum; veni lumen cordium!* You giver of gifts, you light of hearts. Oh, how very much we need light in order to see clearly, in order to understand fully! *Veni lumen cordium!* What is a human being if not illuminated by the Holy Spirit? How easily he will fall!

VENI, SANCTE SPIRITUS

13th Century translation by Stephen Langton

Veni Sancte Spiritus et emitte caelitus lucis tuae radium	Come, Holy Spirit, and send out a ray of your heavenly light.
Veni Pater pauperum Veni dator munerum Veni lumen cordium	Come, father of the poor, come, giver of gifts, come, light of our hearts.
Veni, Consolator optime dulcis hospes animae dulce refrigerium	Come, kindly comforter, sweet guest of our soul and sweet freshness.
In labore requies in aestu temperies in fletu solatium	Rest in hardship, moderation in the heat, relief in pain!
O lux beatissime reple cordis intima tuorum fidelium	O most blessed light, fill the innermost hearts of those who believe in you.
Sine tuo lumine	Without your divine power

nihil est in homine
nihil est innoxium

there is nothing in us,
nothing that is harmless.

Lava quod est sordium
Riga quod est aridum
sana quod est saucium

Wash what is unclean,
water what is arid,
heal what is wounded.

Flecte quod est rigidum
fove quod est frigidum
rege quod est devium

Bend what is stiff,
warm what is cold
guide what has gone astray.

Da tuis fidelibus
in te confidentibus,
sacrum septenarium

Give to your faithful ones,
those who trust in you
your seven sacred gifts.

Da virtutis praemium
da salutis exitum
da perenne gaudium

Give the reward of virtue,
give the end of salvation,
give lasting happiness!

Veni Consolator! Who doesn't need solace? *Dulcis hospes animae, dulce refrigerium!* Who doesn't need: *in labore requies, in aestu temperies, in fletu solatium?* Yes, comfort us! *Veni solatium!* *O lux beatissima, reple cordis intima, tuorum fidelium!* *Veni lux!* Oh, that the light might come down on the Society, come down! *Sine tuo lumine, nihil est in homine, nihil est innoxium!* *Lava, quod est sordidum; riga, quod est aridum; sana, quod est saucium!* Yes, illuminate what is dark, heal what is injured! Who can say he doesn't have any wounds? *Veni Sancte Spiritus!* *Flecte, quod est rigidum; fove, quod est frigidum; rege, [quod] est devium!* Yes warm what has cooled; correct what has gone astray! How necessary is the Holy Spirit! Therefore: *Da salutis exitum; da perenne gaudium!* May

he reign in the hearts of each individual. You should call on the Holy Spirit and make such prayers the object of your prayers of petition: *Veni Sancte Spiritus! O lux beatissima! Veni consolator optime! Veni Pater pauperum! Da in aestu temperiem!* You should often call out in the time of temptation: *Veni Sancte Spiritus. Veni lumen cordium!*

Therefore, prepare to call down the Holy Spirit on the church, on the Society, and on yourself. May he preserve in you purity of heart! Become temples of the Holy Spirit! Pray that he enlightens you in times of danger! Oh how happy you will be, how joyful, if you are all filled with the Holy Spirit! What joy, what peace, what bliss, what harmony, what happiness! *O Veni Sancte Spiritus, reple tuorum corda fidelium et Tui amorem in eis ignem accende!*

[Reverend Father spoke these last words with great emphasis and fervor.]

1899/05/21 and 1899/06/07

A.

The reason we observe poverty is not that we are lacking in wealth and money. It is rather because the spirit of poverty which prevails in our Society demands it. The Most Reverend Father explicitly made it clear that the Motherhouse is the standard for observing and explaining the rules about poverty [in our communities] throughout the world. He also said that every member of the Society living in any part of the world should remember [the Motherhouse] with joy, should imitate it and regard it as mother and teacher. He taught that poverty is very important in the Society, that it was its foundation, the cause of its growth, increase and prosperity. Then, coming down to particular points, he says:

“Each one, whether he lives in community or outside, must have the Society’s spirit as his rule and norm and so it is not lawful, for example, to wear clothing which is rather stylish or of better quality, nor to use a breviary that is finely printed or bound, not even if he has been given these by others; nor must anyone use the custom of other religious orders as a pretext, because each order has its own spirit. My wish is that poverty be observed in the Society as it is observed in the Motherhouse. I am not saying that things which are necessary for one’s health cannot be bought: let no one misunderstand me.”

B.

In addition, I say to you once and for all: as long as one is a member of our Society, he is never given pocket money; indeed, it is not even allowable to think about it. If one, therefore, who needs money, let [him] ask the superior for it! Equally, no one is allowed to dispose of those things which are given to him by outsiders. Beware

of these things as of a poisoned serpent, whom someone will flee as soon as he can. Nor is it lawful to incur expenses which are not necessary and are against poverty; for example, to travel from place to place by cab, or by second class rail, and other such things which are against the spirit of poverty; in our Society. If an exception needs to be made in a particular case, permission should be asked. If permission could not be sought [beforehand], the superior should be told later. Then as regards food and drink, what is commonly not permitted is not lawful; for example, to drink wine in the morning instead of coffee, except on the doctor’s orders.

Dearest sons, holy poverty is a precious pearl in our Society. If it is well-observed the Society flourishes and the members enjoy heavenly blessing. Otherwise the one who does not live according to the spirit of poverty will fail, whether young or old. If someone wishes to betray the Society let him neglect poverty; that would be enough.

Let us, therefore, imitate Our Lord Jesus Christ, who lived poor and died poor. By our observance of poverty we become holy and we will convert the world! Be poor and you will be like a rampart resisting the power and force of tempest and storm.

1899/06/02

The month of June is dedicated especially to the veneration of Jesus' Most Sacred Heart. And we as religious should especially cherish this veneration, especially through imitating the Sacred Heart, meek and humble.

I would like first to stress meekness. We should imitate the Sacred Heart in his meekness. First, we should be meek in words. We should accept everything patiently and endure it in whatever way the good God determines it for us. Being meek, we should abandon ourselves to him completely. We should never grumble against God, whatever may confront us, never lament, but meekly endure everything with patient surrender.

Then, we should be meek in relation to our neighbors. Oh how powerful is the one who endures everything! Let us be meek through enduring the mistakes and weaknesses and those things we find unpleasant! *Alter alterius onera portate!* "Bear one another's burdens!" Therefore, be meek towards your neighbors, towards your fellow human beings, through meekly enduring even those things that offend us grievously! We should be meek, not only enduring their mistakes, weaknesses, etc., but also never making them suffer, and in no way saddening them or inflicting anything on them. We should especially heed this: "Do not do to others what you would not have done to you." Therefore, be meek towards your neighbor and never cause him to suffer. Furthermore, as the rule says, we should obey our neighbor, seeking to follow. "*Non quod sibi, sed quod magis alii placet sequatur.*" "Let him strive not for what pleases himself but rather for what pleases others." Oh

what peace, what harmony will ensue if you seek to make things nice and agreeable yourself.

Therefore, meekness! How mighty is meekness! It wins us God's heart, it wins us dominion over ourselves and over our neighbor. You know that meekness is able to calm wild animals. What power, however, you will have over people! Therefore, *mitis* "meekness" toward your neighbor. Seek to acquire this meekness this month, and soon you will discover and notice its effects. You will come to have greater peace with yourself and your fellows. *Jesu mitis et humilis corde, fac cor meum secundum cor tuum!* "Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like yours!"

During this month, ask the Heart of Jesus to give you this meekness, to make your heart as much as possible like his: *simile fac cor nostrum* "make our heart the same!" If we have this meekness, then we will be united and love will prevail. Don't underestimate this meekness: *Estote mites!* "Be meek!"

Consider what the dear Savior says: *estote mites corde sicut et ego.* "Be humble of heart like me." He himself wanted to appear and to rule as a lamb. Therefore, be meek, you who are called to lead people. And be confident that you will win people over through meekness. You must also take the way the dear Savior trod – the way of meekness and humility. Pray, therefore, and pray quite intimately to the Sacred Heart, that he may grant you this grace of deep humility.

1899/06/09

Discite a Me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde! “Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart!” We should learn from the Divine Savior to be meek and humble of heart. In the last chapter talk, we spoke of meekness; today we speak of humility. Humility is, as St. Thomas says: ...

Today let us look at *proprium agnitionem* “self-recognition.” Our desire for humiliation drives us to recognize our own lowliness and to act accordingly. First, it drives us to recognize our own lowliness, our nothingness, our paltriness, our iniquity, our imperfection. When we recognize what we are, we will also be driven to despise ourselves. We will feel driven to humble ourselves. We will be driven to act on this self-knowledge, on the one hand by patient endurance, on the other hand by action. And when we recognize our own paltriness and act on it, and allow ourselves to be so treated by God, then we will always recognize that this is just what we deserve, and that if God punishes us we shall humble ourselves. We are also compelled to feel ourselves despised by people.

Because if we know ourselves, then we must also desire that others treat us as what we are: we must desire to be despised by our fellows and to be treated accordingly. Furthermore our desire for *cognitionis propriae* “self-knowledge” inclines us to treat ourselves in this way. Look at how the saints called themselves the greatest sinners. But we should not merely recognize this. We should also act on this realization.

But what will drive us to practice such humility, to descend

into our lowliness? The example of our Divine Teacher should drive us to humble ourselves, in fact to humble ourselves deeply! He who is holiness itself wanted to humble himself so. He himself chose the cross, the Skull Place. He himself chose hiddenness. He himself chose the tabernacle. Thus, the Lord of heaven and earth, holiness itself, humbled himself! Why should we not feel the urge to humble ourselves?

Furthermore, God’s delight should drive us! You know: *superbis Deus resistit*. “God thwarts the proud.” Then too, peace of heart should drive us to it! There is such peace in the heart of the humble! Whatever comes his way he thinks: I deserved it, I am worth no more! And what strength! Finally we should be driven by humility because it is the basis of great holiness, great works, leading to great things for ourselves and for the salvation of souls.

The higher the building is to rise, the deeper the foundation must be dug! The greater the building of our self-sanctification is to be, the deeper the required humility. The more we want to work for the salvation of souls, the deeper must be our humility! How can we count on God if we don’t possess humility?

Therefore, may you strive for humility always, with all your strength! In the world, as long as you live, you will have to fight against pride. Overtly or covertly you will be roughly abused and attacked. Don’t imagine that your enemy will spare you from this! If you take one big step toward holiness, before long he will attack. Therefore, humility! Let us recall the Sacred Heart especially today at his feast. Resolve to imitate the Heart of Jesus, *mitis et humilis corde*, “this meek and humble heart.” Therefore, *estote humiles et mites corde!* “Be meek and humble of heart!”

1899/06/09**Address to the Sisters on the Feast of the Sacred Heart**

Venerable sisters!

This day must encourage you anew to venerate the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. And how should you venerate this Sacred Heart? By striving for what the Savior himself says: “Learn from me because I am meek and humble of heart.” Therefore, above all be gentle and humble of heart toward God himself. Submit yourself patiently without grumbling, and don’t oppose him. Be meek and humble of heart in carrying the cross imposed by him and all the suffering that he sends you, bearing all without resistance.

Also be meek and humble toward your fellow sisters. Bear their deficiencies, mistakes, character flaws and frailties patiently. At the same time, however, strive as far as possible not to cause others any sorrow and not to make them endure anything arising from you.

So much for meekness. The second virtue is humility. Humility calls us to desire and even to love one’s own lowliness. It is difficult to embrace one’s own nothingness, to admit it, and to proclaim it. To be humble is to humble oneself gladly and also to lower oneself. Humility means knowing your own lowliness. What is a human being without God! How very much we deserve to be humiliated because of our meaninglessness, our iniquity, and our inclination to errors of all kinds. Humility arouses our desire to be treated as our lowliness deserves, and to treat ourselves accordingly.

Strive wholeheartedly to be meek and humble of heart. Each of you should do it, everyone should become more like Jesus’ most

Sacred Heart. If you are meek and humble you will accomplish great things. Be firmly convinced that you can never build a life of virtue without humility, this most basic of all virtues. The greater your desire to grow in perfection and to work in the community for God’s greater honor, the humbler you must be. To erect a tall building you must dig a deep foundation.

Without humility you will never grow in holiness. Therefore, be quite humble. And by frequently recounting your faults, try to keep your littleness before your eyes. You should not do this to become downhearted or to give up the quest for holiness. True humility doesn’t lead to dejection or despondency, even less to despair. On the contrary, humility leads us to that spiritual attitude whereby we mistrust ourselves and put our whole trust in God. Since we know our weakness, we take recourse in God. Trusting in him we accomplish great things.

Never lose courage, and never slack off in your holy quest. Always turn towards God with complete trust. Look for your salvation in him. *“In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in aeternum.”* “In you Lord I have hoped, do not put me off forever.”

Work together in unity, united with God. Always become more and more like the most Sacred Heart of Jesus through true humility and meekness. That is my fondest wish: may God give you the grace to arrive at this. With this intention, I now give you my wholehearted priestly blessing

1899/06/14

Since care for the salvation of souls is chiefly accomplished by the work of priests, let the members make every effort in teaching boys, in instructing and educating true apostles and especially cooperating in starting new houses. They should be convinced, in the present state of the Society, that they cannot promote God's glory in any more efficacious way. Therefore, it is necessary that many priests of the Society should engage in the education of youth and no one, if he is commanded to do this task, should consider that this work is not worthy of him. It not only benefits the Society as a whole but also each one of the members, not to be exposed to the very great dangers of pastoral care immediately after priestly ordination. Or does anyone think that in the midst of such difficult tasks and in facing such problems he cannot suffer damage to his own soul, and neglect regular observance, and so bit by bit easily prepare destruction for himself, if he is not really filled, animated and fired with the spirit of the Society? So lest they immediately incur such great risks new priests, especially younger ones, should be held back for a while in our school so that they may be more intensely formed in the spirit of the Society, and devote themselves to the education and instruction of young people, and then gradually enter the apostolate. And although perhaps the task of teaching youth is not highly esteemed in people's eyes, still if one brings only three pupils to the priesthood, he will have worked more fruitfully than if he had only been involved in pastoral ministry. Therefore, in the present state of our Society, the members should think it of the greatest importance that as many schools should be set up as possible, that as many truly apostolic priests as possible be educated. God, our strong helper will certainly give us the grace which will help us and bring this about if, setting aside our labors and toils and our own wishes, we strive to promote only His glory. Even if in

the course of the next ten years only twenty schools were established, from each of which only twenty priests would come on fire with God's love and zeal for the salvation of souls: what a great benefit to the glory of God that would be!

1899/06/16A

Today I would like to tell you something about the value of *constantia, patientia, perseverantia*: or in German: perseverance, steadfastness, and tenacity. This has especially great meaning for members of our Society. This perseverance, this steadfastness will be very helpful to accomplish your work of self-sanctification and the sanctification of our neighbors.

First, we should persevere and remain steadfast in our work and in our studies. So don't be disconcerted by difficulties, inconveniences, or obstacles. Persist with endurance and steadfastness in the studies necessary for your vocation, mindful of the saying: *Gutta cavat lapidem, non vi, sed saepe cadendo*. "A drop hollows out a rock, not by strength but by continual wear." A trite saying but important. A drop of water, so inconspicuous, so small, so powerless! But by endurance it finally makes a hole through hard stone.

Therefore, perseverance, *patientia*, steadfastness! This perseverance is necessary not only in studies but especially also in the quest for perfection, for acquiring virtue and casting off faults – great perseverance, great struggle is necessary, great *patientia*! Oh, how many mistakes a human being makes, how hard he must fight with himself if he is to master himself, if he is to overcome his innate faults, his natural inclinations! It is so easy to become despondent when we fall back into the same mistakes again and again.

Therefore, persistence, *patientia*, steadfastness in fighting our faults, especially that basic evil, that pride which each human being

has to some degree! Don't become disheartened; only *patientia, constantia*. Even if you should slip back, work like ants as long as and until the mistake is eradicated.

Perseverance is so important to the apostolate. Without this endurance an apostolic worker gives up when difficulties arise, just when it is so necessary to be insistent and persevering. When difficulties arise you must be all the more zealous and insistent. Yes, difficulties should not make you despondent over your work. That's exactly when you should use your strength and persistence and steadfastness like the Romans: *Romani obtinuerunt orbem patientia*. The Romans conquered the world through their patience, their persistence, endurance and tenacity.

Recently the Most Reverend Apostolic Vicar from India told me about the missionaries in Assam, whom he praised. He said that the fruits, the success, will surely come. If you want to achieve great things you must have this steadfastness. You can hardly embrace the work of the apostolate, which damages hell and assists human beings, without meeting opposition.

Precisely in such great undertakings you can begin to believe that all is lost, and that everything is over, as one believed on the hill of Golgotha – everything is over, as the God-man died on the cross. But it was there one recognized that he was God. Therefore, don't despair in your future vocation! And if you must work at one post for five or six years without seeing fruits, just be persistent! The sufferings, works, efforts and endurance will bear fruit!

How beautifully we see this in our mission in Assam! We worked at a place for years before we had the first convert, and

then many followed one after the other! And this is also the way it is in other missions. Therefore, hold out! If we do our duty, things will go well!

The opposite approach is so futile! Surveying humankind's history, what would you see? So many people start this or that, they begin some work! Then opposition, limited success or other ugly things arise, and what do they do? They give it up! But that is not worthy of apostles. They pursue the good, the apostolate, the salvation of souls, until the end, even if the day comes as with St. Paul who wrote: "It nauseates me to live." If such sufferings and contradictions arise that even living disgusts you – just hold out and pursue the good until your last breath. And when you can no longer keep it up, be like that soldier who was resolved not to drop his flag and held on to it with just his teeth!

Therefore, steadfastness, perseverance! Perseverance in study, perseverance in learning, perseverance in the fight against faults, perseverance in your activities and apostolates. Then you will see what great things you will achieve. And if you don't possess these, you will become erratic and will achieve hardly anything great in life.

1899/06/16B

It is necessary that we be constant, patient, persevering in our apostolic labors; let not difficulties, calamities, inconveniences, pains and sorrows deter you. Remember the saying: "The drop carves a hole on the stone, not by force but by its constant dripping." The greater and more numerous the difficulties that stand in our way, the more zealous we must be for perfection and virtue and the more constant. Because it is precisely in overcoming difficulties that an apostolic person gives proof of his fortitude! ... I say to you: it is almost impossible to take up the work of the apostolate to the defeat of the powers of hell and the salvation of men [and women], without such difficulties and adversity appearing. It might seem to one that time and lamp oil were wasted and the hope of success frustrated. But persevere, because with patience and tireless labor you will bear fruit, as is to be seen in the Assam Mission, in which someone worked for many years until finally one person embraced the faith, and then many others followed him. Therefore, an apostolic person taking up the apostolate and working for the salvation of souls bears with great constancy things which push him to the very limit, as if he could say with St. Paul that he is tired of life. Still, like the wounded standard-bearer even though he could not win, he held the standard between his teeth and was constant and persevered right up to his very last breath. Act, therefore, and you will accomplish very great things!

1899/06/23

Tomorrow's feast sets before our eyes the glorious model of an apostolic religious – a great model of an apostolic man: St. John, the forerunner of Christ, who serves as a model for us all in fact, by being what the Divine Office calls, a *lucerna ardens et lucens*, “a lamp burning brightly.”

Let's look at *ardens* first. He was *igne Spiritus Sancti incensus*, “afame with the fire of the Holy Spirit.” In the desert he had prepared [himself] through long meditations, through long works of penance, through long solitude, and had inflamed his zeal for the mission. We should imitate him insofar as possible in our time of preparation for the apostolate, in order to promote this *ardere*, so that we are all: *Incensi Spiritu Sancto* “fired by the Holy Spirit.” Seek this first of all through contemplation, through solitude, through prayer, through study, penance, and mortification!

Oh, there are so many ways! Use them conscientiously to inflame your zeal. Not only you but also those who are already involved in the apostolate. Yes, every one of us should be *ardens*, “burning on fire.” Our Society is wholly contemplative and active. Contemplation is used to ignite you with the Holy Spirit. I would like to say, contemplation is like pouring oil into a lamp so that it burns and shines. Without it the lamp will go out, and the light, the *ardere* will cease. Therefore, the most important thing is prayer and contemplation; in brief, imitating St. John. Try to imitate St. John, so that you are all *Incensi Spiritu Sancto*.

The second point is *lucere*, the radiance that gives light. *Luceat lux vestra coram hominibus*, “Let your light shine before all.” Yes,

you are called to shine, to show the world the light and to shine yourselves. Everyone of you should shine through good example, in fact already now in the Society. Oh, how much good a religious can do through such radiance, if he appears everywhere as a truly observant religious.

Example is such a powerful thing. Yes, you know: *Exempla trahunt*, “examples attract” or as another says: *Exempla movent*, “examples arouse.” This is so important not only in the community but also in the apostolate because example will accomplish more than many words. Therefore, not only here in the community but also outside, wherever you may be, you should distinguish yourself through observance, through mortification, through an exemplary life. Oh, how powerfully you will work if you live as the holy rule stipulates. How mightily you will preach if you observe in detail what the holy rule requires. [I also want to point out] *modestia*, “modesty” which accomplishes so much everywhere, and immodesty, which does just the opposite.

A further point is maturity: not acting childishly but appearing as a manly religious in your whole bearing, betraying nothing unworthy of a religious, not in attitude, in action, in posture: that no one flits around, etc., or loses self-control in public. None of this gives good example! The world simply judges by appearance.

If you want to preach through example, you must act on both of these points. Therefore, *modestia et maturitas!* “Modesty and maturity.” As religious, appear manly, as men of God!

You should also have particularly *mansuetudo*, “meekness.” Those who appear meekly everywhere and show no disorganized

emotions are so powerful. Think often of the Divine Savior: He was *mansuetus*. Then you must have *humilitas*! Through these you must preach by giving good example here.

Also, often think of St. John – he was a *lucerna ardens et lucens*. See to it that one can say of every one of you: this one is a *lucerna ardens*, he is on fire from the Holy Spirit through his contemplation and his observance. He is a *lucerna ardens* through his good example, through which he points out the *lux*, the true light, the God-man; i.e., that he leads them to the one St. John points out: to Jesus Christ.

