

Collection
of Various Short Treatises

RECUEIL

DE

DIFFERENTS
PETITS TRAITÉ'S
A L'USAGE DES FRÈRES
des Ecoles Chrétiennes.



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Collection of Various Short Treatises
for the Use of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

At Avignon, Joseph-Charles Chastanier,
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1711

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**Collection
of Various Short Treatises**

by John Baptist de La Salle

A new edition of the translation
by W. J. Battersby, FSC

Edited by Daniel Burke, FSC
La Salle University, Philadelphia

1993, reprinted 2007
Lasallian Publications

Lasallian Publications

Sponsored by the Regional Conference of Christian Brothers of the United States of America and of Toronto, Canada, Lasallian Publications will produce volumes on the life, writings, and work of John Baptist de La Salle (1651–1719), founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and on the early history of the Brothers. These volumes will be presented in two series.

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Introduction

Saint John Baptist de La Salle's *Collection of Various Short Treatises for the Use of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* was composed during the first years of the eighteenth century and was first published in Avignon, very probably in 1705. As the title indicates, it is an anthology, a variety of religious texts from different sources: Saint Bernard of Clervaux; Saint Ignatius of Loyola; Nicolas Roland, fellow canon of De La Salle at Reims and his spiritual advisor; Jean-Jacques Olier, founder of the Sulpicians; Julian Hayneufve, SJ, author of a popular series of meditations, and others. One section consists entirely of passages from Holy Scripture. In the fashion of the time, contemporary sources are rarely acknowledged; most are freely adapted and pointed in practical ways to De La Salle's audience of teaching Brothers. *Collection* was, in fact, intended as a companion volume to the Rule, as a handbook that the Brothers could have constantly with them. Entire sections are incorporated in the Rule, with only slight alterations, and much else consists of an elaboration or explanation of the Rule. Initial studies of the sources of *Collection* have been reported in W. J. Battersby, *De La Salle: Saint and Spiritual Writer* (London, 1950), 55–57; A. Rayez, SJ, "Études lasalliennes," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique*, 109 (1952), 18–63; Y. Poutet, FSC, *Le XVII^e Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes* (Rennes, 1970), I, 593–605, 612–619.

The oldest copies of *Collection* that have come down to us bear the date 1711. It seems likely, however, that the date of first publication was much earlier, probably 1705. In a letter to Gabriel Drolin dated September 4, 1705, De La Salle says, "Brother Albert tells me in a letter of August 29 that the Father Censor approved and returned all our books to him." Brother Albert was at this time in Avignon, and, although *Collection* is not specifically mentioned as being one of the books returned to him by the Censor, it seems highly probable that it was, for the copies we possess carry the imprimatur of Petrus Lacrampe, who was General Censor at Avignon from 1704 to 1706.

Collection existed in two forms: one large, one small. The small one was not an abridgement in the modern sense of a summary but consisted of 68 pages of text identical, except for slight variations, with the first 68 pages of the larger volume, which contained 260 pages. The small one might have been intended for beginners, postulants, and novices. The fact that *Collection* existed in two forms explains why the expression “large *Collection*” is to be found in a number of places in our early documents. In the first printed edition of the Rule (1726), for instance, we read: “At a quarter past seven, the Brothers will have breakfast, and during that time there will be reading in the large *Collection*.”

There are ten copies of *Collection* bearing the date 1711 in the archives of the Generalate of the Institute in Rome. Eight of these, however, are actually of a later date, for they carry a reference on page 4 to the Bull of Approbation. Of the remaining two, one is a copy of the small *Collection* and the other of the larger volume. They make no mention of the Bull and are, therefore, earlier than 1725; they might, in fact, be copies of the edition of this very year 1711.

The following English translation is based on the earliest copy we possess of the large *Collection*,¹ the only things omitted being the two appendices: Directory for Reddition to the Superior of the Institute and Directory for Travel. These sections were placed after the table of contents at the end of the 1711 edition and are paginated differently than the rest of the book. This seems to indicate that they are a separate addition, possibly a later one, bound in with the rest.

Collection is a typical seventeenth-century work in its mode of spirituality and its whole approach to the religious life, with its introspection, examination of conscience, blind obedience, bodily mortification, and renunciation of sensual pleasures. At the same time, it involves the more positive aspects of the celebrated French School of spirituality, of the Oratorians Bérulle and Condren, and the Sulpicians Olier and Tronson, the latter being

¹Cahiers Lasalliens 15; hereafter referred to as CL, Cahiers Lasalliens (Maison Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, 476 Via Aurelia, Rome) is an ongoing series of publications of studies, texts, and documents concerned with John Baptist de La Salle, his life, writings, and religious and pedagogical ideas.

the chief spiritual director at the Seminary of Saint Sulpice during De La Salle's stay there. To their devotion to Jesus Christ in the mysteries of his human life and their insistence on the prime importance of faith, union with God's will, and interior prayer, De La Salle adds a filial trust in Providence, a compassionate concern for the poor, and a consistent integration of ascetical practice with the work of teaching.

De La Salle's rigorous and comprehensive program in pursuit of perfection led him, with God's grace, to great sanctity. That program was doubtless tempered in practice for his Brothers, who, as his correspondence suggests, often failed to achieve its high ideals. It is understandably rather distant from the concerns of twentieth-century spirituality. But, as recent General Chapters of the Institute make clear, the adaptation of the Brothers' way of life to modern conditions makes it all the more important to read the Founder's works, to uncover behind the outmoded trappings the underlying principles, the things that do not change and, above all, to recapture their motivating spirit.

The present translation is essentially that of the late W. J. Battersby, FSC, which he used for the *Retreat Manual* published by Saint Mary's Press in 1965. It has been compared with the 1711 text by Brothers Richard Arnandez, Donald Mouton, Francis Huether, Joseph Schmidt, and Erminus Joseph Melofchik, and they have suggested a variety of emendations to Battersby. For the present edition, his introduction and prefatory notes (here in smaller type) have also been updated and slightly rearranged.

Daniel Burke, FSC, Editor
La Salle University
January 1993

John Baptist de La Salle

Collection
of Various Short Treatises



Preface

by John Baptist de La Salle

Some modern editions of *Collection of Various Short Treatises* include the two paragraphs below as a preface intended by John Baptist de La Salle for this work but not included in the initial printing.

The single-page manuscript which contains the two paragraphs is written in De La Salle's hand but is not titled, dated, or signed. According to Battersby (*Retreat Manual*, 1953, 1965), Brother Irlide, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, had planned to include these paragraphs in the edition of *Collection* that he prepared in 1884, but he died in that year, and when the edition appeared, the preface was omitted.

Brother Maurice-Auguste Hermans (CL 15:x–xi) believes that this short text, given especially its frequent references to “rules” and “practices,” might have been De La Salle's draft of a preface to the complete Rule or, more specifically, to the second chapter, on the Spirit of the Institute. In the 1705 edition of the Rule, the second chapter begins abruptly without the introductory observations that appear in the edition of 1718 and that strongly resemble these two paragraphs.

In any case, in view of the overlap of much of the material in *Collection* and the Rule, it is not amiss to preserve these brief paragraphs here in their original form.

What is of the utmost importance in a Community is that the superiors apply themselves in all things and with the utmost care and with all possible vigilance to bring about the exact observance of those things which are most essential and most capable of preserving its distinctive spirit while preventing the introduction of laxity. With this purpose in view, there have been collected in a small volume the chief rules and practices in use in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, so that by making it easy for them to have these always before their eyes, they will be particularly disposed to observe them faithfully. Reading them often, they will acquire such a taste and affection for them that they will omit nothing of them, convinced as they ought to be that the observance of these practices is for them, as

members of a community and of this particular Community, the first means that God has given them to save their souls.

The Brothers, then, will regard what is reaffirmed in this little book as the summary of the essential things that they ought to do, the mainstay of their piety, and what ought to motivate them to the faithful observance and love of the Rule, as well as the most effective means they must ordinarily use to ensure its exact observance. For this reason they frequently ought to have this book in hand and make it their chief study concerning the state of life they have embraced, one in which their chief concern must be to have a spirit of detachment and to live in the manner prescribed for them.



**The Nine Good Effects of Religious Life
According to Saint Bernard**

A Person in Religious Life:

1. Lives more purely
2. Falls more rarely
3. Rises more promptly
4. Walks more circumspectly
5. Is refreshed more frequently
6. Rests more securely
7. Dies more confidently
8. Is cleansed more quickly
9. Is rewarded more abundantly



Obligations of the Vows of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

The prescriptions contained in the following section on the obligations of the vows refer to the vows that the Brothers made before the granting of the Bull of Approbation in 1725. The formula used by De La Salle and twelve Brothers, on June 6, 1694, remained the same, except for slight modifications, from the time when the Brothers first made vows until 1725:

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, prostrate with the most profound respect before your infinite and adorable majesty, I consecrate myself entirely to you to procure your glory as far as I will be able and as you will require of me.

And for this purpose, I, [name], promise and vow to unite myself and to remain in Society with the Brothers of the Christian Schools to keep together and by association gratuitous schools wherever they may be, even if I were obliged to beg for alms and to live on bread alone, and to do anything in the said Society at which I will be employed, whether by the body of the Society or by the superiors who will have the government thereof.

Wherefore, I promise and vow obedience to the body of the Society as well as to the superiors, which vows of association as well as of stability in the said Society and of obedience I promise to keep inviolably all my life.

In testimony of which I have signed. . . . (*Rule and Foundational Documents*, 204)

According to this formula, the Brothers made three vows: 1) to work together in conducting gratuitous schools; 2) to remain in the Society even if it meant begging and living on bread only, and 3) to live in obedience. To these three vows, commonly known as those of obedience, stability, and teaching the poor gratuitously, the Bull of Approbation added those of poverty and chastity. From 1725 on, the Brothers made all five vows. The Bull also specified that these vows are simple vows, dispensation being reserved to the Sovereign Pontiff.