Every one of you is called for the apostolate, and every one of you is called to make Jesus Christ known to human beings – *ut omnes cognoscant Deum et quem misit, Jesum Christum!* “That all might know God and the one he sent, Jesus Christ.” Therefore you should *lucere* through good example. Imitate St. John and in that way lead humanity to the Divine Savior.

1899/06/30

We celebrate today the feast of the great St. Paul. And if we fix our eyes on this hero we will be roused as he was to do great things for God’s honor and the salvation of souls. Who would not feel so driven when he views the life, the apostolic works of this great apostle.

Today I would like to stress only one point from the life of this great apostle: endurance in suffering. This, as you know, is one of my favorite topics. Because I see how important it for an apostolic religious, for one who wants to accomplish great things, to be ready to suffer much and to possess much endurance. Look at St. Paul! He relates what he suffered, and what the Divine Savior himself said: *Ego ostendam illi quantum eum oportet per nomine meo pati.* “I myself will show him how much he must suffer for my name.” Therefore, if we desire to accomplish great things, if we want to work much, we must suffer much.

Therefore, I hope each member among us is ready, as far as possible, to suffer much, each at his place, in his vocation. I hope that each member is ready to suffer for God’s honor and the salvation of souls, that he perseveres in suffering and is full of zeal. Oh, it is so important!

If you review the history of nations and individuals, if you go through your own story, you will find that great works often depend on otherwise small sufferings! I would hope and wish that you would be so firm that neither misery, nor sufferings, nor prosecutions, nor dryness, nor misunderstandings – that you let nothing obstruct your pursuit of the good things, the good work that you began, the good way you have undertaken to follow.

In your good undertakings I wish that you would be resilient like a rubber ball. Even if it is pressed so deeply into the water, it will pop to the surface again and again once the pressure stops. This is the way I would also like you all to pursue the right path. The heroic example of the Spartan soldier comes often to mind. How one must feel driven to make sacrifices for God's honor and the salvation of souls, when you hear how soldiers – [missing] limbs, arms, or legs – still exert themselves in the fight against the enemy. And can not we who [work] for God's honor and the salvation of souls patiently endure an insult from a confrere or a superior?

So let us suffer – we cannot be in this world without sufferings! Let us hold ourselves ready to suffer through deep humility. Let us make ourselves, so to speak, capable of bearing sufferings from wherever they might arise! Certainly, sufferings that come from one's neighbor are difficult; but prepare yourselves to endure these also. Have a good intention towards your work; then you will look with confidence to Divine Providence.

And if you suffer injustice you will receive justice again. Even if your good name is blackened, Providence will help restore it. Have a good intention, otherwise it is doubtful that you will persevere along the right path. You have so many opponents: hell and one's own passions are obstacles; there are evil people, and in addition God allows you to be tried to test you and to make your works fruitful through sufferings. Since sufferings come, always be ready to suffer much, come what may.

Look at the great apostle. Even if everyone is against you, if you are on the right path God will fight for you! Never forget that the successes of an apostolic religious are proportionate to his sufferings!

Therefore if we want to accomplish, to achieve great things, we too must suffer great things. If you don't suffer, then worry about your successes. Certainly sufferings are sometimes very bitter, but let us be ready to bear sufferings as God sends them to us, and let us not seek to pick and choose them as we please. Let us take them as they come, as God sends them, from wherever they come. Let us bear them, whether [they come] from our confreres or from hell, whether from this side or that, whether from misunderstandings or whatever!

I have this conviction: if you are ready and resolved to suffer, then you will persevere and later you will be happy. God's blessing will accompany your efforts and you will achieve great successes. To the extent that you suffer you will succeed. Therefore, if you desire to follow St. Paul in zealous labor, follow him in sufferings. And when you look at his life, take that for your meditation, if what happened to St. Paul should happen to you, that you become weary of life itself!

May you be ready to endure everything, to do everything for the honor of God and the salvation of souls. Today, may each and every one of you make this firm resolution: wherever I am put by Providence I will always try to endure sufferings and misery in my apostolic work and whatever arises from my surroundings. Indeed I will endure out of love for God because he endured so much for me. I want to endure it because "nothing happens by chance." I want to endure it, and God will fight for me. I want to endure it so that I accomplish great things for the honor of God and for the salvation of souls. I want to endure it so that I persevere.

If you analyze the people who deviated from their paths, you will find mostly that they lacked the requisite humility and endurance.

A suffering comes. One is confused, anxious. A certain apathy arises toward one's fellow men [and women]. One becomes weaker and weaker. There is danger, and gradually things go downhill. And where does all this come from? From not wanting to suffer. Therefore again and again: love sufferings! Finally to close, let us embrace sufferings as God sends them to us, even if they are profoundly drastic and sensitive. Because God sends them, you should think: God sends them so I want to endure them. Therefore, arm yourself to suffer! Then, I have hope that you will accomplish very many great things where you are stationed, that you will be like a seed and will perform great things for the honor of God and for the salvation of souls.

1899/07/07

Let's not forget the importance of holy poverty, especially for our Society. As the holy rule says, this is the foundation, and it should be the basis of the Society. Therefore, it is of greatest importance for the stability, the development, the blossoming of our Society to observe holy poverty in the strictest sense. This is of such great importance that the very survival and progress of our Society depend on the observance of poverty.

I would like, therefore, to make today some very concrete points, since you can come into so many situations where questions arise as to how you should behave. The holy rule admittedly is crystal clear, but human beings are *pronus ad malum*, "prone to evil" even in observing this rule.

First of all I observe that everybody has to be in accordance with the spirit of the Society, whether you are in the community now or not, and also that superiors, those who have been entrusted with any position, must adhere strictly to the spirit of the Society. Coming to particulars, I would like to insist that pocket money never ever, never ever, is allowed, especially not in our Society as, unfortunately, it has crept into individual orders where they have regressed in their observance. *Semper et pro semper*, "never, forever," I say never, as long as you hold to the Society, can you ever think to have pocket money. I already told you earlier, how the Holy See is so strict in this regard, that you are *ipso facto inhabiles*, "by the very fact ineligible" to possess property. If you, therefore, use money for any purpose get permission from the superior. And, *ex eadem causa*, "for the same reason," it is likewise prohibited if you get something from home, this doesn't remain

for your use. Treat it like a snake, which you want to be free from as fast as possible. Do the same with pocket money. Therefore: *nunquam!* “Never!”

Since it involves the spirit of poverty, I would like to stress the following: don’t incur any expenses contrary to poverty; for example, if you go anywhere, don’t take cabs. Go instead on foot, realizing that occasionally there are exceptions. The same applies to second class accommodations on express trains or second class in general. This too is not in keeping with the spirit of our Society. If a special case comes up, you should get special permission; and if you can’t get it in advance, you must report it *post factum* “after the fact.” It goes without saying that if someone comes from Germany, he probably doesn’t come on foot (from the railway station). Regarding eating and drinking, it is against the spirit of poverty to take other than is customary; for example, drinking wine in the morning is against the spirit of poverty. Still, I say there can be exceptions if the doctor prescribes it. There is no rule without exceptions!

Hold quite firmly to poverty! If you observe poverty you will garner God’s blessing! I wish that one day you would have the bliss and the joy so many saints have already discovered through observing holy poverty. Don’t underestimate this pearl of great price! If you want the Society to flourish, if you want to have joy, if you want to be happy, if you want to have God’s blessing, then safeguard holy poverty. But if you want to betray the Society, simply cease observing poverty.

Be assured that the Society will flourish or will fall with [the observance of] poverty! Always consider it the *fundamentum*

Societatis, “the foundation of the Society.” Observing poverty, the Society will flourish; violating poverty, it will fall! Where poverty is observed, everything else is also observed. And how can one who doesn’t observe poverty have joy in religious life? Such a religious will fall sooner or later! Therefore, poverty, and again poverty. And if you don’t want to believe me, just look at the Divine Master you desire to follow. *Pauper natus, pauper vixit, pauper mortuus est!* “He was born poor, lived poor, and died poor!”

If we want to follow the Divine Savior (and this is what we are called to do), if we want to become saints, if we want to convert the world, then let us become poor. You surely know what St. John Chrysostom says: the apostles didn’t convert the world through their miracles but precisely through their contempt for temporal goods. Hold fast to holy poverty! Then even if storms break over us, we will stand firm. Therefore, poverty is the foundation! Let us construct this *murus*, – “this wall” as St. Ignatius calls it – let us build this wall so that the Society may stand firm!

1899/07/14

One of the most important tasks in the present stage of the Society is the formation of apostolic religious, religious priests, and especially setting up formation houses for the Society. In this way indeed we will effectively bring about the honor of God and the salvation of souls.

St. Vincent de Paul says: The greatest contribution you can make is through educating a priest. But if helping to train one priest is so glorious, how exalted a task it is to help train many of them – yes, whole troops from all nations! Only in eternity will you grasp the importance of this task. Certainly this depends first on God, but we must do our part.

In the present circumstances it is not only so important for the Society to direct its main attention to forming religious priests; it is for the advantage not only of the Society but also for the individual members. As you know, most of our priest confreres are in ministry. Difficult placements are entrusted to them. And with such huge tasks they can easily injure themselves. Many are not up to the job; they are not yet so firm in religious life or in observance. Hence, due to the ever increasing work of ministry and their assignments, they are easily overwhelmed and they abandon observance. As a consequence they increase their work but they lose the spirit of the institute.

Therefore, it is not always advisable for younger priests to come immediately into ministry. They can serve in a formation house where they can assist, give instruction, and little by little prepare themselves to ease into ministry.

Furthermore, it is so important for individuals to work in formation houses where they can fulfill their observance much more easily. This way they can strengthen themselves in the spirit of the Society, in its observance, etc. There they can develop themselves even further, complete their studies, and get accustomed to the practical sciences and to theology. Outwardly this work may appear to be nothing and to bring little honor in the eyes of the world. But despite what everyone may think, this work can contribute more effectively to God's honor and to the salvation of souls than working as a preacher.

One who works at formation, even if he only trains two or three others – oh, how effective he can be there; he will never perish, he is immortal. Oh, how some great ones don't consider it beneath their dignity to work for the education of priests, and neither should you.

Therefore, always see this as a main task of the Society in its present condition: to collaborate in formation houses through prayer and instruction, and through letters which help with the material side of things. With one hundred priests inflamed with this spirit we could erect thirty or more formation houses, each of which would produce in its time thirty and forty priests. Certainly one won't achieve immediate success, but it won't elude us forever.

It is the same for a bishop. If he wants to work for the salvation of the souls in his diocese he must continuously look to provide a seminary to form good priests. If he doesn't do this, he will never achieve much. I heard that one diocese was completely transformed in a few years through the erection of one seminary. We, therefore, must also direct our attention to this great service, to the training

of many competent religious priests. And it is not so difficult – God will cooperate if you possess the spirit of sacrifice and do not trust in yourself but in God.

Therefore, wherever you may be, always consider this the main task of the Society: working to form good members. That is the hope of the Society and of the church. Therefore, don't be disappointed if for many years you are stationed at one place where you must do formation and such like. Just consider: if within the next ten years we were to establish twenty different education houses, and if in each would place two priests who are imbued with this spirit – priests who would never shy away from sacrifices – what would this do? And if only twenty priests came out of each house – what a joy for the church, what help for the salvation of souls, what great honor for God!

If you are ready, we will see that this is possible with God's grace. On the other hand, if you all become priests today or tomorrow and then go out [into the apostolate] to work, and after so and so many years you died and few came after you, what would you have accomplished? Therefore, the main attention is to be directed toward formation houses. I repeat: the main attention is to be directed toward formation houses: that is the hope of the Society!

1899/10/04A

**Address of our beloved Reverend Father and Founder
after being congratulated in the refectory**

I thank you for the concern you show me today. It fills me with joy that you prove your devotion and love to your spiritual father so single-heartedly. This is a sign, an indication that you will be very effective, that you will be happy, that you will persevere if you remain with this fundamental attitude.

On this feast day I would like to stress that you should always stand united with your spiritual father and superior; the fruits you will harvest from this are so great! God will be pleased with you, you will have inner peace, you will see your suffering and trials and labors blessed, you will be protected against attacks from outside, against enemies, against criticism, if you stand firm and united to your spiritual father, not just sometimes but always and firmly. In this way you will persevere in your vocation.

Think carefully what good things fidelity and devotion, love and unity will bring. And think about it often. Thus, may you always be attentive that this unanimity, this harmony and love are never diminished. And if that does happen, as unfortunately it can in human life, don't stop praying, etc., until it is restored. Because the fruits which you will harvest through [unity], the blessings, are great. Therefore, hold firmly together; because then, as I hope, you will all persevere. Don't trust anything else.

Much is good, but not everything is good for you. And someone who believed there was something better to do, or some other way to go, until he arrived at the end where he could no longer turn

back, because he didn't go the way God wanted. Therefore, unity! Unity among yourselves and with your spiritual father. May God strengthen and preserve this unity more and more and more. This way we will be able to achieve great things for God.

And today may you accept this as your special task: always to persevere in all assaults and sufferings; always to accept them and to stand firm. As long as you don't commit any sin, you are like a rock in the sea: even when it is whipped by the waves – it withstands. The waves may cover it – it withstands. And so you will emerge triumphant from storms and dangers. Just try it and you will see. Persevere, but always survive the storms in this unity. As soon as you deviate from it, I fear! The fruits will reveal if you no longer walk in the right way. Therefore: Unity! *Ut omnes unum sint!* "That all may be one!" Be united with the spiritual father!

1899/10/04B

I thank you warmly for your congratulations to me and I cannot but say that I am delighted that you express your love and reverence towards me with such unanimity and good will. If you will always be inspired and equipped with this piety, it is right to conclude that you will accomplish much in promoting God's honor and the salvation of souls; and also you will persevere in your vocation. And so also today I admonish you with great solicitude to strive always and everywhere to be of one mind with your superiors. Act and consider what benefits and what advantages accrue to you from that: you will be filled with an undisturbed peace and will be accepted by God. By His protection you will be safe and secure lest you suffer any harm in repelling and driving back the enemy. He will take care that the troubles and toils you have to undergo will be turned to good. My desire is that you have the greatest zeal for maintaining this unity. And if, God forbid, it happens that this sweet unity of minds is broken, I ask of you all that you do not rest, but try with every effort and all diligence to recover it. I beg you not to think that everything which is called good is also good and useful for you. How many, influenced by their own opinion and searching after way-out things, think that they are doing good. But how great their deception, if they come to a point of no return. Therefore, I exhort you again and again, to be especially set on concord: I mean, concord with your superiors. And if you are in agreement with your superiors you are by that very fact in agreement among yourselves. If you do this, we will achieve great things. How I wish that you would understand this day how important and how serious a matter it is, that all should work towards the same end! Persevere, therefore, ever bound together by this bond of charity. Persevere, therefore, of one mind in the midst of your sorrows and difficulties. Do not go backwards, even if you are oppressed by those

persecutions. Be strong and constant in spirit, like a rock set in the sea which, although it is surrounded by storms and lashing waves, remains immovable and unconquered! If you act like this you will be victorious. Hold out therefore in your toils, keeping that unanimity. If you neglect it, I fear lest you will fall away from the right way. Pray therefore "that all may be one." Be one with your Father in Christ. And today I add this: Make the resolution to be strong and constant in acting for God!

1899/10/20A

We should contribute *omnibus mediis*, "by all means" to the exalted goal of the Society, *omnibus mediis*! In order to reach the goal the Society set for itself, self-sanctification, the quest for perfection, it is particularly necessary that everyone exactly fulfills his duties at his place, both as a member of the Society and also in the position of his calling. I always say this, and it is the most important thing.

As I already indicated, I would like to stress that you should also work together in other ways for the welfare and the advance of the whole Society. As centuries of experience prove, since human beings consist of body and soul (since that is our situation in the world) if we want to work properly we need both. To strive for [spiritual] perfection we also need the [material] means. Thus, you see how the lack of means keeps many things from happening, and how everything goes slower just because we lack the means. Therefore, I would like to admonish you all quite urgently to do what you can, each at his place. And if we hold together firmly you will see what great things we will accomplish with God's grace.

Above all, economize. I'm not saying one should not have necessities, but no one should incur needless expenses. We must also use our resources well in this point because sooner or later our turn will also come: *redde rationem!* "to give an account!" Also we must give an account of whatever we receive, the superiors as well as the individual members. Therefore, why should we also feel especially prompted to help with material concerns as far as circumstances allow?

[Why?] First, because it accomplishes much good! How much more we could do if we had more resources! There are so many poor, but good, highly talented boys who want to enter and who we could accept if only we had the means. Then there are also the needs of the Society, especially fortifying and strengthening the Motherhouse so that we could proceed somewhat more smoothly. The management, the overall management is so impeded when the means are so scarce. That is how it is nowadays. In the past it was usually this way: if you didn't have any means you went hungry. Nowadays, it is no longer so – the burden falls on the superiors! This should spur you, through seeking perfection, through saving, through collaborating in your place *pro viribus* “as hard as you can.” Much will be demanded from one, less from another – but from each what he can. No one will be required to give what he cannot. And no one should believe that people are unsatisfied with the one who can do less than the other. Because it is increasingly difficult to enter the Society and to be ordained, let us be especially assiduous for the Motherhouse, so that we can accept more members. If we had the means we could ordain a hundred priests a year, and we hope also good ones.

Love for the Society should impel you. You are indebted, you are a part of the Society, you are a member here and hereafter. Therefore, it is in your own interest for the Society to progress properly.

So, be grateful toward the Society. This is a tricky point, but I would like to remind you that gratitude demands that everyone does what he can, because God has given everyone much through the Society. Consider how in the world some must wrestle with difficulties and needs, suffering hunger, going house-to-house

teaching in order to earn his food. Therefore, don't be stingy in your efforts!

Furthermore, the example of so many great people and saints should stimulate you. Consider that St. Paul begged for the needy. And consider how history lists many other saints. St. Francis of Assisi begged. And even today we see an example of what one single priest is able to do. In Hungary one zealous priest with God's grace decided to build a cloister and a church costing 160,000 guilders, and in a few years he completed it through his zeal, so that it could be inaugurated in the presence of the Emperor and the Archbishop. That is an example of what one religious is able to do if he has zeal. If everyone had such zeal you would see what advances the Society would make. Therefore, don't let yourself be troubled, and remember that we must give an account: *Redde rationem*.

1899/10/20B

Commanded by the our holy rule concerning the purpose of the Society, we must diligently and wisely use all ways and means which the love of Christ inspires to glorify God and to save immortal souls. To attain this end, besides one's own personal sanctification, it is of the greatest importance that each one, insofar as he is a member of the Society and insofar as he has a particular task to perform, should fulfill his duties and particularly respect the Society's constitutions. Since however, as you know only too well, there is no small worry in providing for the Society the daily sustenance necessary to live, it is right that you be concerned about that with whatever resource or work is available to you. Doesn't the scarcity of resources and the assistance we need not delay us in accepting new members into the Society, and so hold back the Society's progress? To relieve this want at least a little bit, all members as far as possible should be frugal. Nor should you neglect to reflect on it for another reason: that one day we will have to give an account of what use we have made of the things our benefactors have given us. Gratitude to the Society, therefore, impels you all to work with very great zeal to strengthen it and make it grow. What a great number of benefits have come to you from God through the Society! Also the example of so many saints, St. Paul for instance, who were not ashamed to beg in order to help the poor and needy. May this example stir you and animate you to ensure the safety of the Society. Finally, may our highest and most holy purpose, to further the glory of God and the salvation of souls, induce you to take every opportunity to play your part in the advance of the Society. Is it not truly right and proper, fair and for our good that we should joyfully desire all toil and contempt, even death itself for the honor of the King of the Ages, the immortal and invisible God? Each one of you, therefore, whatever position he is in [should engage in] helping the

Society by his effort and by his holy and fervent love. Seek, I beg you, that by obeying the wishes of the superior, by strongly desiring "perpensiones" and especially by exercising self-denial, the purpose of the Society will be obtained.⁴ Struggle for it, as for a precious pearl, as for the apple of your eye. By so fulfilling your duties, we will be able to establish a strong line of battle against the enemy.

⁴ 1. DSS XXIII, lines 23 and 24, sentence beginning "Indagate..." Some difficulties here. I cannot find the meaning of *perpensiones*. Also, *finis Societatis consequatur* seems grammatically impossible.

1899/10/27

We talked last time about cooperating for the Society; namely, what should inspire you to work for the interests of the Society so that you accomplish much good. The needs of the Society should especially impel us, then love for the Society, gratitude toward the Society, and also the example of the saints of all centuries who were not ashamed to beg, to undertake humiliating works for the welfare of their order and for other devout purposes. You should very much take to heart the advancement of the Society, which is called to such an exalted goal of promoting the honor of God and the salvation of souls.

If you are looking to accomplish the purpose of the Society, to bring about the honor of God, then you must feel yourself driven to say: *Vere dignum et iustum est aequum et salutare, nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere*. “Truly it is right and just, proper and helpful to salvation that we should always and everywhere give you thanks.” Yes, *vere dignum et iustum est*, that we live up to this exalted goal with all our strength, and that we strive for this purpose for God – for such a good and exalted One, for the infinitely holy God.

So, how should we advance the Society? You know so many means. But the one I stress again and again, the most important one, is that everyone in his place contributes by punctual observance, by fulfilling it completely and fully, whether here and now or wherever he is assigned. Thus one can always say of him: *totus est*. “He is fully present.” Therefore, first of all be a good religious! And if everyone fulfills his station well, the Society will form a firm and holy phalanx! That should be your first and your most important endeavor – whether as a superior or a subordinate – you must direct your attention to this.

In addition we should always fight for the interests of the Society. Recalling the Society’s exalted mission and the love of God, we should be prompted to live up to this goal and mission! Therefore, work *omnibus mediis*, “by all means.” Everyone can work: *Ama societatem et fac quod vis!* “Love the Society and do what you will!” Love is inventive; it will show you ways and means, more than any lecture I could give. Love the Society, study its purpose. I repeat again and again, as your first task become as perfect as possible! Therefore, cooperate in this; and consider how much good it brings about, how many crowns await you in heaven, how many souls could be saved, how very much God’s honor could be advanced, how some sin could be prevented.

Fight together, follow the battle plan you drew up, and watch yourself so that you don’t move ahead alone. Unity will make us strong; solidity will strengthen us. It doesn’t depend so very much on whether you have this or that rule. The most important thing is that you fulfill it, that you obey, whether you have this rule today and another rule tomorrow, that you have *mortificatio, abnegatio, vince teipsum*: “mortification, abnegation, self-mastery.”

Therefore, be attentive to this! Seek to fulfill the mission through willpower and through obedience to the commands of the superiors. You know how much a single individual in the world is able to do if only he is *ardens* and *lucens*, if he burns from love for sufferings and glows with zeal.

You should do all of this: work, love, shine and blaze for the Society. Then you will see how [well] things go. Then you will strive with holy zeal for the honor and welfare of the Society. Then in all situations you will defend the Society as you would a jewel, as the

pupil of your eye. Therefore, again and again I say work, mostly through observance. Strive to love the Society: *ama societatem et fac quod vis*, “love the Society and do what you will.” Love through prayer, love through very deep prayer, love the Society passionately, *ardenter, amanter, amantissime, et facite quod vultis*, “ardently, lovingly, with the greatest love, and do what you will.”

1899/11/01

Address to the sisters on the Feast of All Saints

Today’s feast day should renew your courage to stride ahead on the way to perfection. How I wish I could for just one moment gather you up to heaven and show you the vast throng of saints and the glory they enjoy there. If only you could savor for one moment the happiness and the bliss of forever losing yourself in the vision of the most Holy Trinity. Oh, how that would renew your courage to fight the good fight, to reach the crown which the saints now possess eternally, and which we too are sure to attain. Oh yes, fight and struggle steadfastly and insistently. And when clouds and bitter hours and days close in, fall on your knees and look up to heaven. Fix your eyes on the glory of the saints, the many religious of all nations and ages. You will be encouraged when you recall what they suffered and fought for. If they could do it, why can’t we? Even if fierce temptations and sufferings should come over you, be confident! God never tries you beyond your strength. God never sends you more than you can endure. He will always come to help you with his grace.

Therefore, surrender yourself with complete confidence to the one who alone can rescue you. Trust firmly in the one to whom you gave yourself completely – not in people but in him, the eternally loyal one. Yes, I would like to be able to conduct you before God’s throne in heaven today for only one hour so that you could see and comprehend what God has prepared for those who love him. Oh, how joyfully you would then renew the good fight. Yes, pray, work, fight, suffer and obey, in each place to which God has appointed you. Carry out everything steadfastly! Persevere in

the office or position holy obedience has assigned you, or in the duties you were asked to do, so that one day you may also attain the crown of eternal life.

1899/12/15

The holy season of Advent should reinvigorate you to strive for the exalted goal of the Society. I would like, therefore, to admonish you again especially after coming back from my last trip where I saw how much good one single member can do.

As with my last trip, this time too I experienced some things I want to share with you. As you already know, I traveled through almost the whole of Germany, to Switzerland, Hessen, Prussia, a large part of Württemberg, Bavaria and Austria, and I also visited with many bishops and archbishops, and spoke at length with one.

On this trip I saw so much that I want to share with you. Especially I repeat that we should work through example. *Exempla tonant*, “example thunders.” And it is the same when a member shines outside through his example: it will thunder, it will accomplish a lot. You sometimes hear, “This or that religious is a good member.” I want to tell you something I was told so that you see exactly how one notices you.

One priest noted that he felt slighted because someone hadn't called him by the title “Reverend.” A small thing admittedly, but you see how easily feelings can be stirred up. Therefore, even now you should use that title in your addresses. Discipline yourself so that when you come out you don't fall. In another case I was told that a member of our Society visited somewhere. But the man he was looking for was detained; he could not come to the gate quickly. The confrere felt that he had waited for him too long and wanted to run away. I would like also to point this out. It offends, for example, if you wrong someone and do not right that wrong.

Furthermore, respect for the Society is especially important. Someone in the Society expressed to me his disapproval of another member. This person let slip an ironic remark. You see how one notices you. A bishop remarked: this one is good. You see how one is observed even by the highest circles.

In passing, I would like to alert you to a point which I discussed with one bishop regarding formation. Once you come out into the world, you will collapse if you don't stand solidly on your legs. Regarding studies, I would like to note what one scholarly bishop, an archbishop, said to me: when it comes to studies, our Society. ...

It is not impossible that one must comply with these wishes, especially that some members should take the graduate examination in German humanist studies. This is an important point. The purpose of the Society is universal: we use all means. Consequently, if one is a good member and does his job well, he can accomplish much and he will get a position where he can work! That is one advantage of the Society: that it is not narrowly confined to certain circles but is for all classes. And I repeat here in regards to studies as they are required in Germany, that later we will make the effort to follow them and also to reach the graduate examination.

Therefore, as I said, you should now work properly through example, because when you come out, you are really scrutinized. Things go particularly well if you are a tried and true member. People immediately notice this. I particularly recommend modesty and respect toward priests, toward pastors! First modesty, then prudence. Prudence is particularly important.

However, I must relate an incident that was described to me.

A member, without any bad intention, made a remark which ended up doing quite serious damage. In making any remark you must always remember the old saying: *Quidquid agis prudenter agas et respice finem*. "Whatever you do, act with prudence, keeping the goal in sight." Not merely the next goal but the final goal. It suffices, for example, if one says: "We need support." Whoever wants to give something gives. So far God has not abandoned us.

Therefore: *respice finem*, keep the goal in sight. If you follow the rule you will accomplish great things, you will do much. Then, you should work to understand properly the spirit of the institute and become apostles of sufferings. Imagine if the apostles had said as the Savior sent them out: I would like to have a beautiful house, a beautiful room, etc. What kind of apostle would this be! It is the same with us who are at the start of our mission. If we work as we should, we cannot count on a pleasant life; then we would be asking for something that is simply not possible.

I would like your further help, especially now in this holy season, with prudence and insofar as it is allowed by the laws of the dioceses. And I would especially like you to take seriously this one thing: if everyone of you would find just one reliable lay person to care for the interests of our publications in the municipality and region, how much good can come about! If in the outside world a hundred co-workers were won with one stroke, each could do so and so much. Whenever possible, you should work this way. There are some who perhaps cannot do it for free. In this case you can pay them.

Another point that is so important for you and for the Society is to avoid sin. If you sinned, go to the advocate as St. John relates,

but sin no more! *Stultitia est, stultum est peccare* “It is foolish, foolishness to sin.” Yes certainly it is folly! If someone put his hand on the anvil and pounded it a while, what would you say about him? He is a fool, a senseless person. But what are you doing when you commit a sin? If we failed, let us not despair! Let us repent and go to our Savior. But let us be on guard lest in the future we harm ourselves through sin.

Then, it is particularly important to the Society and to the church to be somehow wholehearted. As the Savior says: *Qui non est pro me, contra me est*. Whoever is not with me is against me. It is the same in the Society! We don’t need half measures. With half measures, with indecision, not much is accomplished; for example, if one associates, without any duty or necessity to do so, with people who have failed. Tell me who your friends are and I will tell you who you are! It is so important that one’s character is established. It is especially important in our Society for you to be wholehearted.

If you are completely permeated by the spirit, you become happy. And as soon as you look for work in other directions you become unhappy! You will find opinions about everything. You know that Scripture is the Protestant book from which everyone can dredge up his different opinions. If so many opinions are found even in Scripture, do you think that many opinions will not be found in the Society?

Therefore, work through example especially when you come out in the world, and don’t listen to everything. You can’t blame the people; sometimes they just don’t know the reasons, and from their point of view they are right. I spoke with a scholarly bishop,

who said, “I was against your institute; but the very thing I had against you is why I am now for the Society.”

If you want to be happy you must remain firm in sacrificing. You even know how dignitaries themselves hold differing opinions. This is one point which in the university here also has a bad effect without your noticing it, since one sees so many kinds of things [opinions] that one lets some slide.

I repeat: observe the rule, follow the rule, and you will become happy. You will realize that you accomplish great things thereby – things which are of the greatest importance to the Society. Therefore, I don’t need to talk much about it. Simply do what the rule stipulates and then you will see! How much you will accomplish is immense! And remember how the Society is positioned; it is so appropriate for our time since it is so innovative in its means: it uses all the means that are allowed.

One bishop said that the Society is a providential society for our time. “Other societies are good; but your Institute, the Salesians, and the Resurrectionists are those that best fit our times.” Therefore, if you want to be quite happy, be observant members.

1899/12/22

We are in the run-up to the celebration of Christmas, this sweet feast. We should use this holy time to explore and to renew our vocation – the lofty vocation to which God calls us. I would like you in these days to probe deeply our high and glorious mission as members of our Society.

Our main task is *imitatio et sequela Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Salvatoris mundi*, “to imitate and follow our Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of the world.” Precisely through imitation we must, so far possible, earn the name of a true Salvatorian.

It is certain that Divine Providence was saving this name for us. And if we name ourselves after the Divine Savior then we must also strive to follow the *Salvator mundi*. Oh, what more exalted name! Since Providence reserved it for us, should we not be striving to imitate the Savior of the world?

Our main study should be: *Meditatio in libro (vita) Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Salvatoris mundi*. “Meditation on the book (life) of our Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of the world.” Look at the title the Savior himself adopted in these days: *Salvator mundi*. *Apparuit humanitas et benignitas Domini Nostri*. “Savior of the world. The humanity and kindness of our Lord appeared.” Kindness appeared, that *benignitas*! If we want to be like the Divine Savior we must seek to make ourselves as kind as possible.

Then, as I so often said, humility! *Emitte agnum Domine Dominatorem terrae*: “Lord, send us a lamb to rule the earth!”

Therefore, meekness, humility! So in this way let us strive to imitate the Divine Savior!

He is called *pacificus rex*, “king of peace” the one who brought peace: *Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*! “Peace to men [and women] of goodwill.” Peace with God, peace with our neighbor, peace with oneself! Consider these words, so that you always have peace with God, with yourself, and with all human beings, so far as that is possible.

On the other hand I also wish that you would be quite grateful to the dear Savior for calling you to such an exalted position: to follow him, the *Salvator mundi*! You should, so to speak, help everyone to Christ. How beautiful if one could say about every one of you, that you bring peace. All of you should be *benigni*, “kind;” *humani estote*, “be truly human” so that you become like the Savior! You know how gladly he used this expression!

The task of our Society must be to study and to contemplate this divine model – this should be the main study! There you also find the purpose of the Society! And what is the purpose of the Society other than to be collaborators? Go to Jesus in these days and see meekness and heavenly peace! Draw strength there, so that you receive as much joy as possible from this divine child, to become as much as possible like the Savior.

Then, be properly thankful, since we can regard it as a special grace that the dear Savior arranged for us to have precisely this name. It’s not without Divine Providence that we have the name *Sanctissimi Salvatoris* “Most Holy Savior” from the Savior himself,

and that he strengthened us through this grace. So thank him, especially through seeking to follow him as much as possible! Seek to imitate him and so to thank him. On the other hand, to whom much is given much will be required. And if we don't live up to this we will be punished all the more severely. It is an excellent thing to be reminded to imitate him as much as possible.

We are named after the highest Lord of heaven and earth, who came and descended: *Natus est Salvator mundi*. "The Savior of the World was born!" If we want to name ourselves after him, we see how important it is to imitate him. On the other hand, if we make ourselves unworthy of this grace God will punish us!

Therefore, properly seek to follow the dear Savior in these days and pray that he will give you the strength, as far as possible, to work as saviors according to his spirit and deeds!

The name we received could hardly be more beautiful – Providence arranged it so. We first had the name Apostolic Teaching Society: followers of the apostles. And then, because so many already had this name, God arranged for us to get this [new] name. Therefore, when you suffer much, remember that God has given you much greater things.

Again, be happy that you are called to follow the Savior. Be happy that you have his name: Salvatorians. And to close, ask the Savior when [we celebrate the day] he is born, especially you priests, when you hold him in your hands – ask him earnestly to give us strength to fulfill our lofty task.

1900/01/05

Tomorrow we will celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany where the Divine Savior became known, where he was revealed to the people. *Qua die Dominus Noster Unigenitum Suum mundo dedit*. "That day Our Lord gave his only begotten Son to the world." This most holy feast should be a new incentive for us to strive as much as possible for our holy exalted tasks and to fulfill them according to God's will. Oh, that in these days we might recognize our lofty mission, our exalted vocation! We should make the Savior of the world known to all people, *manifestare Dominum Nostrum omnibus et ubique*, "to reveal Our Lord to everyone everywhere." We should unite with the *Salvator mundi* "the Savior of the world" and spread him and his honor everywhere.

In these days especially consider the exalted mission you have. Be mindful of this great and exalted task, but also of its demands: that you follow the Savior of the world with God's grace. How much you can accomplish with Christ, with Christ the Savior of the world! But for this it is above all necessary to die to ourselves, to break free from the world and to unite ourselves intimately with God.

There is a particular point to which I would like to alert you again, something so necessary to the apostolate, to the fulfillment of your high task: prayer! Oh don't deceive yourselves! If you truly desire the mission and so want to become apostles, if you want to accomplish great things, then become men of prayer! You cannot fulfill our mission if you do not have strength and grace from above. And the more you turn to earth, the less you will fulfill your mission. And the more you turn to heaven through prayer to beg for strength and help from above, the more you will accomplish.

Take this for your whole life and consider well: if you are not men of prayer but are still nonetheless so zealous, still so hopeful that you can accomplish great things – while you are not men of prayer, oh, I fear that you will be like a flame that flares up but soon dies out again. How can you last in this dead world, how can you hold out against the power of the hell and the passions if you don't have strength and help from above? Being men of prayer indicates whether you are loyal to your vocation and your high task! If you relax in prayer you can be sure to slide backwards, and little by little, I would like to say, you lose sight of what you are doing.

Prayer is where you should get fire and increase it on earth, where you should fortify yourself, where you should rest when you are apostolically involved in the activities of the world. Oh, how cold the winds of the world that buffet you now and then! If you don't pray, if you don't warm yourself at the source, how will you endure? Therefore, once again, hold on to this your whole life: as long as you are men of prayer, I trust you will fulfill your mission! But if you slack off in prayer and are not men of prayer, you will not accomplish great things!

This is how it is: we have a task, and if we want to accomplish it we need grace for ourselves and others who we want to convert. But if we apply merely natural means, how can we accomplish anything? Therefore, pray *instantanter, instantius, instantissime*, “urgently, more urgently, most urgently.” *Orate sine intermissione!* “Pray without ceasing!” If you pray this way, you will have some solace, some joy, deep happiness! Oh, it is so important in the apostolate to have light from above. For sometimes, when you believe you are doing good things, in fact you are preparing damage! Yes, send us a good spirit! *Emitte spiritum tuum!* “Send your Spirit!”

In general you will see, if you find a person of prayer God has chosen that one as a tool! And whoever does not pray, pray much, I expect nothing good from him! And I say again: if you are not men of prayer, even if you have goodwill, if you are not men of prayer don't expect much for yourself. If, however, you are men of prayer I hope that with God's grace you will accomplish great things for the honor of God.

1900/01/12

Blessed Cottolengo had this custom, whenever the *piccola casa* the “little house” in Turin fell into dire need; when Providence seemed to retreat, he usually became agitated. Not in fact because the creditors harassed him roughly, and not because of the great need itself, but because he was afraid that something could have been done which had caused the hand of Providence to withdraw. This is not always the case. God sometimes lets an institute or a person fall into deep need without there being any precise fault. We see this in the Holy Family, which was in great need although they were the holiest of people. Therefore, it is not always true that if a house falls into great need something was amiss or something bad happened. This is a big lesson for each and every one of us.

I presuppose that no one judges another, but that everyone says: *Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*, “Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.” No one will say: “I didn’t do it.” That is what Cottolengo feared, and this is a strict reminder especially for us who are dependent on Providence. You know that our Society is from above. And, therefore every one of us must examine ourselves to see whether it is because of him, or whether it could be because of him that God withdraws. All of us, more or less, may be to blame, so everyone must seek to improve! *Errare humanum est, sed perseverare malum est*. “To err is human, but to persist in error is evil.” We may have sinned, but let’s not persist in the sin. Let us get up again immediately!

So we should strive mightily, each individual, to do nothing which is contrary to poverty! I say that we must expect our help

from above. But we won’t be able to wait with trust if we don’t work hard to remain free from sins and to fulfill God’s will. Therefore, we, everyone in his place, should work, especially that trust becomes easier for us. *Sperate in Domino! Timete Deum; habete fiduciam*. “Hope in the Lord! Fear God; have confidence!” Then God will shield us. Everyone should be mindful of his effectiveness, that Providence will help from above! Therefore, again I say: *Timete Deum, sperate et habete fiduciam!* Fear God, look to God, and trust in him.

1900/01/19

May the zeal, the enthusiasm for the Society, in which you have taken vows and are incorporated, always grow and increase from day to day. To insure this happens, that you increase in love and zeal for the Society, consider especially these two points: first, the grandeur and holiness of the purpose and mission of the Society. Contemplate this, penetrate into the holiness of the task of our Society, into its beauty, its nobility. And the second point that should impel you to love and be zealous for the Society are the many good things, material and spiritual, that you have obtained through the Society!

If you really look at these two points it will be impossible for you not to show love and zeal for the Society. Therefore, delve into these two points so that your zeal grows from day to day, and your love grows true. And consider the great and exalted advantages that spring from this love and this zeal. Consider the great advantage for you if you really are a Salvatorian, a full member of the Society, if you are not ashamed but everywhere stand as solid, tried and true members. Consider what good things could be accomplished if you were so enthusiastic, how you could advance the glory of God, how many souls you could save! Never be ashamed of the Society.

Let us consider how our foes do everything to attain their evil purposes. Think of the Freemasons, what zeal, what planning, what eagerness they have for their organization! Think of the heretics, the enemies of holy faith, the schismatics, or whatever they may be called. What sacrifices, what efforts they put in day and night! They go into all countries to the outermost frontiers, yes even to where

Catholic missionaries have never set foot. Then, look at how other people pursue happiness and honor. Look at the soldiers in the different wars, who must endure all these sufferings, and to what end? Should this not impel us to work for the exalted and holy purpose of the Society since we ourselves reap benefits for body and soul!

For now, for this time, especially heed this point: resolve that everyone at his place, will completely carry out what is requested of him by the superiors. Through this you will increase your zeal and your love for the Society and manifest them in a splendid manner. You will not look upon it and think: in this way or that I could do more. Instead, work where you are assigned for the interests and needs of the Society. Let everyone at his place be a Salvatorian and work at every opportunity for the Society! Compared to the many sacrifices made for other purposes, is not our exalted goal worth sacrificing one's whole life? Therefore, everyone should take pains to fulfill his assignment fully and completely, and always work to support and spread the Society.

1900/02/16

The dear Savior says: *Mandatum do vobis ut diligatis invicem*. “I give you a command that you love one another.” And so often sacred scripture admonishes us: “I give you a new command: love one another.” The apostolic zeal of religious who want to live community life is especially important to the fulfillment of this command. Consider what St. Gregory says: *Qui caritatem non habet, praedicandi officium nullatenus suscipere debet*, “the one who lacks charity should in no way undertake the task of preaching.” Whoever does not practice love should absolutely not take up the apostolate.

Particularly religious should be steeped in love in order to become apostolic workers! The Divine Savior himself, the God-man, shows such great love: “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.” What patience and meekness he showed towards his apostles! Then, we look at St. Paul who preferred to be anathema in order to save others. And look at St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bernard, Francis de Sales – what love, what determination! What a reminder for us, if we want to suffer and work as apostles.

Love, especially among confreres, will strengthen us on the way to goodness and perfection. Oh, how easily things go if one neither gives offense nor becomes offended. Certainly it is a duty not to injure love. Let us speak for a moment about the opposite of love: how many are shaken in [pursuing] the good, and the one who injures love, how easily he becomes a victim! And the offender will feel how often God does the same to him! *Qua mensura metiemini, eadem remetietur vobis*. “The measure you measure with will be measured back to you.” You will have God against you if you are harsh toward your confreres; if you injure love, criticize

and judge their mistakes, then you must fear that sooner or later you will experience the same.

Furthermore, love is a sign to me that you are making good progress; it gives me hope that you are striding ahead on the right path! I would like to say the same thing about love that someone said of gratitude: “If I hear that someone remembers for a long time any help he has received, that is a greater sign of holiness in him, than if I hear he scourges himself and has visions.” And if you possess love, that is also a sign to me that you are progressing on the good path. Therefore, strive for love but fear the penalty, the judgment.

I already said: “The measure you measure with will be measured back to you.” If you study the history of individuals, you will see that societies, communities, nations lacking it [i.e., love] were punished. *In quo quis peccaverit, in eo punietur*. “He will be punished according to his sin.” If you don’t possess love and if you criticize and are unjust towards your confreres, you must fear! Therefore, love! *Filioli, diligite alterutrum!* “Sons, love one another!” And not only in words but also in deeds!

Look at St. Paul; he worked with such love. So first of all, persevere! Love endures all things! Furthermore, live so that you love in the way our holy rule prescribes. Oh, how many you can encourage and inspire toward greater goodness when you do them a loving service and spare them a suffering – a cross. And there are so many loving services you can mutually render each other.

Above all, however, see that love does not become injured in speech, as St. James says! Search out the mistakes of your confreres

with love and meekness, but so far as possible, do so in order to excuse (as long as your duty as a superior doesn't force you to do differently!). Therefore, love! Cover whatever you can with the mantel of love. Whoever doesn't do this, must fear that his own mistakes will one day be exposed. Seek to have love and mutuality bloom in the right! How many inconveniences, how many pains a mere word can cause; how many misunderstandings it leads to!

Therefore, love, and again love! *Utinam vere omnes habeant caritatem!* "Oh, that everyone would truly have charity" Then, you would become strong. Then you would carry your burden easily. Examine yourself more frequently, however, to see whether you really do love. Model yourselves after the exalted examples of the Divine Savior, Moses, Paul and so many other saints, the holy apostles and great ones! By love the mind is more easily subjugated, and hearts won over. You can preach on and on, but if you don't have love, for the listeners you are of no use. Therefore, *habete caritatem et nemo sit qui non habeat caritatem. Alioquin.* "Have love. There should be no one without love. Otherwise..."