The vows impose four duties:

1. to conduct schools by association with those who are associated with this Society and those who will become so

- associated in the future, wherever they may be sent, or to do whatever else they may be employed in by the superiors;
2. to remain in the said Society for as long as they have committed themselves, without leaving of their own accord under whatever pretext;
 3. not to leave the Society, if it happens that they come to lack everything in it, but to be resolved to ask for alms and to live on bread alone rather than to abandon the Society or the schools;
 4. to obey, first, the Superior of the Society who has been duly elected and those who will be so elected in the future; second, the particular Directors who are appointed or who will be appointed in the future by the Superior of the Society; third, the body of the Society, whether this body be represented by the superiors or by others assembled in its name; obeying all the foregoing under pain of mortal sin whenever they command in virtue of the vows.

By the aforesaid vows, the Brothers bind themselves under pain of mortal sin to all the things mentioned above. From this it follows that after making the vows, they cannot, during the time for which these vows have been made, leave the Society of their own accord, resolve definitively to leave it, or cause themselves to be sent away for any pretext whatever without violating the vows and committing a mortal sin and a sacrilege.



**Ten Commandments That the Brothers
of the Christian Schools Must Always
Keep in Mind To Meditate
and in Heart To Practice**

1. Honor God in your superior by obeying him promptly.
2. Love all your Brothers cordially at all times.
3. Teach your students well and gratuitously.
4. Do everything in a spirit of faith and for God alone.
5. Fervently use all the time prescribed for interior prayer.
6. Frequently think of the presence of God in you.

7. Often mortify your mind and senses.
8. Keep silence strictly during the prescribed time.
9. Keep chaste by very great recollection.
10. Cherish poverty by willingly having nothing.



The Four Interior Supports of the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

1. Interior prayer
2. The spirit of faith
3. The presence of God
4. Interior recollection



The Four Exterior Supports of the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

1. The accusation of faults
2. The advertisement of defects
3. The reddition of conscience
4. The manner of spending recreation time well



The Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher

Seriousness, silence, humility, prudence, wisdom, patience, reserve, meekness, zeal, vigilance, piety, generosity.



**Ten Conditions That Correction
Must Have To Be Appropriate**

To be useful, all correction must be,
on the part of the one who administers it,
 pure, charitable, just, suitable, moderate,
 peaceable, and prudent,
and on the part of the one who receives it,
 willingly accepted, respectful, and silent.



Method of Interior Prayer

Interior prayer is an inner activity in which the soul applies itself to God.

There are three parts in interior prayer. The first is preparation of the soul, properly called recollection; the second is attention to the topic of interior prayer; the third is thanksgiving at the end of interior prayer.

The first part is called preparation, or recollection, because everything done therein helps to make the soul enter into itself and to prepare for interior prayer.

The first thing to be done in interior prayer is to become permeated with the presence of God through a sentiment of faith. For this purpose we can consider God as being present in three different ways: first, in the place in which we are; second, in us; third, in a church, going there in spirit if we are not there in fact.

We can consider God present in the place in which we are, first, because God is everywhere, saying by the Prophet Jeremiah, "I fill heaven and earth"; second, because our Lord has said in Saint Matthew, chapter 18, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them."

We can consider God present in us in two ways. First, God is in us to maintain us in existence, as Saint Paul says in Acts, chapter 17, "God is not far from us, for we have our life, our movement, and our being only in God." Second, God is in us by grace and by the Spirit, which is what our Lord teaches us by these words: "The kingdom of God is within you." Saint Paul expresses the same thing when he says, "The temple of God is holy, which you are," and, "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in you?"

We can consider God as present in a church for two reasons: first, because it is the house of God, as our Lord tells us in Saint Matthew, chapter 21, "My house is a house of prayer"; second, because our Lord is there in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar.



First Part

In the first part of interior prayer, there are nine acts. The first three refer to God; the next three, to us; the last three, to our Lord.

The three that refer to God are, first, an act of faith; second, an act of adoration; third, an act of thanksgiving.

We make an act of faith by firmly believing that we are in the presence of God. To impress this truth on our mind more strongly and to keep ourselves in this sentiment of faith, we can use some of the above-mentioned passages of Holy Scripture referring to the manner in which we place ourselves in the presence of God.

We make an act of adoration by acknowledging that God is our Creator and our sovereign Lord, by showing profound respect because of this awareness, and by thinking of our lowliness and of our dependence on God.

We make an act of thanksgiving by thanking God for the graces we have received, especially for the grace to permit us to be in communion with the divine presence during interior prayer.

The three acts that refer to us are, first, an act of humility; second, an act of remorse; third, an act of contrition.

We make an act of humility by acknowledging that because we are nothing, we are unworthy to appear before God. To maintain ourselves in this sentiment, we can use these words of Abraham, "How shall I speak to my Lord, I who am only ashes and dust?"

We make an act of remorse by acknowledging that because of our many offenses, we are unworthy to appear before God.

We make an act of contrition by asking pardon of God for all our sins and by firmly resolving to commit them no more.

The three acts that refer to our Lord are, first, an act of application of the merits of our Lord; second, an act of union with our Lord; third, an act of invocation of the Holy Spirit.

We make an act of application of the merits of our Lord by asking him to apply to us the merits of his Passion to make us more agreeable to the Father and better disposed to receive grace and light in interior prayer.