1900/02/23

Tomorrow we will celebrate the feast of St. Matthias. This feast reminds us and admonishes us to protect the grace of our vocation. We have such a powerful example in these two apostles. Judas, whom the Divine Savior himself called, became disloyal to his vocation and another [Matthias] stepped into his place! Let us use tomorrow's feast to do as much as possible for the grace of our vocation; to inflame and to encourage us to do our very best to preserve our holy vocation! Yes, you know how great is the grace of a religious vocation, and you also know that it can be lost. And how easily the loss of the religious vocation can bring in its wake a string of other disasters!

I would like to list just a few points that should help you to protect this grace of vocation. First, always seek to cooperate with this grace. Oh, don't resist the graces, these inner promptings; follow them! So many graces often come either from superiors or from peers; oh, how many admonitions come – follow them!

A second point useful for protecting a religious vocation is conscientious observance. Both as religious and in the offices we administer we should be prompt in complying with the rule. Violating one single rule, even if in and of itself it is no sin, can cause you so much disaster! Follow the rules! The rules are given for your salvation! Follow them! Some rules offer you protection against detours, against ways that lead to your undoing.

A third point for conserving one's vocation is always to preserve a cheerful and happy disposition. The blessed Cottolengo often repeats it: *State allegri in Domino. Gaudete in Domino.* "Be happy

in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord.” You know how the psalmist enjoins: *Servite Domino in laetitia!* “Serve the Lord with gladness.” Seek to be as cheerful as possible! Oh, how beautiful is *laetitia in Domino!* “Rejoicing in the Lord.” *Estote ergo semper laetantes!* “Therefore, always be joyful!”

Therefore, these three points! I prefer the one who sometimes makes a mistake out of impetuosity, to the one who serves glumly! You will more easily overcome some temptation through a cheerful nature; you will win the victory more easily! Don’t underestimate this in your future apostolate and in saving souls. *Laetitia* is an important means to save souls.

Another means for preserving the grace of vocation is to work zealously for the Society, to spread and strengthen it. By working for the Society you become securely bound to it. I know one striking example in the Society: I once requested somebody who was not at all predisposed toward us to work for the Society. He agreed, and by the time the work was finished he had the grace of a vocation. If he had not worked for the Society he would have lost the grace of vocation. Cooperate, work, suffer and endure to spread and strengthen the Society. Just think of how people work day and night for their own purposes, and we who serve such an exalted purpose, should we work any less?

An enemy of one’s vocation is lukewarmness of course. Therefore, avoid it in the spiritual life. May laxity never find its way into our midst!

A further point for conserving one’s vocation are the words of St. Bernard: *Orationi plus fide quam industriae et labori*, “Trust in

prayer rather than in your efforts and work.” Yes, trust more in prayer than in your *industriam et laborem*, “your efforts and work.” *Plus orationi quam industriae et labori*. What a beautiful saying of St. Bernard! We so often pray: *Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam*. “If the Lord does not build the house, in vain have the builders labored.” Therefore *plus fide orationi quam industriae*. Pray much for the grace of vocation.

Another point (there are so many concerning how to retain the grace of vocation): always live in good agreement with the superiors. Still another point is love, *caritas*, that you love your confreres properly, that you don’t withhold respect and that you avoid everything that injures brotherly love!

Still another point: be quite mild in judging. In that way you will contribute to saving your vocation more than if you judge mistakes too harshly; and much, much I could say myself. I would like to say: if one judges too fast, then sooner than one expects, God lets you fall into the same mistake. Don’t judge the mistakes of the confreres!

Therefore, among the many means to safeguard a vocation, I list in particular that you fulfill your assigned duties conscientiously; always have a cheerful, glad nature; zeal for the Society, work for its advancement; avoid lukewarmness; always work and live in good agreement with the superiors; and finally, don’t injure love, and be mild in your judgments.

1900/03/23

How much good, how many blessings the Society can bring about, how many souls it can lead to heaven, how much misery and pain it can ease, how much solace it can bring! Oh, if you could see how much the Society with God's grace can accomplish, you would feel so inspired for it! Therefore, I would like to admonish you to be mindful of the grandeur of the [Society's] purpose and goal, the grandeur of your position and vocation. Then you will sacrifice yourself completely for God and for his holy work! Oh, let us not shame ourselves before our enemies, before the world!

Just look at nature, at the ants as they work together so united toward one and the same goal. What these small animals manage to do! Look at the bees, with what unity and strength they work on one and the same goal, so to speak in obedience! You see, you know, you hear so much about what sacrifices and sufferings soldiers and enemies endure for their own ends. And we, should we hesitate? We who were deemed worthy by God for such an exalted vocation, for such a holy mission, for our happiness and the happiness of our neighbors.

Therefore, especially in this Lenten season when we look at the dear Savior's passion, let this renew our resolution to rededicate ourselves to God! I repeat again and again, to be able to work beneficially in the Society, it is necessary for you to observe obedience and love. Don't be discouraged to hear the same thing again and again; it is too important! Observe this and you will see how much good you can accomplish.

Therefore, obedience, childlike obedience, humble obedience. Ah, what peace it brings if you live and work in obedience. What blessings will accompany your works. Therefore, consider this: *Ad quid venisti? Ad serviendum*, "Why did you come? To serve" – to obey. Recognize God's will through the superiors' will and be obedient. Seek to serve *veraciter*, truthfully, not only externally but completely, to sacrifice both your spirit and your will; in a word, to accept the superiors' wishes.

So love, brotherly love, mutual love, to love each other in faith, in God! This love should not be a love from flesh and blood. No! You should love each other because God wants it so. You should truly love each other, not out of self-interest, but because God desires it. You should show to the other that which you know to be the most beneficial to him! Therefore, obedience and love, mutual love, that we help one another to achieve great things. Let me not touch on the opposite! You yourselves know from history that the opposite destroys the greatest works!

Therefore, today when we celebrate the Savior's sacred wounds, again today let us make the firm decision to live for God, to work and to suffer. Oh how happy you are if you can say at the end of life: I did what I was asked to do. I obeyed, suffered, loved. I always observed obedience! Oh, what solace! Then how easy will be the judgment before God, how easy to die. I already said earlier that the difficulties [one encounters] on one's deathbed depend precisely on this, whether or not one lived in peace with one's fellows! There one will see for the first time what it is to hound and offend one's own brother.

Therefore, everyone should seek to make his confrere happy.

Our holy rule says how you should behave toward the confreres. Follow it, so that you won't have to regret it in the last hour. Work on the one exalted goal of the Society in obedience and mutual love. And may everyone resolve to work completely for his holy vocation, completely for God's affairs, for the Society, the salvation of one's neighbor, to work to suffer. Then you will have strength, then you will have endurance greater than empire and nation! Therefore, *devovere et consecrare* "devote and consecrate" [yourselves] anew for God's holy task.

1900/03/30

Obedience is the principle thing in the make-up of a good religious. Therefore, I cannot return to this point often enough. Oh, everything is accomplished so beautifully and easily where obedience prevails – obedience as the rule imposes it on us.

First of all, obedience should be rendered *integre*, "completely," the subordinate obeying his superiors completely, not just partially or occasionally; *integre*, so that nothing is lacking. Then it should be *accurate*, not superficial but exact. It also should be all-encompassing. For example, one should obey not only in matters that don't strike one as difficult, but globally, in *quacunquere*, "in whatever matter." Therefore, one should obey in everything.

Furthermore, [you should obey] always, whenever anything is ordered! It does not depend on the time, whether one feels like it or not. So always, *opportune et importune* "in season and out." Then *hilari corde!* "With joyful heart!" Oh, this is so important for your own good. If you obey *hilari corde, libenter*, "joyful-heartedly, gladly" then things become easy. If however, you resist from the start, it becomes hard for you to obey and you will also make it more difficult for your superiors to command. Even though orders must sometimes be given, you should never run the risk of having to be ordered under obedience. Instead, wherever possible anticipate the wish of the superior! Oh, how difficult it is when superiors have to weigh, judge, look, inquire whether or not the subordinate will follow their orders and commands. If you make giving orders difficult for the superior, you will sometimes have to do something which is disadvantageous for you!

Therefore, always desire to obey gladly, *hilari corde, hilari corde*. Then promptly, *sobrie*, “promptly” so to speak, as if one were ready to act: *Ecce adsumus, iube nos quid vis!* “Behold here we are. Use us as you see fit!” Then [instantly], *littera inchoata relictis* “leaving a letter unfinished” [e.g., leaving an “i” undotted, a “t” uncrossed].

Another important point for obedience, something St. Benedict already had in his rule is: accept the commands as if they came from God, because this superior takes God’s place. Some things become easy when you don’t scrutinize the person [giving orders] but concentrate on what God accomplishes through him. Especially don’t grumble, etc. Don’t be contentious *verbis, actibus, corde*, “though words, actions, or intentions” or even worse!

Because I am now talking about obedience, I would like particularly to point out that this is applicable to all, not only to these or those, to the scholastics but less for the priests, and even less for those in charge. It is applicable to all, from scholastics up to priests, and from priests up to superiors, and especially for the latter. It is very easy to believe that if you are made superior you are less bound to obedience. But if you think about it correctly, you must obey even more because disobedience brings serious consequences in its wake, not merely for you but also for others. A superior who doesn’t obey can bring a whole house into confusion.

Therefore, obedience is especially applicable to all, from the first to the last! Consider this well, you who are set up as superiors and overseers, that not only the scholastics must observe *regulae communes* “community rules” but this is also your task. You must observe them just as well as the scholastics.

Therefore, obedience! And a uniform, harmonious cooperation will follow. This is so important to our Society because it should spread so fast. And how will this happen if everyone, from the lowest up to the superior, is not united in a good, solid and holy obedience, a good, joyful, exact obedience! Therefore, pay attention! Without obedience in the Society, there will be cross upon cross. If however, obedience reigns, it will go well, and we will achieve great things with God’s grace.

1900/04/13
Good Friday

This day should admonish us to live as true Salvatorians. Oh, how I wish that in these days you would really fathom what it means to call yourselves *Salvatores mundi*, “saviors of the world”: Salvatorians.

Today I would like to stress particularly one way you can work faithfully for the dear Savior, the *Salvator mundi*: it is through suffering and obedience. A Salvatorian is a savior of the world: *est Salvator mundi*. The Redeemer and Savior of the world, *factus est oboediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis*: became obedient unto death, even death on the cross. That is my food, to do the will of the one who sent me.

God’s will is clearly before your eyes. Therefore, your task is to fulfill God’s will by following Christ. May you also be able to say one day: I was obedient. I did the will of God the most high, the will of the superior. And may you be able to say at the end: I have finished the work. Therefore, obedience! Look at the dear Savior. Imitate the *Salvator mundi*. Study him that you may become like him! Therefore, obedience!

Suffering is also your task as Salvatorians. You desire many things and great accomplishments. You want to help save souls, you want to become collaborators. And you know that if you want to do this, if you want to save souls and do great things for God’s honor, then you must suffer. For it is well-known that successes come in proportion to sufferings. Therefore, if you want to do something great for God’s honor and for the salvation of souls, as

true Salvatorians you should follow the Savior in suffering. Never recoil if pain and suffering await you, but walk courageously towards suffering because you will work through them to God’s honor. *Surgite, eamus!* “Get up, let’s go...!” Oh, you should long for sufferings, yes, sufferings *usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis!* “Unto death, even death on the cross...!”

If you want to be glorified, you should follow the Divine Savior. If you want to call yourself *Salvatores mundi*, you must seek to become like the Savior especially in these two things: obedience and suffering! Never shrink from obedience *in omnibus* “in everything.” *Christus factus est oboediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis*. “Christ became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.” He said: *Fiat voluntas tua*. “Your will be done.” And when you encounter suffering ask for strength!

May you be true Salvatorians! Day by day, penetrate more deeply the meaning of these words; thank God that he has called you in his kindness and providence. Strive to become like the Divine Savior in obedience and in suffering! A single member of the Society can accomplish so much if he follows the Savior in obedience and seeks to become like him! Oh, you already see how a zealous member of the Society enjoys God’s blessing. How much more if you seek to become as much as possible like him. Do it and you will see what success will accompany your efforts. Be Salvatorians through steadfast obedience even to the point of crucifixion! Be Salvatorians in sufferings even up to crucifixion. Seek to become like the Savior so that you will not be found unworthy.

1900/06/08

As you know, tomorrow and the day after, many will receive Holy Orders. So I would like to share some thoughts with you tonight. The candidates for ordination have already prepared for this important step through the holy Exercises.

Now in this short time they have before their holy ordination, I would like both those to be ordained as well as the other confreres to have another more intense preparation. First of all I recommend that you pray quite earnestly: *Adjutorium nostrum venit ex Alto*. Our help comes from above. Therefore, you should all pray very fervently, not merely the candidates for ordination but also all priests, brothers, and everyone. Reflect on the exalted dignity that will be given to these confreres. Oh pray fervently, without ceasing, even now! Oh, how much depends on this hour, on this moment!

In addition, deep humility – truly humble yourselves. *Humilibus dat gratiam*. “He gives his favors to the humble.” So approach this great honor with even greater humility, true self-abnegation, confessing your real nothingness. Be humble! *Estote humiles!*

A third point is an earnest desire for this sacred dignity, the source of so many graces. You have such a deep desire, such a joyful yearning because you need so many graces. So, candidates for ordination and others, prepare well through zealous prayer, deep humility, and deep longing.

1900/11/16

Before I depart for Belgium, let me urge you all to live and work as good, true Salvatorians. Fulfill your sacred obligations before God conscientiously and exactly. May you not be deterred from your duties by the attacks of the devil, or give in to that personal enemy you carry within yourselves. Faithfully observe the three religious vows, the first of which is holy poverty.

How beautiful, how exalted is holy poverty through which one is so detached from everything. But if perhaps after many years someone asks himself: “How did I actually live in this or that situation?” how will he have to answer himself? That is why I hope you will always remember the day of your holy profession. Always remain in the spirit of that day, and never weary of fighting. We fight for a great prize; and if you don’t fight, you will never win.

Then the vow of obedience. By it you have offered yourself as a sacrifice, surrendering yourself to God. But how easy it is to stray from obedience. Who can say that he is never tempted in this? There is quite a danger that after the passing of years one may arrive at the point where he is merely pursuing his own interests. Therefore, I beg you, remember your holy vows.

Then humility! Become quite humble. Reflect often on the comforting promise: *Deus humilibus dat gratiam*, “God gives his favor to the humble.” Consider the model of the Divine Savior who became *ut vermis et opproprum plebis*, “like a worm and despised by the people.” When you humble yourself completely before God, then you will achieve great things. When you humble yourself before God, then what is said about the Divine Savior will

also be true of you: *Dedit illi Deus nomen quod est super omne nomen*, “God gave him a name above every other name.”

Finally self-mastery. You will make progress only to the degree you overcome yourself. If you neglect self-mastery you will regress; neglect humility and the foundation of the virtues collapses.

If you become good, observant Salvatorians through obeying the holy vows, through self-mastery and humility, then you will be like a tree planted at the water’s edge, bearing fruit in due season. I want every one of you to have an ardent and firm desire to become reliable Salvatorians. I know we all make mistakes, beginning with me. But I can and I must demand goodwill and earnest effort from every one of you.

Therefore, strive to live, to work, and to die for the things of God. That would be my greatest solace on this wearisome [upcoming] journey. I will especially remember you. And remember that my greatest joy will be to know that you are striving heartily with goodwill to become more and more perfect.

1900/12/08

Today recalls the day the Society was founded. The Society was founded 19 years ago, at the end of the holy jubilee. You were all living by then. After 19 years we have another jubilee year and the Society is also granted a great joy. This year with God’s help we have been given such a large number of priests for the Society, more than ever before and probably more than will happen for some time to come.

These two points certainly are sweet memories – the foundation anniversary as well as the large number of newly ordained. How much they can do for the honor of God. What solace already from above, what joy, what advancement for the Society! But under this joyful mood a certain apprehension also lurks: will all of them also be good religious and persevere as good religious priests? With this thought and this question, a certain sadness befalls me: whether each and every one of you has resolved to be and to remain a good religious priest. God grant that after 10, 20, 40 years you still have the same resolution and have carried it out.

If you really desire only to be the joy of the superiors, of the church, the joy of people and angels, the joy of the Society, then you must pay special attention that when you become priests you don’t start to think that you are on the height, that you have arrived, so to speak. That is when you really start! You obtained the honor, but consider well that from now on your obligation to strive for holiness and perfection is all the greater. Therefore, don’t imagine that you have already reached the height through ordination. Think instead that now you have another new reason to strive for holiness with new strength and energy, to wipe out mistakes and to implant

and fortify virtues, to achieve a character that does not sway back and forth like a reed in the wind.

A second point: when you are priests don't think that you are no longer bound so strictly to the rule. Precisely as priests you should be exacting. The world, which wants to see a religious man in you, is stricter in its judgment than you think. Therefore, heed these two points, when you reach the exalted dignity. From that moment on and up to the end of your days, strive after holiness, root out failings, become strong-minded. Secondly, don't imagine that you are less bound to the rule, but as priests walking in such close relationship to the dear Savior, you really must live as true Salvatorians. Again in these days so many are being beatified, and these are religious. Yes, certainly the religious calling is a means to holiness; this should encourage and strengthen you.

1900/12/28

We are poised at the turn of the year, and this time at the turn of a century. Once again we stand before a new year. This reflection is of great importance for us. First of all we must review the past year and century to see how we used this gift for our salvation, for the honor of God, and for the welfare of our neighbor. Then we can tell whether we have profited from it, so that when the Lord comes to us with the summons, "Give an account of your stewardship," we could survive.

Therefore, in these last days I request you to consider carefully what you did, how you conducted yourselves, and what you think you must change. This time won't come again; it is extremely important, because we are now coming into a new century.

Here the question arises: what will this century bring us? I say, it will bring some things we certainly know and other things which we don't know. What we don't know is what things will meet us: joy and sorrow, happiness and misfortune. This is all for the best, because everything serves for the best for those who love God. If you love God, if you have the firm desire to love God, everything is arranged for your salvation. Thus, you have nothing to fear.

Another point is what awaits us – what we can expect with certainty and what we can say will come to everyone is death and judgment. Not one of us gathered together here would venture to claim that he will outlive the century now beginning. By the time this new century runs its course none of us will be counted among the living. A further certainty is judgment – either to eternal rest or to eternal damnation. People usually say, as we live so we die.

As we have lived, so will be our eternal lot. This is certain: that in the coming century we have to expect death and judgment.

If the judgment is unfavorable – we must fear that we may have many accusers. Accusations from the much good we could have done but failed to do, from the souls we could have saved, from the poor we could have helped. And if favorable – what joy, what bliss, what triumph! Then the souls we saved become our glory, our adornment. Oh, think deeply about what awaits us. Let us use this time of life because we do not know how long it will last. Let everyone consider what he has to change.

Let us get to work even if it demands sacrifice. Now there is still time; therefore, let us use even these last days to improve. The more sacrifices we make, the more merits we will have. We should consider these truths carefully, and firmly strengthen our resolve to begin the new century in such a way that we can hope for a favorable [final] judgment.

Time speeds along whether we want it to or not, whether we close our eyes or not. Death is certain, and judgment is sure. Let us not be confused by hellish influences, by the enticements of the flesh and the world lest our eyes be opened once it is too late.

1901/01/25

The Society expands more and more; our numbers grow; and after a very short time, in keeping with God's will, we will be found throughout the world, on every continent. Now that we are so widespread it is vital that a solid bond should unite us all as members of one and the same Society – one and the same mother. Of necessity this must be a strong bond; and this bond should be love for the Society. This bond should bind you all together, north or south, east or west, to work for God's honor and the salvation of your neighbor.

What is this love based on? First on the many kindnesses you have received from the Society. It accepted you, introduced you to the life of perfection, groomed you for life, body and soul. How many benefits you have received through the Society! This is one important reason why you should love the Society. You know that even dumb animals recognize and are drawn towards those who treat them with kindness. How much more is it a duty for religious to be grateful and to love the Society, which over the years has given them so much. Therefore, you have an important reason to love the Society. Recall how many benefits you have received to make you happy both now and for eternity; these are not the kind of benefits the world offers, and which lead nowhere.

How should you now prove your love for the Society? First, you should protect the Society generally; defending it as your own property. Never be ashamed of it, just as a good child is never ashamed of his own mother even if she is poor.

Second, promote the Society, its growth and its health, inside

and out, through cultivating benefactors, candidates, etc. Love will make you inventive in finding ways to fight for and to promote the Society.

Third, everyone should be conscientious at his post and do his duty, whether as superior or subordinate, no matter what your position, as procurator, scholastic, or brother. One single brother can do so much for the Society if he works conscientiously.

A fourth point is prayer. Prayer – many prayers. Pray with great trust. Yes, pray for me and for all in the Society.

Therefore, as far as it is possible show your love for the Society as you would for your own mother. Never allow anything to enter through you or through others which could in any way damage or tarnish it. Hold fast to the bond that joins you with the Society. What great things can happen, how much you can accomplish if you are united by this bond of love for the Society. How happy you will be if you move to another house where the members are animated by love for the Society. There you will feel at home, if you all prove yourselves children of the same Society and mother.

Love of the Society is so important. Just today I heard someone emphasize this. After expressing his astonishment at the rapid spread of our Society he suggested this was grounded in the confreres' love for one another. Truly the love of one's Order gives strength. So never let up! Pray and think about what I have just said. Seek as much as possible to make this love real. Some of you already do give good example in this regard. May it equally be said of each of you: he loved his mother, the Society.

1901/02/01

Tomorrow's feast, the Presentation, concerns God's dear mother. The aged Simeon addresses her and Christ, and calls Christ the *lumen ad revelationem gentium*, "the light for revelation to the Gentiles." Here God's dear mother is a model, especially for priests. As she offered the dear Savior with purity, so also the priest should offer the sacred victim with purity.

Priests especially should announce Christ, announce him everywhere as the *lumen ad revelationem gentium*, so that Christ may really be the *lumen*, "the light" of people everywhere. The priest is the herald of Christ.

To become a good, useful herald of Christ, you should equip yourselves especially now in this time of preparation through zealous study so that you appropriate Catholic teachings and become capable of proclaiming them.

Furthermore, you should not only appropriate these truths yourself, you should also ready yourself in this preparation time to share this truth with others, *verbis et scriptis*, "in words and in writing." Consequently, you should practice writing so that you can also announce Christ *in scripto* "in writing." Then especially the spoken word too: practice elocution and voice so that when you appear as a preacher one day, you really edify, teach, stimulate, etc. in the proclamation of Christ, and don't tire your listeners so they fall asleep from boredom.

Therefore, work to equip yourselves with the true Catholic teachings, so that you are able to announce them to others *scriptis* "in writing" and orally. However, for a good preacher the most

important thing is good example. *Verba sonant, exempla tonant.* Words sound, but example thunders.

A preacher whose life and words don't harmonize isn't worth much. But even a mediocre preacher, if people see he leads a holy life, accomplishes great things. We have examples. Think of the Curé of Ars. What he accomplished outstripped even the most gifted. And actually with some saints, when we read their sermons, we do not find what we expect. But what successes they had! And how often it happens that just seeing a preacher in the pulpit, the sermon is already half preached.

Through these three points, *scripto, verbo, exemplo*, you should work. Not only priests but also brothers can work through example. Don't forget that they can preach precisely through good example in their dealings with people of the world with whom they so often come into contact – at the gate, or when shopping, or wherever they associate with people. How much a brother can do in the missions, in houses with small communities; there a good brother can be a solid support. Therefore, the brothers especially should take this to heart: through strict observance, shine before people through modesty and a pious life.

This way priests like brothers will proclaim Christ everywhere, one through word, writing and example; and the other also through his example. Therefore, work closely together to exercise the apostolate of announcing Christ so that *lumen luceat*, “the light may shine.” Oh, I would like you to use all, all of your strengths, *exemplis, verbis, scriptis*, to announce Christ. In this day of recollection think about preparing yourselves in every way, really and truly to become instruments for this exalted task.

1901/02/08

The more the Society spreads and expands, all the more important strict obedience becomes. Today I would like especially to stress punctuality: *alacriter ac prompte*, “readily and promptly.”

First, everyone should be prompt in observing the daily schedule, perform his daily duties exactly, and to this end, rise in the morning at the prescribed time.

A second point, but no less important is that everyone, whatever his position, superior or anyone holding any post, always submits his letters and reports promptly at the stipulated time. Heed this your whole life. Be quite punctual when the time comes to submit reports, etc. What great annoyance and harm can arise if just one person is not punctual and the whole group is held back through this lack of punctuality.

Moreover, fulfill the duties of your position, including religious and priestly duties: Holy Mass, etc. One disorder leads to another.

Furthermore, you should be prompt in fulfilling particular orders given by the superiors. Carry them out promptly at the assigned time. If you execute everything punctually, a beautiful harmony reigns, and then everything goes well in the organism. But if on the contrary this regularity and punctuality are missing, how many annoyances and how much damage arise with severe consequences.

Where there is punctuality there is peace, harmony, unity; and this gives the whole Society a luster. Where punctuality exists, one

merits the respect of others! However, I would like to make sure you do not misunderstand: *omne nimis bonum vertitur in vitium*, “too much of a good thing becomes bad.” If you are punctual, you will then see what is God’s will. There are also exceptions to punctuality, and it can also happen that it becomes a duty to postpone something.

Furthermore, don’t judge or criticize those who are not punctual. Punctuality doesn’t consist in appearances but in the firm will to do everything at the right time. One can be more punctual, even if his actions don’t look so prompt, and vice versa. Don’t judge. In the sight of God there can be exceptions. One may at times be duty bound to make exceptions. Accustom yourself to this [punctuality] early, particularly the younger for whom it still is easy. See to it that you hold to solid, prompt procedure in these matters. Because if you are careless when young, the older you become the worse it will get. Get used to doing everything at exactly the assigned time. Each day even the seniors should fulfill their assigned tasks as punctually as possible at the assigned time. In this way you will be like an organism, or like good clockwork, which moves ahead uniformly and without mistakes. This way you will be at peace with yourself, and at the same time you will find peace and unity with the community.

1901/02/15

These days before Lent, when the world indulges in raw desire and sin – during these days how often God is offended. So holy church gathers Catholics in churches to make reparation there. Also we want to pray in a very special way in these days, with a penitential spirit and deep humility, to in some way make up to the divine holiness for the insults inflicted.

We also want to pray for the Society, especially in these days. Try hard to pray well, first for the Society in general and then particularly for the new foundations, where it is so necessary to stave off the devil’s attacks, neutralizing them and laying a solid foundation. We are called to pray and to hope for help from above. Oh, this rule is not for nothing: *Maximam fiduciam et confidentiam habeant in Deo et in sanctis patronis nostris, quoniam adiutorium nostrum venit ex alto. Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam*. “Let them have utmost trust and confidence in God and in our patron saints, because our help comes from above. Unless the Lord builds the house, in vain have the builders labored.” What will we accomplish if God is not for us?

We may work, labor, organize, and rush about, but if God is not for us then what will we attain? This is especially true of the whole Society. If even within himself every individual person finds so many opponents, especially the devil, how many more opponents and hostilities the whole Society will have, open and covert, especially in each new foundation. Who can help there besides God? How many secret tricks of the devil and his minions may be afoot. How easily they could inflict great damage on the Society if *manus Omnipotentis* “the hand of the Almighty” didn’t help.

The dangers are many, the enemies are numerous. And especially hell – what it won't use against a society which has declared open war [against it], and which plans to snatch the souls that it already regarded as won. Therefore, hell will be furious and do everything it can to harm the individual members and the whole Society. That's why it is necessary for you to pray much, to call down God's protection and help from above for the Society in general and for the new foundations in particular. Because they especially need prayers, since the enemies and opponents are greater there and the devil himself is more entrenched there. Just as it wanted to destroy the divine child in Bethlehem immediately after his birth, it wishes to do the same with the new foundations.

Pray, pray with great trust for the Society, and especially for the various new foundations, because our help comes from above. What can we attain even if everyone is for us, but if God is not for us? *Maledictus qui confidit in homine*. "Cursed is the one who trusts in men [and women]." Put your whole trust in God. With God on your side, all hell can storm against you, and it will be rebuffed. Prayer is the mightiest weapon. Therefore, use it, especially in these three days when we are so near the dear Savior particularly through prayer. Through prayer we will make up to the dear Savior for the many sins being committed now.

Furthermore, prayer has another special effect: it has a salvific effect on individuals. The more you pray for the Society and its undertakings, the more it will also help you!

1901/02/22

In any organism there are different functions, many diverse organs work together toward one and the same goal. It is therefore of great importance that you carry out as exactly as possible this rule that was just read, because on it depends the welfare and the progress of the whole Society.

You yourself should be ready to assume any office, any activity, any task, any undertaking entrusted to you by your superiors, convinced that it is God's will insofar as God in his providence directs your superiors. Superiors have a better overview of the whole; they know what is needed. They will consider individuals, nationalities, etc. However, if higher duties call, they must subordinate their own inclinations. Neither the superiors, much less the subordinates, will be allowed to follow their own inclinations there. Instead they must see what is God's will and what the welfare of the whole demands.

Even if things go so well, you should remember that not all wishes can be granted. Therefore, you should undertake every work in this spirit, whether it is a prestigious office or a seemingly low position. In an organism or a machine if something is not right, the whole thing is not right.

Don't think that if someone has an insignificant task as a priest that he is doing less. Precisely through uniform collaboration, each one carrying out in his place what is entrusted to him, will we accomplish great things. No one can boast that he has an important office, that this is one he deserves. You know how important the mission of the Society is, what a noble goal we have: to rescue

souls for the honor of God. What is more important and more urgent than saving souls? Should we not, therefore, feel impelled to undertake any activity that leads to this goal?

Let's compare the activity of the Society with a sinking ship: how everyone works there, everyone lends a hand and helps as much as he can without ever thinking whether his help is praiseworthy or insignificant. Now, no work is higher than the goal the Society has set for itself. Or if a fire breaks out, all have the same goal. Everyone is happy if he can help, if he can tote one bucket. And we who have such an exalted goal, how we should work! If we work together for the Society this way it will progress quickly and there will be unity among the many members. This will bind us solidly together.

Then you yourself will enjoy peace. And if you comply with these orders you will become such a joy to the superiors! It will help them with their heavy burden if they don't have to tiptoe around with fear and trepidation of your rejecting their request. This way you will secure your own peace, you will be the joy of the superiors, the Society will advance, the purpose of the Society will be achieved and the Society will accomplish many great things.

The opposite can easily come about if you don't do this. I cannot explain it more clearly, it is too bitter. Everyone can figure it out for himself. If one wants to build a house but no stone will stay in place, then no house will ever materialize.

It is in your own interest to assume as much as possible the various works and offices, and to do what is asked of you *pro bono communi*, "for the good of the community." Then you will be the

joy of your superiors, who along with the Society and the world will be built up, while you intimidate the enemies. Through this unity we will call down God's blessing.

1901/03/01

In examining your conscience, you can easily make the mistake of looking more at the *commissa*, “what one has done” than at the *omissa*, “what one has not done”: caring too little about how you can fail through sins of omission. I would especially like to alert you to one point: that when you make the daily examination [of conscience] prescribed by the rule, you should also examine whether you have done everything that is required by your occupation, your position, your vocation, etc.

First I would like to alert scholastics conscientiously to fulfill their duties respecting studies. Remember that you are failing if you do them negligently or only partially, when for example you pay more attention to subjects you like while neglecting others that are just as necessary. Scholastics should devote themselves to their studies, first to the required subjects especially moral theology and above all to dogmatics; however also then, so far as time allows, to philosophy; and where it is necessary to *Humaniora* “the humanities,” but always in accordance with their importance as duty demands.

Especially priests with a position, who discharge an office, should do it conscientiously according to the rules, first of all preaching, but also written or spoken lectures. Perform all of them strictly. Priests without any special office should approach their studies conscientiously to prepare themselves for the task of ministry. Also, as far as time allows, they should seek to make themselves useful for God’s honor. Let no one be idle even for a moment.

Brothers should be especially on guard to fulfill conscientiously their job, their office, however insignificant it may seem, each in

his own place in this or that position, according to the orders of their superiors.

I especially request that all of you, priests, students and brothers, be conscientious and exact in everything; carry out everything punctually and fully. Be exact and prompt and quick in all your activities and works. This will also give you public recognition. You will make yourselves popular with your superiors who will then respect you.

Take for example a state where the government and all its officials are quick and efficient. Such a state will flourish, becoming big and powerful, while another struggles along only with difficulty. It is similar in a society if the individuals are punctual and prompt. Therefore, I ask you and each superior who has any influence to direct their attention to this. This is so important, and good government is impossible if individuals are not punctual. Through punctuality you find joy in your vocation. With it comes life and strength, it is like flowing water that doesn’t stagnate or freeze over.

May you continue in such a way that you can stand on the day of judgment when the Lord says: *Redde rationem vilicationis tuae*, “Give an account of your stewardship;” that you performed your duty; that none of you is a *servus nequam*, “a wicked servant,” but that all can hear the words: *Euge serve bone et fidelis, intra in gaudium Domini tui*. “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into your master’s joy.”

1901/03/08

St. Joseph, Jesus' foster father, is among the holy patrons of the Society. Therefore, we should venerate him in a special way. We have a special opportunity with the novena for the coming feast of St. Joseph.

Apart from the fact that we especially revere St. Joseph as a patron of our Society, we have three main reasons to especially honor him: his relationship to Christ, the Savior of the world; his relationship to God's mother, Mary; and his relationship to the holy church. St. Joseph is the foster father, the guardian of the Divine Savior; he is close to him, in intimate contact with him. Therefore, he certainly resembles religious, especially religious priests who also stand quite close to the Savior, especially religious priests who touch him and interact with him. St. Joseph teaches us how we should interact with the Divine Savior, Christ, especially through his life, through his blissful converse with God, through his prayer and through his holiness. As religious and priests we should imitate St. Joseph in our contact with Christ.

Furthermore, St. Joseph's relationship to the dear Savior is the object of our particular veneration. He is the confidante, the bridegroom of God's dear mother. He is her protector. He is joined to her in holy love. He is friendly toward her, and he teaches us how we should turn towards God's mother, and especially through this he grants us that tender chastity which turns us into particular favorites of the Blessed Mother. For this he is the model. Therefore, in his position relative to the Divine Savior and to God's mother we should feel especially impelled to follow him.

A third point that should inspire us is his position relative to

the holy church. He is the patron of the church, the protector of the holy church and of religious orders. It is he who takes charge of the [material] resources.

Therefore, especially in this novena you should pray quite earnestly for these things: that he might assist us in this particular regard, that he send the Society very able members and support us with material means, that we might progress more and more in overcoming those things that so often hinder us on the way. Pray that he sends us many capable members and the corresponding means.

So that you may be heard, bestir yourselves especially in these days to imitate him in his relationship to Christ and especially in his relationship to Mary, and pray with trust in him. You know how St. Theresa herself said that she attained so much through him, that she never called on St. Joseph without being heard. The needs of the church and of the Society are always great. The particular needs of the Society are that we always get good, capable members and the corresponding means.

1901/03/15

One great good, especially for a religious, is the trust he enjoys from his superiors. Indeed that good is all the greater, the bigger the trust shown in him and the higher the superior who shows it.

By trust, one is encouraged, honored and stimulated to work for and to accomplish good things. This trust, however, what is it? It is the fruit of good qualities and strong-mindedness. Therefore, trust is not a matter of the whim of the superior. Rather it is the fruit of the qualities of the person concerned, how he behaves. Whoever performs his duty conscientiously; whoever fulfills the rules, is constant in the good; whoever holds out under difficult circumstances, is strong-minded; whoever is prudent in action; in brief, whoever proves himself through his strong-mindedness and his behavior, that person earns trust.

It is quite important to think about this point of trust because there is always a danger of accusing the superiors, saying they give too little trust. Trust is determined by one's behavior. If that were not so, the superiors would be acting unwisely, arbitrarily, and even wrongly. Because if they trust someone who doesn't earn it, they would thereby be punishing themselves. They would harm God's work and the results would be bad. I once heard such a disappointment over one superior expressed by a person of note that really gave me the creeps. And why did this man speak so indignantly? Because that superior had given his subordinates too much trust and the fruits appeared only after years.

Whoever wants to be trusted should make himself trustworthy. Trust will be given to the extent that one behaves. And it is the

duty of a superior not to give it to one who doesn't earn it. But trust has its degrees. One says: he possesses the greatest trust, full confidence. Certainly, not everyone will gain the highest trust easily. But trust can be extended to everyone as long as he does his duty, especially if he masters himself, showing himself to be a strong-minded character who perseveres in the good and doesn't give it up whenever adversity arises.

Even if somebody fails seriously (all of us are human) he can regain trust. Even Peter who failed so seriously, nevertheless received the first place. Therefore, the trust of the superior is so important. It is not capricious, but is completely the fruit of your behavior. Whoever behaves will also have trust, and vice versa.

Now I would like clearly to admonish you all to seek to earn the full trust of your superiors. You will attain it if you become and remain strong-minded, men of firm principle on whom not only your superiors but also the church can build. Don't be people who are blown back and forth by every wind like a reed, but be firm and head straight to your goal. Remember that you are men and hold firm like soldiers. Never be afraid to appear and actually to be good, conscientious religious.

Whoever enjoys trust, his activity will be blessed with abundant fruit. Preserve the trust you possess, and if it should be diminished, regain it with all your strengths. It is so important to your work and for the activity of others. Therefore, may you all be diligent so that you can be trusted, both for your own welfare and for the welfare of the Society.

1901/03/22

The spirit of the world is one of the biggest dangers threatening a religious. It has already snatched many members from religious life, and has made many religious fall. The Divine Savior says to his disciples: *Ego elegi vos de mundo*. “I chose you out from the world.” He chose them from the world, in fact, as he says: *ex hoc mundo*. “Out from this world.” They shall be in the world, but not of the world: *ex mundo, sed non de mundo; ego elegi vos*.

This is applicable to you. In fact, first and foremost it is applicable to those bound in holy profession. *Ego elegi vos de mundo*. You give up the world, you give up the spirit of the world. You should be from the world, but not of the world. The Savior says: *Ego elegi vos de mundo*. If you are entrusted with the holy priesthood, if you are invested in the holy order of priesthood: *Ego elegi vos de mundo*.

Oh, you should realize the great danger posed by the spirit of the world, in fact you most of all, since this spirit creeps in among the good. This is true first of all for the superiors. Admittedly they should be in the world but not of the world. And especially the younger superiors of new foundations should be in the world but not of the world in their whole activity and methods of education, and attitudes. *In mundo estis, sed non de mundo*, therefore, in opposition to the world. *Si ex mundo estis [essetis]...* “if you are not of the world” the world will hate you.

Furthermore, this is particularly true in the priesthood, when due to circumstances many assist in the world by helping out in the ministry. If they come in contact with the world for a very long

time, the spirit of the world easily seeps, drop by drop, little by little, into their habits and opinions. And how difficult it is to get it out of him again. It is the same with lukewarmness. In general, the spirit of the world and lukewarmness are linked.

Furthermore, there is a greater danger of being infected by the spirit of the world in Catholic cities than in cities where there is a marked contrast; for example, in Protestant cities. Therefore, I believe that Berlin has fewer dangers than a city in [more Catholic] Austria. The contrast hits you between the eyes. You recognize error from a distance. Where, however, the contrast is not so strong, where some [bad] views have taken root among good people, one easily gets involved in the spirit of the world through talk and actions, and that is the end for one’s religious vocation.

A further danger exists for those who devote themselves to literary activity, as experience has already shown, and as in fact different bishops (German) complained to me. It is dangerous because some are forced to read newspapers, books and other writings that are full of the spirit of the world, and they become infiltrated by that spirit without recognizing it. Like a miller who is always in the mill, or like the mason, little by little.

So many different dangers surround you. And the less these dangers are recognized the greater they are. It is easier to convert somebody who committed a serious mistake than to remove from them the spirit of the world. Whoever sets aside the spirit of the world finds happiness, peace, bliss; while the one who picked up the spirit of the world, for true spiritual things. ...

Imitate those the dear Savior describes as not of the world and

you will discover what joy, what happiness you possess. Being divorced from the world in this way makes you strong, like those the Savior says are not of the world. Remember, if the world doesn't hate you, this is a bad sign.

Furthermore, how should you be salt of the earth and light of the world and drive the spirit of the world out of other people, if you yourself have failed to do this? I hardly believe you will do many great things if you are infected by the spirit of the world. You will lack that powerful trust in God, you will lack the inner strength that endures all hostilities. In a word: if you are established in God, if you are divorced from the world, then as long as God does not fall you will not fall. And that means never. But on the contrary, if you are infected by the world, you will fall with the world.

Therefore, pray, meditate, and be watchful so the spirit of the world never takes possession of you. And if you ever should be infected, then through prolonged prayer and spiritual exercises rid yourself of it again as soon as possible.

Read, for example, that chapter of St. John [15] and consider your lofty calling. Consider how much is demanded of you for the salvation of souls. Thus, may God grant that you are *ex mundo* "in the world," but not *de mundo* "of the world," that you are salt of the earth. Pray, meditate, and be watchful so that the spirit of the world, this disastrous poison, doesn't take hold and spread in the Society.

1901/03/29

Externos nemo consulat nisi Superiore permittente. "No one can seek advice of outsiders without the permission of the superior." It is not good to carry the internal issues of the Society outside. Nor is it good to carry even one's own issues outside, especially if they are of an unfavorable nature. Rather, I would like to say, they should be buried inside the family circle. This rule, not asking outsiders for advice, is of great importance for individuals and for the whole Society.

From whom should one ask advice? From superiors, those in charge, from spiritual directors, or even from the higher superiors of the Society – from these alone should one ask advice. And only then, if they think it's necessary, should you seek advice from outsiders. The former are appointed by God and will therefore have the light. They are the ones furthermore who are generally in the best position, who know you best, your concerns, etc. They are better able to judge the circumstances of the Society. In general, they can respond to you with love, more than someone outside the Society. Should one's own mother have less interest in her children than an outsider?

That is why your own superiors, confessors and spiritual directors can give you better advice. It is very important that you strictly heed this. Even if breaking this rule seems a small thing initially, the consequence of asking for advice outside can cause great damage for you and for the Society.

It often happens that one goes to outsiders when he is in a bad mood. His irritability usually makes him half blind, and he goes

out to ask, looking from the start for the kind of adviser who will tell him what he wants to hear. How can someone judge correctly if, as it frequently happens, he is not sufficiently informed, if he doesn't know the circumstances, etc? We know from history that in every situation there are some who are not always accompanied by God.

Live just like good children of one family. Children, if they have trouble, if something happens among them, if they get into a dispute, they keep their business among themselves and their parents to insure that it doesn't leak out. Because once such business gets out, peace vanishes and along with it the happiness of the soul.

Going outside with these things is similar. It is difficult to undo something you say outside. Then instead of being a builder and an apostle you become a destroyer. Be candid and sincere with your superiors, confessors, and spiritual directors. And if it is necessary, turn to higher superiors in the Society. Even if you sometimes believe it puts you at a disadvantage for a while, yet all things considered, great and complete blessing will come upon you.

Your superiors esteem openness; they have so much discretion. Whom should they love more than just those good members of the Society? In whom should they show more interest? It is in their own interest and for the welfare of the Society. Therefore, be careful that you never ask outsiders without permission. If it is necessary, the superiors will give permission; this is not ruled out. But you cannot do this without the express consent of the superior. Then you can be calm; the superiors will lead you to the goal.

If you do go outside you will inevitably run into danger *ambo in faream cadere* [sic.] "both fall in the ditch." Openness prevents so many sins, so much disaster and misfortune for you and for the Society. Don't shun openness. But not toward everyone. Only toward those appointed by God. It would be disastrous if you were open toward everyone. Therefore, may you always be quite open as good children and in that way may you look to protect the spiritual and inner peace of the Society and so your own peace.

1901/04/05
Good Friday

The church so often repeats the words during these days: *Christus factus pro nobis oboediens ad mortem*; “For us Christ became obedient unto death.” And on the second day she adds: *mortem autem crucis*, “even to death on the cross;” and at the third: *propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum et dedit illi nomen quod est super omne nomen*, “because of this God exalted him and gave him a name above every name.” This compels us to say something very important about holy obedience.

Obedience is the sum and substance of the Divine Savior’s life – his whole life, from the incarnation up to his crucifixion: *factus oboediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis. Cibus meus est ut faciam voluntatem eius qui misit me*. “He became obedient unto death, even death on the cross. My food is to do the will of the one who sent me.” Obedience is the content of the life of the God-man. Whoever wants to be a disciple of the Divine Savior, whoever wants to follow him, must be obedient. Religious must be obedient.