We make an act of union with our Lord by uniting ourselves to his interior dispositions when he made interior prayer, begging him to make interior prayer in us and to offer our prayer and to present our needs to his Father, considering us as belonging to him and as his own members, who neither have nor can have any interior life, movement, or activity except in him.

We make an act of invocation of the Spirit of our Lord by begging him to give us his Spirit, so that we will make interior prayer only under his guidance, renouncing for this purpose our own mind and our own thoughts in order to admit during the entire time of our prayer only the thoughts with which it will please his Spirit to inspire us, so that we will put into practice what Saint Paul says, that the Spirit of God prays in us, for we are unable to have any good thoughts by ourselves.



Second Part

In the second part of interior prayer, we apply ourselves to the subject of some mystery, virtue, or maxim of the Gospel.

If the subject is a mystery, we begin by permeating ourselves deeply with the spirit of this mystery, paying attention to what is said about it in the Gospel or what the Church proposes to us concerning it, either by a simple view of faith or by some reflections on the mystery or on its subject. We then maintain ourselves in sentiments of interior respect while considering the mystery.

If the subject is a virtue or a maxim, we interiorly permeate ourselves with its necessity or its utility, whether by a sentiment of faith, by some passage of Holy Scripture that expresses this virtue or this maxim, or by reflections on the virtue or on the maxim that will help to convince us to practice it. We draw these reflections chiefly from Holy Scripture, particularly from the New Testament.

Then, based on faith, we make nine acts. The first three refer to our Lord; the next three, to us. Of the last three, the first refers to our Lord; the second, to God; the third, to the saints.

The three acts that refer to our Lord are an act of faith, an act of adoration, and an act of thanksgiving.

We make an act of faith on the mystery, the virtue, or the maxim by firmly believing that our Lord accomplished the mystery, practiced the virtue, or taught us the maxim. To persuade ourselves of this truth, we recall some passage of the New Testament.

We make an act of adoration by paying homage to our Lord accomplishing this mystery, practicing this virtue, or teaching this maxim. With our mind thus engaged, we remain in profound respect before him.

We make an act of thanksgiving by thanking our Lord for his goodness in accomplishing this mystery, in practicing this virtue, or in teaching this maxim for our instruction and our sanctification.

The three acts that refer to us are an act of remorse, an act of contrition, and an act of application.

We make an act of remorse by acknowledging before God how great our remorse must be for not having applied ourselves to become imbued with the spirit of this mystery or of this maxim or with the practice of this virtue or for not having applied ourselves as much as we ought to have done. To add to our remorse, we call to mind the principal occasions on which we have failed.

We make an act of contrition by asking pardon of God for the faults committed against the spirit of this mystery or of this maxim or against this virtue. We resolve to be more faithful in the future to the spirit of this mystery or of this maxim and to the practice of this virtue.

We make an act of application by applying to us the mystery, the virtue, or the maxim, considering before God how necessary it is for us to enter into the spirit of this mystery or of this maxim or to practice this virtue, noting the occasions on which we can and ought to do so and taking suitable and definite means to act in this manner when such occasions arise.

When making the act of application, we form resolutions. This is what is meant by taking suitable and definite means to practice the virtue on which we are making interior prayer.

These resolutions must refer to the present, be specific, and be effective. First, they must be applied to the present, so that we can put them into effect on the same day on which we make them. Second, they must be specific, that is, relate to a particular virtue that we can foresee some occasions to practice. Third, they must be effective: we must take care to perform them without fail when the occasions arise.

The last three acts of the second part are, first, an act of union with our Lord; second, an act of petition; third, an act of invocation of saints to whom we have a special devotion.

We make an act of union by uniting ourselves interiorly with the Spirit and the dispositions of our Lord in this mystery or with those with which he taught or he practiced this virtue or this maxim. We beg him to give us a share in this spirit and in these dispositions, earnestly beseeching him to grant us the grace to enter into the spirit of this mystery or into the practice of this virtue or of this maxim, not merely exteriorly—as the *philosophes* and people of the world practice it, by reason of its being a moral virtue or through purely human motives—but through views of faith and in union with the Spirit and with the dispositions of our Lord and through the action of grace.

We make an act of petition by humbly asking God for the spirit of this mystery or for the practice of this virtue or of this maxim, begging that it be granted to us in union with our Lord and through our Lord, in whom and through whose Spirit alone we dare to ask for and to hope to obtain it.

We make an act of invocation of the saints by begging those to whom we are especially devoted, chiefly those who were present at this mystery, who cooperated in its accomplishment, or who frequently and perfectly practiced this virtue or this maxim, to interest themselves on our behalf with God and to beseech God to grant us the spirit of this mystery or the practice of this virtue or of this maxim, thus showing them our great confidence in their intercession.



Third Part

In the third part of interior prayer, there are three acts. The first is a review of what we have done during the prayer; the second, an act of thanksgiving; the third, an act of offering.

We make a review by thinking about the principal items we have considered in our prayer and about the sentiments God has inspired in us that we consider the most wise and the most practical and by reflecting on the benefits that we can draw from them.

We make an act of thanksgiving by thanking God for the graces received during the prayer, for all the sentiments that were given to us, and for the affection that God enabled us to experience for the good of our soul and for our advancement in virtue.

We make an act of offering by presenting to God our interior prayer, the resolutions we have taken, and our dispositions to fulfill them, at the same time offering ourselves to God with all our actions of the day.

We finish our prayer by placing all that we have done, considered, and resolved under the protection of the Most Blessed Virgin, so that she will offer it to her dear Son and by this means we will obtain from him the graces necessary to perform all our actions and to practice the virtue or the maxim on which we have made interior prayer, all for his greater glory and with the greatest possible perfection.



Directory for Giving an Account of Their Conscience

It would seem that the practice of having periodic redditions, that is, personal interviews with or reports by letter to the Superior, goes back in the Institute to 1691, for Canon Blain informs us that De La Salle required the Brothers who made a retreat in October that year under his guidance to write to him every month to give an account of their conduct. Blain adds that De La Salle attached great importance to this practice as a support of faithful observance of the Rule and that he was very careful always to answer these letters. The hundred or so of his letters that have come down to us are, in fact, nearly all answers to letters of reddition.

De La Salle required that every Brother make a reddition to his Director every week and send a written reddition to the Superior of the Institute every two months. This is indicated in the earliest copy of the Rule, the manuscript of 1705, and the text is repeated almost identically in the Rule of 1718.

All the Brothers will have a day assigned in each week to give an account of their conscience and their conduct to the Brother Director, and they will do this according to the *Directory* that will be given to them for this purpose.

On the eve of the day assigned to give an account of his conscience, each of the Brothers will use the time of spiritual reading to read the *Directory* and the time of the evening interior prayer in recollection to enter into himself, to reflect on his conduct, to examine himself on what he ought to give an account, and to consider the means he could take to correct himself of his defects. (*Rule and Foundational Documents*, 27–28)

Furthermore, in the manuscript Rule of the Brother Director of 1718, indications are given as to the manner in which the Director of a house of the Institute is to give an account of his administration each month to the Superior and of his personal conduct every two months.

There are two sets of directions for reddition in the 1711 *Collection*: those given in the following section, numbering twenty-one items that apply to the weekly reddition, and those given in an appendix for the bimonthly reddition to the Superior, numbering thirty-one. It would seem that these latter were printed separately, possibly at another time, and then bound in with the rest of *Collection*.

There is some similarity between the directions for reddition drawn up by De La Salle and the fourteen questions in *Instruktionen ad reddendam conscientiae rationem in Regulae Societatis Jesu*. This would seem to indicate that De La Salle may have been inspired by *Regulae* in his treatment of this matter (CL 16: 5–20).

It is worth noting, as emphasizing the importance that De La Salle attached to reddition, that he dwells on the subject in two of his meditations: that for the Third Sunday in Lent and that for the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

This section ought to be read bearing in mind that in John Baptist de La Salle's day, it was customary for members of a religious community to open their conscience to their superior. The Church has since decreed that inferiors are in no way obliged to do this and that superiors cannot induce them to do so. Hence the periodic reddition that the Brothers still make concerns only their exterior conduct, although they are free to open their minds to their Director if they so wish. (See *Codex Juris Canonici*, Pt. 2, Art. 530.)



Everyone in the community will have a fixed day for the weekly account of conscience and will prepare in the following manner.

During the day assigned for giving this account, take time to examine yourself to foresee what you ought to say with regard to each of the items indicated and what advice you ought to seek with regard to your conduct.

Prepare for this reddition in a spirit of faith, assuring yourself that you are addressing God in the person of your superior and also that God is speaking through the mouth of the superior to console you and to give you the means of correcting your faults as he thinks fit for your progress in virtue.

To stamp this truth more deeply on your mind and to dispose you to profit by the advice that may be given, it will be useful and appropriate to make an act of submission of mind somewhat like this:

O my God, I firmly believe and hold for certain that it is you who are to speak to me today, to teach me what I have to do, to console me in my trials, and to admonish and reprove me for my faults by the mouth of my Superior, to whose guidance you have entrusted me.

I thank you, O my God, for your goodness in furnishing me with a means so easy and advantageous for advancing in virtue.

I ask you to grant me the light I need to know and to make known the depths of my heart as you know them. This is the grace I humbly ask, O my God, together with that of profiting by the good advice that will be given to me.

Thus convinced that you are speaking to God, you will reject as dangerous temptations all duplicity, shame, and human respect, which might lead you to conceal certain thoughts, sentiments, designs, troubles, or temptations.

Endeavor, then, to speak with sincerity and with Christian and religious simplicity on the following articles.



Articles on Which They Are To Examine Themselves To Give an Account of Their Conscience

1

What is the state of your health? Do you feel well, or have you had any indisposition; if so, from what cause? Have you had any interior anxieties or temptations? If so, to what have they been due, and how have you dealt with them? What good or bad consequences resulted?

2

Into what faults have you fallen since the last reddition? Were they done knowingly or even deliberately? What have been the most usual ones? Have you made an effort to remedy some of them? If so, which ones, and what means were adopted?

3

Have you made progress in the practice of virtue and in the path of perfection, or has there been slackness? Have you had any good inspirations? If so, have you been faithful to them? What virtues have you practiced?

4

What has influenced your conduct? Is it at times mere inclination, a whim, repulsion, or perhaps passion?