But what are the qualities of perfect obedience? It must spring from love. The Divine Savior said: *ut cognoscat mundus quia ego diligo Patrem et Pater diligit me*; “so the world recognizes that I love the Father and the Father loves me.” You should be obedient out of love, out of love for God, for the Divine Savior, out of love for the cross. Through love obedience reaches perfection. Oh, how exalted is the obedience of the religious; it is so beautiful if he is completely obedient! To the words already quoted the church adds this glorious reward of the obedience of Christ in the third point: *propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum et dedit illi nomen quod est super*

omne nomen. So also the religious, if he is really obedient, will be exalted. He will have success in his work, he will speak of victories. Therefore, you should practice strict obedience.

But we still have another quite particular reason as religious to practice obedience. As Salvatorians, as disciples and successors of Christ, we especially must practice obedience. If you truly want to follow him, the leading characteristic of your life must be obedience. Therefore, like the Crucified, *qui factus est oboediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis*, may you learn obedience, learn to be a disciple of Christ, learn to be true religious, learn to be true Salvatorians.

If you are asked to do some work, to make some sacrifice, to accept any transfer or anything else, and if you find it becomes difficult, go and pray like the God-man and you will find strength.

May you become true Salvatorians, true Salvatorians through exact obedience, just as the God-man was obedient toward his heavenly Father. Then, you too will be exalted, not merely in this life but also and especially in eternity.

1901/04/13

The Divine Savior said to his disciples: *Pax vobis*. “Peace be with you.” Oh, may peace also be with you: *Pax vobis*. Peace be with you, peace with your superiors, peace with your subordinates. That is one of the greatest goods that a community, a religious, can receive.

For there to be peace, however, it is always necessary that each one watches, esteems, and maintains the other’s right, standing, life, property, or whatever he has. Because peace is disturbed by the opposite.

Furthermore, it is necessary for you to observe silence; otherwise you easily succumb to gossip. And not only is gossip one of the biggest enemies of peace, but also slander, [as well as] repeating a fact. May neither gossip nor slander penetrate into a community.

Again, what is important is observing the rule, the prescriptions and ordinances of the superior. Because to do the opposite would disturb peace and harmony. Above all, especially fight your own ego and seek to do what pleases others. In a word, fight your own ego. If peace is protected in this way, happiness will reign in the community, the religious will feel happy and content, and the whole community will prosper. Where there is peace, there is God’s blessing and his solace.

Therefore, take the trouble always to protect this precious resource of peace with your superiors and confreres. Maintain and protect each person’s rights, fulfill the rule conscientiously, be on

guard against breaking silence, gossip, etc. This way peace will be to your own benefit, to the welfare of the whole, to the welfare of the church, to the salvation of souls, to the honor of God, so that this peace is strengthened more and more and is never marred or disturbed by anything.

1901/04/19

Last time we looked at the Easter greeting, “Peace.” First of all peace with confreres and superiors. Today we want to look at peace with reference to individuals themselves: inner peace, *pax interna*.

We will possess and retain this great gift first of all if we remain free from serious sin, and if we fight the passions. Truly, *pax non est peccatoribus, (impiis)*. “There is no peace for sinners (the impious).” Furthermore, we will protect peace if we strive honestly for perfection, fulfilling our responsibilities exactly. As soon as we no longer strive for perfection, inner peace is disturbed, though it is even worse if one is not disturbed, if one’s conscience remains untroubled.

One important step toward peace is openness toward superiors and confessors. One should especially be open to confessors about working matters and professional activities. Usually, the devil is near. Today I have such a clear example of what blessings openness can bring. It is an internal matter, therefore, I cannot disclose it. (This is not to say that it was sinful.) It is from one who lived amid great temptation, who was bothered by the devil very much, and who finally decided to inform me honestly about the whole matter. Today, I got the message from him informing me quite joyfully that this openness averted a great disaster. Here, we see the blessings of openness. You must know that, for the most part, the devil has a hand in these matters, and he fears nothing more than humiliation! It is humiliating to reveal such things to one’s superiors or confessor; it requires rather great humility.

Therefore, endeavor to keep yourself free from all sins, to strive honestly for perfection, and always to be quite frank about this with the superiors and confessors God has appointed for you. Then you will possess this sublime gift, *pax interna*, and you will communicate it to others from the pulpit, in the confessional, etc. *Quam pulchri pedes eorum, pedes evangelizantium pacem*. “How beautiful are the feet of those, the feet of those who bring the good news of peace.” Always protect peace yourselves so that you can share it with others.

1901/04/26

The month of May approaches. The whole Catholic world directs its thoughts toward this wonderful month. The zealous Catholic hastens to honor and venerate God's dear mother. In this month we too see an opportunity to show our devotion towards our heavenly mother.

In fact this month, first of all the whole community should especially venerate the Blessed Mother through public prayer. Then each individual [will venerate her] through special prayer, fervent prayer, and through working to acquire virtues, which make him/her similar to our heavenly mother. Therefore, this month in these two ways the community and individuals should honor the dear mother in a special manner.

Why the individual? Because s/he needs the assistance of God's mother, who is so mighty, *Virgo potens*, "powerful Virgin." Yet the community should venerate God's dear mother in a special way since it also needs the assistance of its mighty patroness, she who tramples on the fiendish dragon's head.

First, we need [her help] for the many various new foundations. I read just today that the infernal enemy fights furiously against great works dedicated to the salvation of souls. We all know that he fights not only against the Society but against all new foundations. How? Through internal and external disputes, through causing discouragement, dissension and such. Therefore, much prayer to the mighty virgin and intercessor is necessary.

Furthermore, you should ask our heavenly mother to send good, capable candidates who will be assets to the Society and who

will one day work mightily for God's honor and the salvation of souls.

Another reason we should particularly pray is the present chronic need hovering over the Motherhouse which hinders its progress so very much. Use this month of May to beseech [Mary's] mighty intercession to remove this burden (which certainly also has its good side) if that should be God's will. It is of such enormous importance that the Motherhouse is extricated from its need, and that it has adequate means to progress. So, all of you should help. And if you cannot help externally, help through a true devotion to God's dear mother, through zealous prayer, through imitation of her virtues, so that this particularly heavy load will be removed from our superiors. She is the mother, so approach her with trust.

Therefore, use the month of May to venerate God's dear mother and to imitate her virtues, especially her humility, so that you yourselves become a joy to the angels.

1901/05/10

Among all the means for carrying out the apostolate *efficaciter* “effectively,” example is the most important. Example is the most universal means. Each one can and should give good example: priest, scholastic, novice, candidate, brother, superior, all. Example is an important means that all can use.

In your dealings with outsiders or even with your own confreres, they will look above all else at your example. They will observe it in each individual: in how the priest conducts himself, how he reads Holy Mass and prays the breviary. They will observe how he keeps the rule, how he is with the superiors, whether he is humble; in short, whether he really is what he should be: a religious. This is of special importance with new foundations. Wherever a new house is erected somewhere, everyone looks at it to see whether it really is what it should be.

Show yourselves to be true religious, and your accomplishments will be a mighty. Therefore, good example is the most important means to this work, the most universal because all can and should make use of it, from the first to the last. And it is the most effective because it accomplishes the most. As they say: *Verba sonant, exempla tonant*. “Words rumble, but example thunders.”

Good example is the most necessary means for effectiveness in the apostolate. It is also the simplest means, because everyone can practice it at all times, whatever his position, whether he is healthy or sick, in dealings both in and outside the house, everywhere and in every situation.

Therefore, strive to be true Salvatorians outwardly. Consider Mary. She said little. But through her example, her humility, modesty, etc. she accomplished much. Imitate her so that you also accomplish quite a lot through good example.

1901/05/17

It is right for us to turn our whole attention to the Queen of the Apostles, our heavenly patroness whose feast we will celebrate the day after tomorrow. On that day you should all renew your longings, resolutions and vows.

Though I leave to you what resolutions you want to make, in these days I would like to recommend one in particular: that you all become and remain capable Salvatorians, and that you desire to live and work as such until your last breath.

What is a true Salvatorian? Two points are especially necessary: an apostolic spirit and a religious spirit. Both are necessary. One without the other gets lost. So ask your heavenly mother for this double gift. May you always at the same time remember that you cannot have the second without the first, and that if the first is emphasized too much the second gets lost. How many have already succumbed to this pitfall precisely through the cunning of the hellish enemy. They nursed the apostolic spirit so much they lost the religious spirit; they believed they could accomplish greater things if they were independent. They saw the order as an obstacle to their activity, until finally they became disappointed. But they realized it too late. How many who acquired great fame for themselves fell in this way and their name became spoiled.

Cultivating the apostolic spirit too much leads to the loss of the religious spirit. Therefore, it is above all necessary to possess the religious spirit, to which one has committed oneself, and to live according to it. A true religious will accomplish great things because he has the blessing of his superior and God's blessing.

Therefore, ask the heavenly mother to grant you that double gift. And if you already possess it, protect it! Above all, keep an eye on it and live as true religious. A true religious and an apostolic person, this is the true Salvatorian. The religious spirit gets lost if the apostolic spirit is emphasized too much. To lose even one small degree of glory is a great loss. Work and suffer as true Salvatorians with an apostolic spirit and with a religious spirit. May our heavenly mother grant you this double gift.

1901/05/24

We are now preparing for Pentecost. This reminds us to prepare ourselves well to receive the Holy Spirit – the Spirit, which is necessary for a true Salvatorian. One cannot be a true Salvatorian without it, neither for oneself still less for others.

Therefore, make the most of this short time to properly receive the Holy Spirit. Use the time truly well, *perseverantes unanimiter in oratione*, “persevering single-heartedly in prayer” as the holy apostles also did through zealous, persistent prayer.

Prepare yourselves through avoiding all evil, especially by avoiding each of even the smallest things that cause scandal. Scandal can happen so easily, and what comes of it? Therefore, make sure that no one gives anyone any scandal, in or outside the house. This is so necessary in houses where so many young offspring are reared and where perhaps one thinks he isn’t giving any scandal, but he is actually dealing a deathblow to these blossoms. Scandal is something terrible. Be on guard against it, and against any impulse to give scandal.

Above all, protect purity of heart. Then the Holy Spirit will find a dwelling in you.

Another dimension of this preparation is *caritas*, “charity.” Practice *caritas*! What use is it to surrender your life but hate your brother? Therefore, practice *caritas*.

A further point is humility. The taller the building, the deeper the foundation, and the higher the vocation and the mission, the

deeper the foundations and the greater the humility. Without this the building will collapse. You know the saying: *Corruptio Optimi pessima*, “the failure of the best people is the worst thing.” If humility is missing, then *paulatim incidit in mala*, “gradually one falls into evil ways.”

Therefore, prepare well for Pentecost and for the Holy Spirit by working as true Salvatorians, through purity of heart, through deep humility, through brotherly love, through *caritas*. How much a true Salvatorian accomplishes. I received a message again just today that proves it. And I hope God will prove it even much more by showering blessings on whoever works as a true Salvatorian, blessings both for himself and for the works of the others. Therefore, prepare for the Holy Spirit! That way you become better and more capable Salvatorians, and you can realize a plentiful harvest in heaven.

1901/05/31

As the month of May comes to a close, we will celebrate its ending tomorrow the same way we celebrated the first Saturday of the month. Let us take this opportunity to survey our religious life, whether it is lived in a way that pleases our heavenly mother – whether we do our duty, meditate and do spiritual reading regularly and conscientiously, etc. Otherwise we risk losing the grace of our vocation. It is more certain that the one who regularly does these things will persevere.

Look and see what path you are on and where you are heading, where you are now going, where you now stand at the end of this month. Finally, make another thorough review of your observance of the rules. I would like to take this opportunity to touch some points regarding being a religious in our Society.

Hold fast to the idea that you are first a member of the order, and subordinate yourself. Imagine what you would do if you were in a place where you had a hundred and a thousand reasons to want to remain, and the command came: Stop and return! If you ask yourself this question you will see whether you are firmly and unshakably a vowed religious, whether obedience is more important than your apostolate, or whether you are a good religious and Salvatorian.

To protect this first duty it is ordered that life outside the community will be limited; i.e., nobody may stay longer than three days outside the community without the express permission of the general superior; and if it is necessary to stay out longer, this must be requested from him. This is in order to safeguard against falling

into crooked ways, and experience has already made this procedure necessary. If the superiors become lax here and don't realize the consequences, one could come to a house with as many as 50 priests and find no one at home! You are above all religious priests; the rest follows.

If you live as true Salvatorians, God's blessing will rest on your activity, and the higher superior will be so divinely enlightened that they may possibly allow an exception. Why exceptions are given in the missions is self-explanatory. If you hear the mission reports you will find individuals spread over very great distances. They are not to be compared with us.

What Salvatorians should really do is persevere at their post. And especially as Salvatorians we must prepare ourselves to bear sufferings like the dear Savior himself.

Now as for what the apostolate involves, Chapter VIII, the instruction I read aloud today, contains the main point: catechesis. In the world it is only too true, unfortunately, what Fénelon says, that most people are lost through religious ignorance. Therefore, I admonish you, if you don't believe you have a firm grasp of catechizing, hone yourself sharp, and when you come into pastoral ministry attach importance to the main point: catechesis. If people are taught and know divine truth, they are easily led; they will respect priests and religion, and vice versa. Scholarly sermons and addresses won't do much if they are not preceded by a thorough catechesis; it will be an enthusiasm, but not a lasting one.

Above all, take this to heart. And I can tell you that no rule I have written gave me so much heavenly solace as the one I wrote

down before the Most Holy. Tears of bliss overcame me, as if to confirm that this is God's will. Therefore, catechesis! And you will see that you are on the right path.

1901/06/07

I think it is good to inform you about some points of the rule to prevent possible difficulties and misunderstandings later. First something about superiors. The vicar, *vicarius in capite*, or vice-superior or vice-vicar, heads his community and has full authority according to the Society's constitutions; he represents the superior in his absence. Note that the blessing [i.e., permissions] should be sought from the vicar (and vice-superior); this is the interpretation of the rule (regarding *Segenholen*, "securing the blessing.") The vicar can alter nothing and can execute nothing important until the superior returns.

The vicar *in capite* or vice-superior has rights similar to a community superior. Subordinates owe him obedience and must also get his blessing. The difference between a vice-superior or vicar and a superior is that the vice-superior can be replaced at any time even without reason. It doesn't depend on the person. It is even possible that someone has the ability to be superior but never becomes one for many reasons and due to different circumstances; e.g., because the community is too new, it is insufficiently developed, or it does not seem appropriate to appoint a superior. In any case, a vice-superior should be obeyed as a superior.

Furthermore, I would like to add something: you are still young people. And even if you have goodwill, you can easily get derailed. Therefore, in every community you should first be cautious, no matter where you are or what you are doing. Through centuries of experience we know that one must be careful in order not to be at risk. History teaches that no one is ever safe anywhere. Lucifer was a seducer among the angels, Judas a traitor among the apostles. In

every situation, always and everywhere, you must be alert to dangers because you can experience disappointments even in religious life. St. Ignatius, such an enlightened and careful person, even received someone into novitiate whose only intention was to corrupt the Society; and only after a long time was he exposed. Other orders tell similar stories. Dangers are everywhere, and if you are not careful, such serious injuries can arise! But if you fulfill the rule entirely and stand by the superiors, dangers are cut off.

The second point is that you should not go according to your own opinion but follow the superiors, particularly the higher superior. You should hold together firmly with me. Otherwise there is a danger that what you built will be torn down again. A mason must tear down whatever doesn't follow the architect, whatever doesn't fit. The superior is the decisive person. God's blessings rests on those who adhere to their superiors along with the certainty that they are not being led astray.

Furthermore, as subordinates, perform your duties and don't meddle in other things. Remain loyal to the appointed superiors and abide by this rule: no one can make himself into whatever he wishes, much less can he transform others. Superiors must strive for better things, but *praevisis omnibus* "after everything has been carefully considered." Above all, avoid impatience, rushing into confusion in the search for something better. Confusion is always a sign that something is not desired in the right way; rather it is demanded. Wishes are like temptations. Everywhere you go, in every community, you will have desires and temptations. Hold fast to God, to the rule, and to the superiors; these point the way. The superiors have the task of managing the whole plan; you should follow them as long as no sin is involved. In this way the great work

which Providence has entrusted to us will progress. Otherwise it only brings about more harm than good.

Therefore hold together with the superiors. And if you want anything, take the circumstances into consideration and ask for it peacefully and calmly.

1901/06/21

Because of the vast field of activity open to apostolic workers in the Lord's vineyard, there is a great danger for the religious who doesn't fulfill his most sacred duty, at least in part to duty itself [to be a religious]. Therefore, our first task as Salvatorians is to achieve our own salvation, our own sanctification. We entered the Society to become holy; we were called to produce saints. This is our first and most important task. If this is fulfilled, the second will also be accomplished; if however, the first is not fulfilled, the second too will collapse.

Therefore, you should always meditate on the holy rule, study the constitutions, and as far as human weakness allows, train yourself to observe them promptly, even strictly. It is the guide, the polestar, the mother near whom you should nestle, who guards you, awaits you, teaches you how you should conduct your life. Yes, the rule is the mother of the Order.

Ordinary Christians judge religious by how they observe the holy rule, especially by how they observe the holy vow of poverty, by how they observe obedience. Therefore, it is so important that you become acquainted with these laws and observe them strictly. It is so important because experience teaches that religious fall by not observing their holy vows. This is one of the biggest evils into which they can fall. It is easier for someone in the world, for a great sinner and then to convert, than for a religious who has fallen into blindness. And the biggest blindness is neglect of the rule.

Therefore, you should live exactly according to the rule and search your soul [to see] whether you observe the rule. If you don't,

then pray that God will give you the grace and protect you from blindness. The consequences are even greater. Remember: a good religious is happy and content; peace lives in him. He will spread blessings and he will accomplish his task, his apostolate, successfully. He says to himself: What good is it to me to win the whole world and yet to lose my soul? *Quid mihi prodest si universum mundum lucrarer, animae meae vero detrimentum patiar?* "What profit is there for me to gain the whole world and yet lose my soul in the process?" And as another great man says, it happens that one opens heaven for others and hell for himself.

So observe the rules strictly as true Salvatorians, especially the vow of holy poverty, because not doing so is the fastest way to blindness. Pray for strength, that you fulfill the rule exactly. If you do you will feel like what you are [good religious], and if you don't you will never recognize your blessing or your happiness. *Gustate et videte*. "Taste and see." Be rigorous even in the smallest things and you will see what blessing and what peace you will receive. It is impossible to become holy and happy without self-mastery, and the rule is a permanent instruction on willpower. It doesn't depend on whether this or that rule says this or that, but on the fact that the rule leads to salvation. *Vince teipsum*. "Conquer yourself."

As true Salvatorians, you must primarily be true, good religious who look out for your own sanctification and who look primarily at becoming holy for the sake of later apostolic effectiveness.

1901/06/28

Tomorrow's feast must excite our interest in a very special way. It is a feast for the whole church, for each Catholic and each priest. However, it is for us all the more special since we find ourselves in the Holy City [Rome], and especially since we chose the holy apostles as our advocates and patrons. Tomorrow we will not merely celebrate the feast of the holy apostles Peter and Paul but also, through a unique apostolic decree, we will celebrate the feast of all apostles: *Commemoratio Omnium Apostolorum*.

What basic attitudes should especially animate us on this day? Above all gratitude. If we look back on the mission God gave us, through the intercession of the holy apostles, we cannot thank God sufficiently for the great good he granted the Society. I mention only its rapid buildup and expansion: we have so much to be thankful for.

Probably because you do not see the difficulties such undertakings must overcome, you also fail to recognize the great grace. Consider what difficulties assailed a Society which had set itself this task: to declare war on the worst enemies, oneself, hell and the passions. If you consider this, you will recognize that if God's grace and protection had not been there, it [such a Society] would have been rocked to its foundations because its enemies are too mighty. Therefore I say thanks, and thanks again!

Secondly, we should be animated by the apostolic spirit. We should renew our apostolic spirit on this day – that spirit which animated the apostles and accomplished such great things for the honor of God and the salvation of souls, the sacrificial courage to,

perferre omnia et vincere semetipsum “endure everything and master oneself;” everything for the mission and to reach the goal. May this day especially animate in you a spirit which attends to small things – things which so often have the biggest consequences – and fill you with generosity and with an apostolic spirit. How some were able to endure terrible fights and slaughter and emerge victorious, and yet a small perhaps nameless thing caused their downfall. That is not apostolic. Therefore, be magnanimous and prepare to endure great things.

Tomorrow, on the feast of *Omnium Apostolorum imprimis SS. Petri et Pauli*, you should pray quite eagerly at the tomb of the holy apostles for blessings for yourself and for the Society. Pray to imitate the example of these saints, and that you fulfill your task – apostolic works for the honor of God and the salvation of the people. Pray always to be animated with an apostolic spirit like these saints. Pray to them. They are powerful at God's throne, they are *columnae* “pillars.” Don't begrudge honoring them properly through zealous prayer, through firm resolutions. Pray that the spirit which animated them may also animate you.

Therefore, gratitude, apostolic spirit, and prayer. These should be your aims tomorrow. Again and again it is necessary to renew this apostolic spirit. If we look at our paltriness, we will have all the more reason to pray to them [i.e., the apostles]. Ah, this is prayer: to beseech the holy apostles to beg for us the grace of always protecting the apostolic spirit; and if we don't possess it to the right extent, of acquiring it. The more you are animated by the apostolic spirit, the happier you will become and the happier you will make others. It is a great solace, as I have already told you, and we must be grateful for the protection of the Almighty, and

precisely for the many good things he has already given us. Each prayer offered in grateful remembrance of good things is powerful in the eyes of God.

If we want to accomplish great things we must be grateful for good things. This is precisely the conviction with which you should pray tomorrow. Then, as I already said, the apostolic spirit should animate you. In addition, may pessimism stay far from us. Nobody will say that the good we do is *our* work. No, it is God's work. But what if we don't even acknowledge this?

Therefore, at tomorrow's feast pray in grateful remembrance of these good things, and ask the holy apostles that you and all the members will always be animated by the apostolic spirit, that you will never be defeated by small things but that you will leap over difficulties, large and small, and triumph over the enemies and so conclude your life and your struggles.

1901/08/16

It should interest you to hear something about my trip since it was undertaken in the interest of the Society, especially my trip to England.

From here I traveled to Freiburg (July 3) and Drogens. On Monday evening at 4:00 I left Freiburg directly for England. After traveling the whole night to Brussels, Ghent, Ostende and then over the sea, I arrived the next day at 5:00 in London, the great city. Of course, it was somewhat difficult to speak.

First I went into the big Hospice of St. Boniface. I stayed there during my entire stay in London which lasted approximately 4 weeks. The second day I went to Cardinal Vaughan. Because he was away on a trip I went again to see his Eminence on the feast of Blessed Thomas More. The feast is celebrated solemnly there. I was received lovingly by his Eminence, and he gave permission for everything.

Now came the business of finding a place. After receiving permission I cabled Fr. Odo to leave for England. In the meantime, I looked for a suitable place with the help of someone from London. At first his Eminence proposed "Münster," 15 English miles from London. But after taking a good look at the whole place it did not quite measure up, so I looked in [undecipherable]. But that was not the place either.

I went again to his Eminence. Now began the real work of finding a house. We encountered insurmountable difficulties. [Note: Here the text is incomplete; the writer could not fully understand the meaning of some things. Jordan explained that they

did not buy the house they had planned. Difficulty upon difficulty arose. Then after 2 or 3 sentences, Fr. Jordan continued.] I went once again to his Eminence for new discussions. He suggested going to P. We found the place favorable. There were some Catholics there, but again we encountered other difficulties because the parish priest wasn't willing to hand over this area.

I went again to the vicar general and a final plan was devised. He gave me a letter addressed to a very zealous and gracious priest. He is from an affluent family and has two sisters and two brothers who are priests; one is a bishop. He accepted us very kindly on the strength of the letter and was very glad that we came to take over the ministry. He even accompanied us to look for a house. He recommended one but the chapel was too small.

The following day we went searching again, and we finally found a suitable house on the main street. We will be able to build a public chapel, and the Cardinal approved everything. This place is very good but there were many difficulties connected with finding it.

I believe we have the most beautiful place we could find in all of London. From there we have a beautiful view of the city. It will still cost some, but I believe we have a place we can start in England.

Just think, a city 13 times as big as Rome with 6½ million inhabitants! What traffic! People say the population is not ill-disposed toward the faith. In England one finds belief, and on this score it is better than Germany. The English are receptive to religion. There I have even witnessed a great procession. One may think that in England one must dress in a quite secular fashion; but that is not correct. The Cardinal himself expressed the wish

that Franciscans would wear their religious habit, but not in the capital; so they wear their habit. The English are very free in this matter. A converted Jew is in our church. On Sunday, he preached publicly to the other Jews gathered there.

Then, the English are not accustomed to certain comforts we have on the continent. There I missed porters very much. I don't remember seeing one porter. You must carry your luggage yourself; at best you can take a carriage but that is very expensive. There are 13,000 of these in London and 15,000 police.

Another point. One day the bishop celebrated a Solemn High Mass. He was met at the church door with bells pealing and processions, and as he came he carried his own suitcase, by hand, without a servant – without a servant – and so he was received. The porter himself said that the bishop packs everything himself.

Now, concerning our pastoral work, in England it is much the same as in most countries. In many cases one begins by having a house chapel. Little by little converts come and a temporary church is built, one of iron for a few hundred, and afterwards, when the mission develops more, the church is built.

The English are very generous and give much. [The results from] begging [mission appeals] in England is wonderful. Church attendance is good; one must pay for a place in the church. The priest himself has four collection boxes. So the English are beneficent. One Protestant family asked for prayers for a sick member of their family; the person improved and they brought a hundred francs as alms. Protestants often come into Catholic churches and there is hope that little by little many will convert.

I believe the Society has a big task there and a profitable one. The English are noble people, and through this trip and this stay I have learned to think more highly of the English.

Perseverance is necessary for everything. The Cardinal sent me two handwritten letters. If we had not persevered the whole matter would have been unsuccessful; the difficulties were really big. So you also should have perseverance everywhere. God often tests you, and it often seems that nothing is accomplished. Endure! It is of greatest importance that you perform your religious exercises. Strength and light come from these and from above.

Fr. Gabriel is in Athus. Welkenraedt will have a great future. Athus and Hamont have big difficulties in the languages. But how important language is! So don't omit the opportunity to practice Italian.

In Athus, Fr. Gabriel told me that he had a very great predicament regarding the chapel so they decided to hold a novena. And on the very last day of the novena Fr. Gabriel received 300-600 marks as a gift (I no longer recall exactly how much it was). Exactly what they needed! You can imagine how for that small beginning that gift was a sign of God's support for the undertaking. We have a very beautiful temporary house there. 4 priests can live there along with a number of candidates. The population is Catholic, but due to the factories much is not good.

However, they have courage, and I believe Athus will have an important future, and also Hamont and Welkenraedt, where they are in good financial shape so that in a few years they will be a support for the Society.

I stress that each and every one of you must have perseverance in all the situations you meet. Wait until God helps. Then in ten years all these houses should be ready to ordain priests. There are so many vocations in Holland and Flanders.

The house in Welkenraedt also prospers. The French foundations will go somewhat more slowly because the French are always somewhat slow in matters that originate from the Germans.

The house in Athus lies quite near the border; from the window one looks across into France. It takes 10 minutes to get to Luxemburg; 2 minutes to Germany; to France $\frac{3}{4}$ hours on foot.

Particularly in Hamont and Athus all are very healthy. The same is true in England. Fr. Dorotheus, who was always sick here and in Freiburg was healed in Hamont in a short time. I already read in England that Hamont is a very good place. It measures over 7 hectares – a huge place. They have 60 children enrolled, half of whom are Protestants. But they take part in everything in the school, and the Sister superior said that some convert on their own. And the English are not as fanatical as the Germans.

Therefore, in closing I admonish you once again to persevere, which you always do. *Sustine!* “Remain steadfast” in good things, and to be able to do so, do your spiritual exercises.

1901/08/23

The present season in Rome demands great sacrifices, and it probably demands a lot for some to comply fully with their duties. Because this heat, these temperatures cause exhaustion and fatigue. However, you should use this time of suffering to show God a service, to bring a sacrifice, and not to slacken in your zeal for religious exercises. You who want to follow the apostles should pass just this test as well as possible. Don't give in to the difficulties, omit nothing, but fulfill all the rules and practices conscientiously and promptly. In your life you will come into other situations where it is very difficult to accomplish this or that good thing, or to fulfill your duties.

If you accustom yourself here in the Motherhouse to doing your duty conscientiously, the hope is that you will also do it later. Persistence means completing the good things you started. Only if you go constantly forward on your way despite sufferings, only then can you bring about good things, only then will you obtain your salvation. Great work will always encounter great obstacles. How many initiated great things, how many made heroic resolutions! But because they could not overcome their difficulties they fell into other ways, into other circles, and vanished. Therefore, overcome this difficulty, bear it patiently so that later, if Providence sends you other difficulties, you will overcome them.

From my last trip, I would still like to mention two points that particularly touched my heart and edified me. One is that in England you find such high regard and veneration of the Blessed Sacrament. Perhaps there more than elsewhere, they know how to esteem the sacrament. I heard repeatedly that in some families the

[veneration of the] Blessed Sacrament has never ceased since the Reformation, that they always reserved it. During our journey we toured a room 30 English miles from London, where someone showed us a former Benedictine abbey from before the Reformation. There he told us something truly remarkable: that from the time of the Reformation the practice of reserving the Blessed Sacrament was never discontinued in this church.

Secondly, we were shown an opening in the floor of one room. Pushing furniture aside and lifting a board, there appeared a deep dungeon containing secret chambers. That is where the Benedictines escaped at the time of the Reformation; and all were saved except for one who was discovered and executed. Their veneration of the Blessed Sacrament should be an example for us also to properly respect this great treasure we have throughout all our houses, using it to manifest due respect to the dear Savior.

Another point that pleased me very much in London was the church and cloister of the Oratorians. These religious, if one can call them so, are praised very much for following their Roman motherhouse so very closely. Actually their church is probably the most beautiful after the cathedral; it is almost a complete imitation of St. Philip Neri [Church] in Rome. In their construction they also imitated their mother cloister completely. This is the biggest foundation in England, the most beautiful, splendid church. The more you follow Rome, the more your authority will grow. The Oratorians are the mightiest society in England, from which already several cardinals have emerged. It was a joy to be there.

I wanted to share these two points with you from my last trip: the veneration of the Blessed Sacrament in England, and adherence

to the Motherhouse. This will make you strong and great. Endure this seasonal trial, the heat, with patience. And through it all, do not neglect your duties because of these difficulties. In this way you will bring an offering to God, serve him, and prepare yourselves to carry out later the apostolates you are given.

1901/08/30

“The Imitation of Christ” says, *Tota vita Christi crux fuit et martyrium*. “The entire life of Christ was the cross and martyrdom.” Christ suffered for us. We Salvatorians should imitate this patience: *patientiam Christi*. It is of such great importance for our own sanctification and for our success in apostolic work for others. *Christus reliquit nobis exemplum*: Christ left us an example of patience.

Therefore, a Salvatorian, an imitator of Christ, must above all imitate his patience. *Agere bonum est, pati melius*. “Doing is good; suffering is better.” Suffering is effective for one’s own sanctification and for the apostolate. In whatever position we may be, we should take care to possess patience, which is the test of humility. We must practice patience in every position, be it as a teacher towards our students now, as a priest in the apostolate, in the mission, as superior or as subordinate, in the domestic activities of brothers – in every position. Everywhere we must practice patience and humility; otherwise we will often destroy what we built. *Fructus efficitur in patientia* – patience will bear fruit, in fact the fruit of your own sanctification and the fruits of the apostolate.

Therefore, practice patience which is so important everywhere, especially in our Society which is still developing, which is still very young and which has still to make so many foundations. Because of this one must exercise a greater spirit of sacrifice than in an order already stabilized through centuries of existence. *In patientia vostra possidebitis animas vestras*. “In your patience you will come to possess your souls.” And don’t forget the words of sacred scripture concerning the Romans: *Suo consilio et patientia totum*

tenuerunt orbem terrarum. Through their planning and patience they conquered the whole world.

When our efforts toward self-sanctification do not go well, we will find that it is because patience is missing. How many good works are begun. But if difficulties, sufferings, slanders, criticism come, then too often we abandon everything we had worked for so very long because we didn't possess enough patience; *patientia* was missing.

Therefore, resolve never to lose patience in any situation or position. Live the conviction that you will never be able to accomplish great things toward your own sanctification and the sanctification of your neighbor if you do not possess a great deal of patience. How is it possible to fight against the enemy and to wrestle if we don't possess patience? What is so important for us is precisely patience against the enemies. You know the dear Savior's words: *Ecce, ego mitto vos sicut oves inter lupos.* "Behold, I send you out as sheep amidst wolves." How will you work there without patience? Patience conquers the world. Patience accomplishes great things. Therefore patience, and again patience. You should safeguard this proof of humility as much as possible.

1901/09/06

I told you previously: a religious should live by faith. Especially the religious should not judge circumstances, people, etc., with the eyes of the world. No, not even with the eyes of reason, but only in the light of faith as the Divine Savior taught and as the saints have done. This is valid in general, but especially with regard to the superiors.

Look upon your superiors as what they really are: God's representatives. Don't view them simply as people; they are your superiors. For the sake of God, you should obey them as God's representatives, in whom you explicitly recognize God's will. Therefore, you should not pay attention to whether the superiors are younger or older, whether they are skillful or less skillful in governing, learned or less learned, yes even clever or unwise – it should be enough for you to know that this one is my superior, and therefore it is God's will for me to obey him as long as what he asks is not a sin.

If you live by such faith and see your superiors as God's representatives, great peace will fill your soul. You will feel happy, and something especially important, your faith will be stimulated. How many people say: we believe everything which is to be believed, but they don't live their faith. How many people believe in the Blessed Sacrament, but don't act on their belief regarding what is due the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament; their belief is dead.

Therefore, promptly obey all the superiors and give them their due reverence as God's representatives, regardless of personal faults or idiosyncrasies, and you will discover great peace in yourself.

Stray from this, however, and in a short time you will be ruined. Here one can say: *ex fructibus cognoscetis*. “By their fruits you will know.” We are all human, and if we judge superiors and seniors with only the eyes of the flesh, we will detect faults in all of them. And that is the big mistake and disaster that can enter a community: judging everything with the eyes of the flesh. The first disaster is one’s own unhappiness. The second, if one criticizes his superiors and disturbs the relationship between superiors and subordinates, how can such an organism prosper? If somebody is unsatisfied or no longer happy inside the community, he finds so many pretexts and problems there that even if a saint were put in charge as superior he would find fault. We are all people.

Live by faith, I beg you. This will bring you blessings, this will bring you peace and bless your work. This will fortify and strengthen the community; it will make the Society grow and prosper. And the contrary is also true; [if you do not live by faith] disagreement and strife well up. When faith and reverence are missing priests and superiors begin to bargain with each other like shop boys chasing around on the street. I cannot denounce strongly enough the way, when you are together, of not treating your confreres with due reverence. The angels would envy you, and yet you human beings, you do just the opposite! This is a disgrace for us. Live by faith and act by faith. This will make you happy and content and will enable the Society to do great things.

1901/10/04

Address of Reverend Father and Founder,
Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan,
on his nameday after congratulations
they offered him in the refectory

I thank you for your good wishes and for the proof of your love. The best thing you can do for me is to strive with firm purpose towards our exalted goal, keeping our rules in particular and in general. It is so necessary in our times, so important, to help the holy church, which is besieged on all sides, opposed, abused and slandered. Even though people have always fought and suffered for the church, in our days when lack of faith is so flagrant, it is especially necessary and important that you grasp and take to heart the lofty mission God gave you. After all, God has called you to enter the church in these pressed times like a new army, to work with all your strength for the holy Catholic Church and to fight. You will accomplish this if you cling firmly to Christ. Above all, that through observance of the three holy vows and of the rule you fight *concupiscentia carnis, concupiscentia oculorum* and *concupiscentia vitae*, “concupiscence of the flesh, the eyes, and of life.”

The weapons with which you should fight are these: like Christ you should love humility and poverty; you should know how to control yourself; you should love humility and humiliations. If we desire to save the world and souls, if we desire to come to the aid of the holy church, we must walk the same path walked by Christ and all the saints. If we desire to help the church in some other way, we will accomplish nothing. Only through humility, self-denial, humility and humiliations.

Then, it is imperative for us who must disperse over the whole world to be of one heart and one mind, to hold firmly together with one heart and one mind, and to subordinate our personal opinions and advantages to the common welfare. This is the way we become firm. Hold on to it and seek to tame *concupiscentia carnis*, *concupiscentia oculorum* and *concupiscentia vitae* in order to reach the exalted goal through holding together firmly.

Hold firmly, unshakably together with your superiors appointed by God! This way you will do awesome things. Hell itself will tremble. May God bless you in order to reach this; may you be considered worthy to become a choice battalion in the holy army for the honor of God and the church. *Benedictio Dei omnipotentis: Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti descendat super vos et maneat semper vobiscum. Amen.* “May the blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit descend upon you and remain with you forever. Amen.”

1901/10/11

This week the church celebrated the feast of St. Brigitta. Maybe you visited this holy place [the Church of St. Bridget in Piazza Farnese] on that day or you may visit there later. As I visited there this week, you can imagine what thoughts arose in me. I thought back on the time 20 years ago when we lived in that sacred place, offered Holy Mass, and where the Society was founded. Then the whole Society was so small, so inconspicuous and poor, unknown, and hidden. But now!

What a turn around! At that time three priests, now 140. And how much has been accomplished. The Society is widespread over a large part of the world, the foundation stone is laid for so many religious houses and formation houses for the Society. Who did this? To whom do we owe it? To the merciful God, from help from above: Providence. *A Domino factum est istud.* “By the Lord has this been done.”

But specifically how did these things happen? It was the way of the cross, the way the Divine Savior, the Redeemer of the World, has gone. How much suffering there was, how much opposition, how much unpleasantness, persecutions and hostilities from outside; and how much suffering and misery came from within during these 20 years. How some said and believed that the Society stood perched on the abyss, ready to collapse. We would be disbanded, etc. How much was reported and spoken about these things. And what became of all this? All the human judgments, where are they today? They are buried. And some are not happy to be reminded of what they said. From this we can see how one must follow and accomplish the way of God’s will, and that you cannot let yourself be waylaid by anything.

How many allowed themselves to be seduced; if only you realize it in good time. A letter arrived recently from one who allowed himself to be influenced very much, in which he confesses that he was misled. Therefore, if you want to accomplish great things you cannot be disconcerted by human judgment. Such judgments, etc. are inevitable, so that you can see God's work all the more clearly, so that you can see that the Society moves right along despite all storms and privation. *A Domino factum est istud.*

If you are called to a new foundation, if you are appointed to a new house, consider this and remind yourself of what the Society has undergone. Then you will remain steadfast and you cannot be disconcerted. Then you will move ahead quietly in obedience along the straight way marked out by your superiors. The individual foundations must endure humiliations, slanders, privations, poverty and distress, etc. But don't be disconcerted. And we have this experience: where things are initially quite difficult, suddenly things turn around.

Long ago a cathedral priest told me: you will accomplish very much good here because you suffer so much; and as a matter of fact much good has already been accomplished. Steel yourself so that you are never influenced by human judgment and difficulties. Especially never let anything good ordered by the superiors grind to a halt when you meet the first difficulty. The key thing is what I read in the Scripture and in the breviary from the Letter to the Romans: *Omnem locum possiderunt suo consilio et patientia.* Through intelligence and patience the Romans conquered everything.

Live this conviction: if we want to accomplish great things, if we want to do much for God's honor, we must go the way of the

Savior: *per crucem*, "through the cross." Therefore, never desire to flee the cross and never be discouraged! There is no other way to God except through the cross. All your works must be through the cross. We should follow God through the cross, *quia per sanctam crucem redemit mundum.* "Because through the holy cross he redeemed the world."

Therefore, dear ones, accustom yourselves to taking up the cross in every situation. If everyone of you gathered here carries out well whatever is asked of him through the orders of his superior, what great things we will accomplish, how beautifully the Society will progress. And if this had always happened in the past, how beautiful things would be now.

Therefore, during this week, if you can do so, be so good as once again to visit this holy place where St. Brigitta and St. Catherine lived for a very long time, where they suffered and died. And remember that the Society is strengthened through the cross, that you mustn't be discouraged in your undertakings. Pray to St. Brigitta, whom we sometimes besought in her room where we were engrossed in prayer at the midnight hours. Pray that you never become disheartened. See that you always behave and work in accordance with the will of your superior.

1901/10/18

Next week will be the grace-filled days of your retreat. Therefore, even now prepare for these important days properly through prayer and recollection. These days are so important for you, whether you have already let up in doing good and are on the way to tepidness, or whether you are still zealous in God's service. In the first case it is especially important.

To be tepid is something dreadful because reviving is so difficult. Yes, the Holy Spirit says: *Quia tepidus es incipiam te evomere ex ore meo*. "Because you are lukewarm I shall begin to spit you out of my mouth." Dreadful words indeed, and it is rare that one who falls into tepidness rises up again and begins anew. Truth will no longer make an impression on him. One who commits a serious sin rises more easily than one who is lukewarm. It is easier to convert a great sinner than one who is lukewarm. Being lukewarm is something dreadful. Therefore, if you fear you are on the way to mediocrity, use these days to escape it.

In the second case, it is so important that as good, zealous religious, you don't relax in your efforts. Oh, I would like to shout this: *Qui sanctus est, sanctificetur adhuc*. "Let the one who is holy become holier still." Don't give up the quest, even if many sufferings, trials, misery and the like constantly close in over you. Don't let up! Maybe God has destined you to accomplish great things for his honor. Follow the call of grace, and *sanctificemini adhuc*. "Still become holy." Now use these days to do this, follow this injunction: *Sanctificemini!* "Become holy!"

Really, it is so important to the whole Society that you remain true, holy religious. In this way you discover your happiness, in this way you will see the salvation of your soul, in this way you will greatly promote God's honor. Therefore, be happy that God invites you again to these grace-filled days, and go on your retreat with willing hearts.

I would especially like to advise you to resolve in these holy exercises always to be diligent in your religious practices and never to omit them even if they must occasionally be postponed from necessity. If you observe this resolution faithfully you will have a solid foundation in perfection and holiness. If you neglect this you are already on the way to becoming lukewarm. Therefore, may the fruits of this upcoming retreat be steadfastness in the holy practices of contemplation, spiritual reading, and especially in the spirit of prayer. Then these grace-filled retreat days will be blessed and fruitful.

1901/11/08

Obedience is among the key points for a religious. By obedience religious are guided by Divine Providence. Happy the one, the religious, who is obedient. He will speak of victories. However, you should observe this obedience as our rule stipulates: always promptly in all things which the superior orders, not only what he commands you to do, but also when he advises you to do something he wishes, what he entrusts to you. In short: *oboediens in omnibus*. “Obedience in everything.”

This superior, apart from the fact that he himself has more light from God in general, also knows the subordinates better – their qualities, their capacities for certain spheres of activity, etc. He also knows their weaknesses, and so he is in a better position to do the right thing for an individual. Because as you know yourselves, no one can guide himself. As a great scholar says: Whoever makes himself his own teacher has a crazy fool for a master. So generally speaking, human beings cannot lead themselves. Religious especially must let themselves be led by the superior appointed by God to lead the order. And in their assigned work they have to obey their superiors, and let themselves be led through them.

Obedience is the greatest and best thing. Even God’s son, who reigns upon the heavenly throne, was obedient. Not only the welfare of the individual but also the welfare of the whole group requires obedience. In any organization that strives for a common goal, all strengths must be united in pursuit of this aim and be used in such a way that the whole group reaches its intended goal.

Now superiors, especially major superiors who are appointed by God to direct individuals, can more easily and more certainly recognize what leads to the attainment of the whole, common goal. Why? Apart from the fact that they have God’s assistance, they also have an overview of the whole and know the individuals.