5

Do you esteem mortification, particularly mortification of the mind and senses? Have you done any extraordinary mortification? If so, what? How have you accepted the penances that have been imposed? Have you performed them exactly, with the right motive, with fervor, or with distaste?

6

Do you welcome humiliation, embarrassment, and rebukes? In what way has this been evident? With what interior and exterior dispositions have you accepted them?

7

Have you cheerfully accepted having your faults pointed out and being reproved for them? Do you accuse yourself of your faults every day without omitting any? In what dispositions do you do this? Do you experience some distaste? If so, is this deliberate or involuntary?

8

What esteem do you have for obedience? Are you indifferent no matter what might be commanded? Are you disposed to obey any superior whatever, without distinction, no matter what repugnance or difficulty you might experience?

9

Do you have a serious regard for the Rule, and do you observe it exactly? Have you failed to keep certain points? If so, which ones are they? Are you fervent or careless in the matter of faithful observance of the Rule? Have you experienced any difficulty in this respect? If so, what is the reason?

10

Do you observe silence exactly and maintain recollection both inside and outside the house? Are you attentive to the holy presence of God? Do you recall it frequently, always through faith? Do you keep strict watch over yourself and often enter into yourself, so that you do not perform a single action unguardedly and without thinking of God?

11

Do you apply yourself to the performance of all your spiritual exercises at the time and in the manner prescribed? Do you perform them all, including the external ones? Do you do so with correct interior dispositions, with the sole view of pleasing God and accomplishing God's holy will?

12

How do you make your spiritual reading and with what dispositions? Have you derived some benefit? If so, what is it?

13

What defect have you concentrated on during your daily examination of conscience? Have you tried to correct it? In what way have you noticed this?

14

How do you occupy yourself during interior prayer? Do you make all the acts of the preparatory part? Do you find it easy or difficult to deal with the subject of the interior prayer? Do you have distractions? Do you experience dryness in interior prayer, or do you have an inclination for it? What benefit do you derive?

15

What dispositions do you bring to the reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist? Do you go to these sacraments with fervor, tepidity, or carelessness? Do you have a great affection for them? Do you receive them willingly and profit by them?

16

How do you assist at Holy Mass and with what attention and degree of application?

17

Are you charitable toward the Brothers? Is your charity the same toward all? Do you have a grievance against anyone, or have you had any? If so, what was the cause? Have you also had a grievance against your superior?

18

Have you a special affection for some particular person in the community? Have you spoken privately with anyone?

19

Are you ardent and zealous for the salvation of your neighbor and in the performance of your professional duties?

20

How do you perform your work in school? Do you observe the Rule in this matter? Have you wasted time? Do you follow everything carefully during the lessons, and are you diligent in correcting all mistakes? Do you leave your place in class? Do you talk too much or to a particular student unnecessarily? Have you changed anything or introduced anything new?

21

In school do you make sure that the students progress in reading and writing, and are you equally careful to make them advance in piety? How do you act toward your students? Have you been too strict, too easygoing, or too familiar with them? Have you been impatient? In what way and in what frame of mind have you administered correction?

22

After you give an account of your conscience, first, pay attention to the advice you received; second, thank God for having given it; third, make a resolution to follow it, and take the means to do so.



The Nine Requirements of Obedience

Because obedience is the principal and the most necessary virtue for religious and for all people living in community, it is important that those who have this advantage and wish to practice this virtue to the fullest extent know in what it consists and the requirements that must accompany it, without which it cannot truly have the name or the nature of obedience.

Obedience is a virtue by which we submit our will and judgment to another human being as holding the place of God.

Obedience must, of necessity, include nine requirements. First, it must be Christian and religious; second, it must be universal; third, it must be indifferent; fourth, it must be exact and entire; fifth, it must be prompt; sixth, it must be blind; seventh, it must be simple; eighth, it must be humble and respectful; ninth, it must be cordial and affectionate.

The first requirement refers to the motive that ought to prompt us to obey; the following three refer chiefly to the person whom we obey; the fifth states the exact time in which we are to obey; the last four express the manner in which we are to obey.



The Requirements of Obedience in Particular

1

Obedience Must Be Christian and Religious

The first requirement of obedience is that it be Christian and religious; that is, we obey through virtue and the spirit of religion as obeying God, whom we respect and honor in the person of the Director, who is invested with the divine authority. Thus our sole motive is to obey God and do God's holy will.

The following defects are opposed to this kind of obedience. First, we do not entertain the view and the sentiment of faith that we are obeying God in the person of the Director.

Second, we do not obey because the Director has shortcomings or for any other reason whatever, even reasons apparently good, or we prefer to obey another person whom we like better or one who shows more learning or greater ability to govern. Third, we obey merely because we cannot do otherwise or to avoid a reprimand or some penalty. Fourth, we prefer interior feelings, imaginary inspirations, or even our inclinations and opinions about what is commanded, counseled, or of Rule. In a word, we are guided by our own mind or by the advice and opinions of others, because we think they are better than those of the Director.

2

Obedience Must Be Universal

The second requirement of obedience is that it be universal. We must obey all superiors, whether our equals or our inferiors, without distinction. We obey in all that is commanded, at all times, and in all places.

The contrary defects are the following. We obey one Director and not another; we obey the Director but not those who command in the Director's name; we obey in one thing but not in another, in one place or in one house but not in another.

3

Obedience Must Be Indifferent

The third requirement of obedience is that it be indifferent to all that the Director commands.

These are the contrary defects: first, we obey in one thing rather than in another; second, we listen to our inclinations or our dislikes in what is commanded; third, we predispose the Director to accede to our wishes, either openly by proposing something as being fit and useful, even giving reasons and thus showing a tendency to do what we wish and to avoid what we dislike, or by extorting permission for specious reasons, which might be prejudicial to our spiritual progress or to the good order of the community, esteeming this to be of less consequence than our own inclinations.

4

Obedience Must Be Exact and Entire

The fourth requirement of obedience is that it be exact and entire. We omit nothing that we believe to be the will of the Director; we do nothing more, but we do all that is commanded.

The following are the contrary defects. First, either purposely or through carelessness, we do only part of what we believe to be the will of the Director or of what has been ordered. In such cases we generally choose to do what is most agreeable and conformable to our inclinations or what is least painful.

Second, we do more than the Director commands, even under the pretext of doing good. For example, if the Director commands us to sweep a room, we sweep two; if he orders or permits a half hour of interior prayer, we make an hour, and so on.

Third, we do things not in the manner prescribed but according to our own fashion. For instance, if the Director orders a thing to be cut with scissors, we use a knife; if we are told to use a poor instrument to do something, we use a good one that we have either looked for or found, under the plea that the work will thus be sooner and better done. Nature is never at a loss for such pretexts.

Fourth, we do things at a time other than appointed by the Director. Thus, a certain day or hour is named, and we select another on the pretext that the time we choose is more convenient or fitting than that set by the Director.

5

Obedience Must Be Prompt

The fifth requirement of obedience is that it be prompt. We must obey at once, at the very moment a thing is commanded; at a glance or at the first sound of the bell, leaving a letter half formed, a syllable half read; discontinuing what is partially done when required to begin something else; breaking off our conversation promptly when the bell announces the end of recreation; leaving a person to whom we have been speaking when the bell rings for an exercise; even leaving all things unfinished, however necessary they might appear, unless we have permission to continue them.

6

Obedience Must Be Blind

The sixth requirement of obedience is that it be blind, that is, we obey without paying attention to whether the thing is good or bad, unless it is evidently contrary to the commandments of God. If the command appears inopportune or if any thought of this nature enters our mind, we must not listen to it or adhere to it; on the contrary, we must be convinced that the Director is right and that we can do nothing better than or as good as what is commanded, however perfectly we might do it, because we cannot do anything better or more perfect than the will of God, which consists in one thing only, namely, what is infallibly indicated by the order of our Director, according to the words of the Gospel, "He who listens to you, listens to me."

The contrary defects are any examination or inquiry into whether the thing commanded is good or bad, whether it is well or poorly advised, and all reflections based on reasons tending to either of these views.

7

Obedience Must Be Simple

The seventh requirement of obedience is that it be simple. We must perform with simplicity what we have been told to do, only because we are so ordered and without troubling ourselves about the reasons for the order or whether we will be able to fulfill it. We must reject all thoughts of this nature.

The contrary defects are all questions concerned with how or why, which are incompatible with true obedience, for instance, asking yourself, Why does the Director order this and not that? Why command me and not someone else? Why allow such a thing in this person and not in me? Why does the Director command so many things at the same time? Why such contradictory things, such useless, ridiculous, or even hurtful things? Why does the Director command so haughtily and harshly? How does the Director expect me to do such a thing that appears impossible? How does the Director expect one person to do so many things? Or we directly ask similar questions of the others or of the Director.

8

Obedience Must Be Humble and Respectful

The eighth requirement of obedience is that it be humble and respectful. We must obey without making any comment, for when we do so, we always try to excuse ourselves and to be dispensed from obeying.

The contrary defects are remarks or thoughts such as, I cannot do this; I will do it some other time; I will satisfy this command by doing something else; I am unwell; I cannot do so many things; such a thing is too difficult; someone said that such a thing ought to be done, and so with all other, similar replies.

9

Obedience Must Be Cordial and Affectionate

The ninth requirement of obedience is that it be cordial and affectionate; that is to say, we receive every command joyfully and comply with it in a pleasant and unrestrained manner, without being troubled or upset by it no matter how difficult or disagreeable it might appear.

These are contrary defects: first, to receive the Director's orders in a cold, indifferent, or melancholy manner; second, to be upset by the thing commanded, obeying without feeling, in a lifeless way, or by murmuring and showing repugnance; third, to oppose the superiors, those who communicate their orders, or those who require that the orders be carried out; fourth, to show displeasure or ill-will toward the Director or anyone else on account of an order received—in a word, everything that indicates that we are not pleased with what has been commanded or what we find difficult to carry out.



Topics on Which the Brothers Are To Speak During Recreation

The question of regulating the recreation periods that the Brothers are to have after the midday and evening meals gave De La Salle a good deal of concern. As he explains in the preface to *Collection* and in the Rule, he is of the opinion that conversation about worldly affairs must be carefully avoided in a religious community and that the talk of the Brothers must be totally different than that of laypeople in general. For this reason he drew up a collection of topics that he thought suitable for the Brothers' conversation during the time of recreation, based on a catalog he found in use by the Jesuits.