Obedience especially demands that the individual is always open with his superiors, that he reveals the difficulties he meets here and there, *in omni reverentia*, “with all respect.” Therefore, openness to superiors is such an important quality in a religious, one that is required so strictly in all religious houses and orders. And you should not think that if you are frank toward your superiors, you will lose their respect. If you submit your difficulties and the superior decides, then you should be at peace. You will have fulfilled God’s will. Therefore, in everything be obedient to your superiors who must give an account for your souls.

Good for the one who obeys! He will preserve inner peace; he can expect help, assistance from God. And he can stay calm even when his undertakings, which he carries out in obedience, do not seem to be going well – something which often happens especially at the beginning of a project. But he will be victorious, his obedience will be crowned by victory. If however, he wants to escape obedience, he will experience neither victory nor triumph. God’s blesses those who obey.

But those who follow their own will, who seek to persuade their superiors and cannot be directed, how can they find peace or blessings? It is one of the greatest disorders, it is against God’s design, the opposite of law. This is also what leads to the sad defections of which unfortunately also the Society has had enough.

If one wants to push through his own will in work, in studies, or wherever, then the result will usually be unhappy. Experience proves this. How can we expect that God will bless what is undertaken against his will?

Therefore, always be obedient, *oboedientes praepositis vestris, qui rationem reddunt animabus vestris*. “Obey your leaders and yield to them; they must give an account of your souls.” Do you seek to avoid obedience? Do you fear to assume an office because it presents difficulties? Scripture says: “Whoever fears frost, on him the snow will fall.” Therefore, let us take the experience of scripture: whoever shuns one heavy duty, will be burdened with an even heavier one.

Always see to it that you are obedient and never evade it. It is a superior’s agony when he must fear to get a negative response to the conferral of a transfer. And generally the superior will let it go. But what follows? I heard from someone lately that if one refuses difficulties, that he [i.e., his superior] makes that person *inhabiles* “sidelined” for three years. Now, in a religious order one cannot do this so easily. But still there are consequences.

Therefore always say: *parati sumus*, “we are ready!” Say this wholeheartedly to whatever the superior asks. That will be to you peace and blessing, and you will accomplish great things through it. Fear the desire to direct yourselves. Because, as I already said: *Qui se magistrum facit, stultum se facit magistrum*. “Whoever instructs oneself has a fool for a master.” Therefore: obedience, submission: *ad omnia parati erga praepositos vestros, qui per animabus vestris rationem reddent*. “Being prepared for everything with regard to your superiors, who will render an account for your souls.”

1901/11/15

Vos estis lux mundi, “You are the light of the world.” The Divine Savior said this to his apostles. The priest should be *lux mundi*, light of the world. Priests, especially religious priests, are placed on a lamp stand where they should radiate light. Religious especially should be *lux mundi*. However, they should shine not only on human beings in general; they should be *lux*, a light for the secular clergy. Yes, zealous bishops who take the trouble, who are concerned about their diocesan clergy, invite religious into their dioceses to support and to help the secular clergy.

But how should the religious be a light for the secular clergy? He should be a light through a holy life, through good example, so that everywhere he meets with the secular clergy, he gives the example of a pious religious life. Not only can priests do this, but religious brothers too can influence priests through their good example as we know from the life of other holy brothers.

Secondly, the religious priest should influence the secular clergy through instruction, through admonition in the confessional. It is known that if there are religious, good religious, the secular clergy gladly come to them for confession. There the opportunity presents itself for you to support the secular clergy.

Another opportunity are retreats, which as God wills, our priests should conduct for the secular clergy. In this way also you should exert a healthy influence on the secular clergy.

Thirdly, you should have a healthy influence on the secular clergy by [temporarily] helping out in ministry. You do this when

you meet with secular priests by working everywhere through example as a holy religious, by being men who live by faith, by seeing that your conversations are not mundane but that they flow from the high ideals of a holy religious.

In this way you will be a good influence in the parish house as temporary workers. And if you make the clergy healthy you affect the parish. Therefore, all of you should see that you are a *lux mundi*, not merely in general but also in the manner just outlined. You should aid and support the secular clergy. This you should and can do because you [as religious] acquire virtue and holiness much more easily because of your greater separation from the world. Consider how some secular priests are surrounded by dangers and worries. Therefore, it is easier for you. Furthermore you have the holy rule by which you live, striving after holiness. This is something the secular clergy lacks.

And finally the observance of the three holy vows. That is the main means through which you reach holiness and virtue. For this the secular clergy has fewer opportunities. So always live conscious of the fact that you are called to be a light for the secular clergy, that you are their support, that you should draw near to them in good things. And don't take the dangerous way, don't climb down instead of lifting up the secular clergy and claim: "He is also a priest, I need not be any better." You will recognize this aberration yourselves.

And what will be the result of this? The danger of losing your holy vocation by making yourself unworthy of it, and in addition, of incurring God's strict judgment. Therefore, always work and act with this in mind: that you are called not only to be a light for

the secular clergy in general, but also to work for their sanctification. You should always really focus on this high task, and always live in such a way that the secular clergy trust you, that they feel themselves drawn to you, that they always see in you pious and enlightened men. You should not only work directly with the people but also with the clergy. How could you accomplish more than by supporting and educating the secular clergy?

However, it is especially necessary for you to be armed with virtues, and also to be sociable, humble, modest, and not to fall out with the secular clergy but: *cum omnibus pacem habeatis in quantum possibile*, "to be at peace with everyone insofar as that is possible." Admittedly, there will also be people among the secular clergy with whom it is difficult to manage, but in general: *cum omnibus pacem habete*, "Be at peace with everyone."

1901/11/22

Whoever is not trustworthy in small things will not be trustworthy in greater things. This remark especially fits us. With religious, the biggest and most difficult point is the loss of one's holy vocation, the collapse of one's religious vocation. As long as we live, as long as there are religious orders, this will probably always occur. But how unhappy are those who are swept up in this because they lose their sense of community, confreres, the community, their example, and the protection of their superiors.

In religious life there are so many things which don't appear big or important in and of themselves. But one should be zealous precisely in these matters in order to protect one's zeal for the bigger things. These small matters are quite important; for example, this and that community practice, being punctual in writing reports as the rule stipulates, and so many things which appear small in and of themselves. It is, therefore, so important that you prove yourself faithful in these small matters, and that you never evade a rule for the sake of comfort, caprice, or for any other motive. There are times when one must make exceptions. If, however, this happens from convenience, indifference or lukewarmness things will go downhill. If one is no longer faithful in small things, the way is already marked for a greater thing: for the loss of one's vocation. Therefore, this is so important. Whoever is faithful in small things, whoever follows as closely as possible all the rules, is at peace with himself, with his confreres, and with the superiors. He is not seen as an eccentric. He will be strong and joyful in his vocation. If not, [i.e., if one is not faithful in small things] dissatisfaction will grow, grace will decrease, and you will fall prey to the first big temptation that comes along. So be faithful in small things. Whoever is trustworthy in small things will also be trustworthy in greater things.

1901/11/29

We have already begun the novena to prepare for the feast of the Immaculate Conception, at which time we will also celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Society. 20 years have already passed since Divine Providence established our work. In this celebration we must remind ourselves of the many good things we have received. On this day especially we should be glad, and we have reasons to be glad.

First, we should give God honor in grateful remembrance, thanking him for the many, many kindnesses he gave us in these 20 years, most of all in defending us from dangers. How many storms rose up against the Society, how many storms from both inside and out, how many confusions, how many difficulties, where we stood helpless not knowing what to say or do. But God always helped.

Furthermore, on this day we should not merely thank God for preventing dangers, we should also thank him for strengthening the Society inwardly. Oh, what inner strength! I cannot describe what inner strength the Society has now compared to that time! And the expansion! The future will show the great spread of the Society, even if some inconveniences and difficulties will accompany it. As with every new foundation, some difficulties will come. Therefore, thank God for the inner strengthening. Thank him also for your daily bread. If we consider that despite. ...

1902/07/02**Address to the Sisters on the Feast of the Visitation**

On today's beautiful feast, Mary hurried into the mountains to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Twenty-two years ago I celebrated this feast in those same mountains at the site of the birthplace of St John.

What jubilation, what joy, what expectation reigned in Elizabeth's house on this day. What a model for you also! What love, what harmony, what affectionate deference should prevail among you. With what joy you should love one another [with a love] proved by service. With what eagerness you should seek to please each other, especially your superiors. If you are one with your superiors, what joy for them. If you live in peace with your fellow sisters, again, what joy. Where peace is, there is God. Oh, do everything in your power to achieve peace and harmony among yourselves. And if, God forbid, these two should be diminished, don't rest until they are restored. Hurry to the tabernacle and pray as long as and until order is restored. For where there is no peace there can be no blessing from God.

Yet for peace and harmony to abide, you must master yourselves. Above all, observe the holy rule; be obedient and deny yourself. Without willpower, nothing is accomplished. By nature human beings avoid sufferings, difficulties, inconveniences. We flee them. But scripture says: "Snow falls on those who flee the frost." Whoever shuns and flees a small act of discipline will be overtaken by a great evil. Whoever vacillates over small difficulties will encounter big ones. How many religious, if they had overcome small difficulties and spared no effort at the beginning, would later

not have been diverted or sadly derailed by big things. Therefore, for the love of God, master yourself. Kill all willfulness, make small sacrifices, and you will remain safe from big ones.

A small lapse in willpower can be the start of great unhappiness, strife, and infidelity. So persevere, forgive from the love of God, carry your little daily cross. What can become heavy for those who look at the crucified Savior? And how much his most holy mother must have suffered!

Always seek to be on good terms with your superiors, to make them happy. This will call God's blessings down upon you. Sacrifice yourself completely to the Savior to whom you have dedicated yourself. Hold firmly together in love, unity, and humility. Have true love for each other. Endure those weaknesses from which no human being is free.

May God bless you all and fortify you in your faithfulness to your vocation.

1902/10/06**Address to the First General Chapter⁵**

“However, far be it from me to boast except in the cross of Our Lord Christ, through which the world is crucified to me, and I to the world” (Gal 6:14).

Beloved sons! A heartfelt welcome to all of you who have come to Rome from the most distant places to stage the First General Chapter for the greater honor of God and for the benefit of the Society.

We intend to strengthen our Society in the spirit of the Savior of the World, in the spirit of Jesus Christ crucified, which is the opposite of the spirit of the world. “However, far be it from me to boast except in the cross of Our Lord Christ, through which the world is crucified to me, and I to the world” (Gal 6:14). Oh, that the spirit of the world – arrogance, frivolity, vanity, inflated freedom – would leave our Society. The spirit of Jesus Christ, which is the spirit of humility, mortification, prayer and obedience, fulfills us. May no one dare to reduce this spirit of Christ. This would mean nothing less than pulling the Society down from its height and throwing it to the ground for people to trample on it. May no one dare to introduce the spirit of the world into the Society!

The more the spirit of the world is introduced into the Society and the less the spirit of Christ crucified prevails in it, the less it will bloom, the less fruit it will bear, the more it will be punished by lack of

⁵ In the original edition of DSS XXIII, both the original Latin and the German translation of this talk were included under 1902/10/06. In this edition, only the English translation of the German is given.

vocations and forfeit heavenly blessings. The closer we approach the suffering and humiliated, the prayerful and meditative Savior, the richer will be the fruits which will grow from our work in the Lord’s vineyard.

Since we cannot now pray throughout the nights, we want to dedicate at least some hours to contemplation and to the Divine Office. Since we cannot climb the highest degree of humility and mortification, suffering and patience with the Savior of the World, at least we want to take the trouble to imitate the humiliated and crucified Christ through the few small humiliations entailed in our rules and in our way of life.

Beloved sons, if you want to promote our Society through your counsel and your voice, always keep before your eyes this spirit that I preached to you. Raise to the first ranks in the Society those who are filled with this spirit and who live it, although they must also display intelligence and experience. True Salvatorians, students of the Divine Savior, are just such as these.

Finally, most precious sons, remember that the spirit of Christ is a spirit of universality, not of particularity. Because Christ died for all, our Society too has a universal character. Its laws can, therefore, not become fitted exclusively for one nation or another. Rather, they must take into account the needs of the whole world and of our holy mother church which so desperately requires apostolic workers throughout the whole world. In this way, the faith is reinvigorated among Christians and extended among nonbelievers.

All of you, open wide your hearts and work to become all things

to all people. In this way you will win everyone for Christ under the protection of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen of the Apostles, and under the banner of the Savior of the World, who is praised and honored in eternity. Amen.

1903/02/14

**Talk to Scholastics on Constitution XIII, p. 116
Recorded in Philosophers' Chronicle, p. 8**

[With great spiritual fervor and emotion Reverend Father spoke about the true sign of a Salvatorian. In his own words:]

There is and can be no other true sign of a Salvatorian, of Salvatorian scholastics, of followers of our dear Savior than love, and observing the commands of the Savior: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." There are and will be no greater works and no greater or more celebrated name but the love of Christ toward the confreres, and reverence [shown] toward the superiors. Those who do this merit the name "Salvatorian."

1903/04/25
Profession of the Sisters

What greater proof of your love can you give to God than total dedication through religious profession? As Jesus transferred to Peter the power to be chief shepherd, he first asked him three times: “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these?” And Peter in humble mistrust of himself answered: “Lord, you know that I love you!” So, Jesus gave him charge of the lambs and sheep, of souls, as the reward for his love. In the same way Jesus gives us as the greatest reward for our love of him the high, sacred office of rescuing souls – supplying him with souls.

May each one of you become an “*Apostolin*” *Christi*, “an apostle of Christ,” a true Salvatorian. The main task of our Society is the sanctification of our own souls and the sanctification and salvation of other souls. Therefore, today on the feast of St. Mark, resolve enthusiastically to embrace this mission completely, with all your strength, as your assigned position allows. In this way you will lead many souls to your Divine Master. Each soul you rescue adds a new jewel to your heavenly crown. You should not fear any sacrifice. You should even surrender your life for the salvation of souls.

Saving souls should be your topmost wish, your most eager endeavor. Jesus will repay this superabundantly in the possession of his eternal glory. Then you will receive as many crowns as you rescued souls.

1903/09
Address to the Sisters

Seek to please God in all things, and always to fulfill God’s holy will. Bolster your sanctification with prayer, work, mortification of the senses, and silence. Never become despondent in the spiritual life, even if you have great difficulties to overcome.

1903/09
Address of the Sisters

Dear sisters, consider carefully that we are not in the world in order to enjoy it. We are here in order to suffer, to work, and to fight. But trust firmly in the Lord. The greatest misstep you can make is to lose courage.

1903/11
Address of the Sisters

You are the favored ones, preferred and selected. You have a particular right to approach the Divine Savior in order to be heard by him in all your concerns. Always remember that we are not yet in heaven, that we must still fight and suffer much. But never despair. Trust firmly in God, however great your inner or outer difficulties may be!

1903/11/02**Profession of Sisters on Feast of All Souls**

What a great and sublime good fortune you were granted today! What great and undeserved grace! You were selected from among thousands to leave this world and everything earthly in order to belong to the Eternal One, to that Omnipotent, Immortal God, as his possession, dedicated and consecrated to him alone; to be the bride of the Lord, Creator of Heaven and Earth; to become our Divine Redeemer's bride. Oh, what incomprehensible good fortune!

But this great reward and favor from the Lord also demands seriousness from you. So far as lies in your power, you must make yourselves worthy of it. Being the Divine Redeemer's bride, you must also possess the Divine Savior's spirit. Therefore, all your striving and yearning should now be channeled toward becoming chaste and humble, obedient and modest, like your Divine Master and bridegroom. Since you left the world, you can no longer belong to it. Therefore, cling to Jesus alone. Trust and surrender yourselves completely to him alone, to the one to whom you have consecrated yourself just now.

And if times of temptations and danger should come, days of fear, sorrow and abandonment, days of affliction, oh, cling to Jesus the Crucified. Remember then the holy joy you felt in the present hour, and persevere! Yes, persevere in faithfully observing your holy rule, in fulfilling your duties. Persevere in your holy and exalted vocation until death, so that you may be considered worthy to receive the crown of eternal immortality and be united with all the saints to behold and possess God in eternity!

1904/02/08**Investiture of the Sisters**

“Far be it from me to glory in anything except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!”

Beloved sisters in Christ Jesus. Today I would like to give you the book, wherein you could read your life: Jesus the Crucified! If we want to build, to work and to accomplish things in the Congregation, then we must endure with Jesus and persevere united with him. Let us, therefore, contemplate the Crucified. This teaches us to recognize the value of our immortal soul. For the salvation of souls God sacrificed himself in the most painful death. This should fill us with joy and encourage us to work devoutly and courageously for the salvation of souls. It also shows us how everything we do for the salvation of immortal souls must be grounded in Christ crucified. Great accomplishments thrive in the shadow of the cross. The greater and the more numerous the things you want to accomplish for your own soul and for the sanctification of other souls, the greater the cross you must carry. Yes, more than anything else, the success of your work will depend on what you suffer for Jesus the Crucified.

Therefore, love the cross and difficulties. Then you will save your soul and work profitably for the salvation of other souls. The cross alone brings us salvation and peace. The more of the cross and humiliations you have, the more you will accomplish. Don't think things are going well if you don't have the cross. If everything comes off so smoothly, without effort or difficulties, if everything goes as you wish, you will not save many souls. Whoever has to suffer much also has much to hope for.

Whoever fears suffering cannot be an apostle. Study all the great ones, starting from St. Paul. All of them highly venerated Jesus the Crucified. Think of St. Francis. How did they achieve such great holiness? Where did they find the strength and courage to walk toward difficulties and to embrace them with great joy? From contemplating the cross, and from the love of the Crucified. All their learning drew them to its source: the cross.

Therefore, sisters, love the cross. Seek it and your efforts will bear fruit. It is so beautiful to belong absolutely to Jesus the Crucified. And if you don't see any success because you are nailed completely to the cross of Christ, be assured that you will have the greatest successes. Yes, I repeat: God's works thrive only in the shadow of the cross. And if you want to do great things for God you must suffer much, be humiliated and tested. If here below you were loyally devoted to the cross and to the Crucified, you can also hope that you will one day share in his exaltation. This is my heartfelt wish for all of you. Amen.

1904/10/04

Chronicle of the Scholastic Philosophers (pp. 87-88)

[With these words the most Reverend Father gave thanks for the good wishes on his nameday.]

It was a great joy to me that you sent me your very best wishes. This makes it clear that you are mindful of the benefits from your spiritual father, that you love him and are dedicated to him, which is very necessary so that I may direct God's work well. Do not ever forget that, unless you keep the holy rules and do not rely too much on your heads, you cannot be happy either now or in eternity, you cannot win God's blessing in your toils and labors, you cannot bring honor to God or salvation to souls. So therefore, in thanking you for being so lovingly mindful of your spiritual father, I will ask from the great and good God that he will tighten ever more strongly the bond of charity which embraces us and preserve and increase our zeal for our constitutions and religious customs.

*Your spiritual father,
Father Francis Mary of the Cross
Greets and blesses you from his heart.*

1906/02/17

Departure of Missionaries to Assam (excerpts)

Mihi autem absit gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesus Christi.

“May I glory in nothing except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This should be your slogan for the inexpressible mission you have received from God to take to heathens and unbelievers the light of the truth. Also you belong to those of whom it is said; *Quam speciosi pedes evangelizantium pacem, evangelizantium bona!* “How beautiful are the feet of those who announce the good news of peace, who announce good news.” In this way you are chosen for the apostolate and for the first ranks of the disciples.

Your task, therefore, is to become like your Divine Savior. ... You must be crucified with Christ; as *pars Christi*, “members of Christ” you must be united with him. And there is no other way to achieve great things and to be united with Christ than through suffering. Through his disciple [Ananias], the Lord wanted to reveal to the apostle Paul not how much he would accomplish but how much he would suffer. Thus, the Lord said: *Ego enim ostendam illi, quanta oporteat eum per nomine meo pati*” (Acts 9:16). “Therefore I will show him how much suffering he must bear for my name’s sake.”

The apostolate consists in suffering; and in bearing suffering you will be victorious. Like every Christian in the world, you most especially as disciples of the Crucified must be prepared to suffer in unspeakable ways. Because you preach Christ crucified you must

also suffer. Not with big talk. ... You must proclaim only the Crucified.

Remember this ... we will accompany you with our prayers. Persevere in suffering! I cry to you once again: “If the seed does not fall into the earth and die, it won’t bear any fruit.” If you are not destroyed, as it were, with sufferings and misery, your works will not thrive. ... Therefore, persevere and you will be crowned!

1907/02/17**Departure of Missionaries to Assam (excerpt)**

I would like to give you two admonitions for the trip. Keep them always before your eyes during your future work:

1) Always work in holy obedience. Work with and in the will of your superior, which is also your will.

2) Work in *caritate*, charity.

a) in love among the confreres. You should cling firmly to the bond of mutual love and solidarity.

b) in love and patience for the salvation of souls. Only in this way will you achieve much and acquire an immortal crown for yourself.

1911/02/09**Profession of the Sisters**

Venerable sister! Your long-awaited day of final vows has now arrived. Oh, be happy for having come so far and for having persevered faithfully and steadfastly in your vocation. Certainly you experienced some sufferings and temptations, but with God's grace you overcame everything and survived.

In your future life, too, there will be temptations, crosses and sufferings, unpleasantness. But remain faithful to your holy vocation and persevere steadfastly. Don't let yourself be discouraged by unedifying example. Pass over it quietly. Always stand faithfully by your heavenly bridegroom. He will not abandon you. Don't shun any sacrifice if his honor demands it. Be eager in his holy service. He will reward you with the eternal joys of heaven.

1913/03/11
Address of the Sisters

I wish you all a holy year during which you will make great progress in perfection, and in the love of your heavenly bridegroom. How? Through zealous exercise of mutual love and patience, through quietly enduring sufferings and sacrifices. This is a significant year for you, the jubilee year of the Congregation. Oh, truly pray much, and thank God sincerely for all the graces he has given you, so that the jubilee celebration may become for you and for the whole Congregation a celebration of true joy. Yes, a festival of grace! I wish you a Eucharistic year. May you grow in love of the Blessed Sacrament and in the worship of Jesus' most Sacred Heart. May the love of the Eucharistic Savior penetrate you completely and [may this love] flare up in unselfish, sacrificial dedication to your heavenly bridegroom. Because this year can also be our last, use it well. Make it the best year, a year rich in merits for heaven.

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