These topics for conversation during recreation are listed in both the small and the large *Collection* and also in the manuscript Rule of 1705, but there are some variations. The text in the small *Collection* is the oldest, earlier than 1705, and also the closest to the source from which De La Salle borrowed, namely, *Instruktionen ad provinciales et superiores Societatis Jesu*, sent out by order of the Seventh General Congregation of the Jesuits, in February 1616. These instructions contain a chapter entitled *De recreatione quotidiana religiose transigenda* (CL 16).

Nothing contributes more to bring about disorder in the holiest communities than conversation with seculars and curiosity regarding worldly affairs and talking about them; hence, nothing must be more carefully avoided.

In communities conversation with seculars is sought, as a rule, either because we are not satisfied with the daily conversation we have within the community and are curious about worldly matters or because our hearts are not sufficiently occupied with the things of God and we are not in the habit of speaking about them. Yet, God and his service ought to form the usual topic of conversation of those who have consecrated themselves to God by leaving the world; therefore, it must be a chief concern of those who live in community to learn how to speak of and to speak well of God.

To help the Brothers acquire this ability, we have thought it advisable in our Institute to list a large number of pious topics that can furnish useful subjects of conversation in the recreation they take every day after meals.

To preserve the spirit of the Institute and to conform to what the Rule prescribes for recreation, the Brothers must be careful always to converse on the topics listed below, so that they keep themselves in a horror of the world by making their conversation totally different than that of seculars and by disposing themselves to have no relations with them. In this way they will avoid extinguishing the fire enkindled in their hearts by the Holy Spirit in interior prayer and the other holy actions which they perform during the day by engaging in talk that results in corruption of the soul and only serves to distract the mind, withdraw it from God, and soil the purity of the heart.

For this purpose the topics of conversations during recreation are listed here.

1

What has been read in the refectory. This is the first subject to be spoken about in recreation.

2

What they have read in spiritual books.

3

Death, judgment, heaven, and hell.

4

The hidden and manifest judgments of God.

5

The life of our Lord Jesus Christ and the special devotion we ought to have toward him considered in all the mysteries of his sacred humanity, especially his divine infancy, his Passion and death, and his presence in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar; how we can acquire and preserve this devotion and encourage it among our students.

6

The life of the Most Blessed Virgin and the importance of having a great devotion toward her; how sensitive we must be about everything that relates to her; with what devotion we must say her Divine Office and recite the rosary; how we are to acquire this devotion and encourage it among our students.

7

The lives of the saints, especially of those who are patrons of the Society, such as Saint Joseph and Saint Cassian, or those in whom the spirit of the Institute is most conspicuous; likewise, those who are notable for the spirit of mortification and of zeal for the salvation of their neighbor, such as Saint John the Baptist, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Ignatius Martyr, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Dominic, Saint Vincent Ferrer, Saint Charles Borromeo, Saint Francis de Sales, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Saint Francis Xavier, Saint Philip Neri, and Saint Teresa, and the devotion we ought to have toward them.

8

The spiritual maxims and practices of the saints, especially of those who withdrew from the world; they can inspire aversion for the world, a love of retirement, of interior prayer, and of total renunciation; other maxims and practices in harmony with the spirit of our Institute.

9

The spiritual hazards encountered in the world and the danger for their salvation that seculars encounter.

10

The advantage and the possible assurance of salvation enjoyed by those who belong to the Institute, are bound to it by vows, and observe the Rule.

11

The spirit of the Institute, which is the spirit of faith, and the purpose of the Institute, which is the Christian instruction and education of youth.

12

The grace of a religious vocation; the Rule and the commandments of the Institute, which we are encouraged to observe perfectly.

13

The means that we ought to use in the Institute to advance in the way of perfection.

14

Obedience, which is the first means of attaining perfection in a community; the advantages that the practice of this virtue offers and the requirements for its practice; the great merit and the peace of mind and of conscience that people acquire who obey in all things with true simplicity; the obligation to do so in this Institute.

15

Retirement, silence, mortification of the senses, and the interior spirit, which are necessary for the Brothers to acquire the perfection of their state.

16

Interior prayer, the spirit of faith, the practice of remembering the presence of God, and interior recollection, which are the principal interior supports of the Institute; how to acquire and preserve them.

17

How to make interior prayer well; the method and the acts in use in the Institute; the benefit to be derived from interior prayer.

18

The great benefit to be derived from remembering the holy presence of God; how to make this practice easy and frequent.

19

The obligation under which we in the Society are to perform all our actions through the spirit of faith; the means we must take to perform them always in this spirit.

20

Daily actions; the fervor with which we ought to perform them; how easily we can work out our salvation in our Institute by performing our actions in the spirit of faith and religion, without doing anything more.

21

The great happiness that the Brothers in this Institute have of making a daily self-accusation, of being frequently told their defects, of giving an account of their conscience every week,

and of being able to converse on uplifting topics during recreation; the great benefit and advantages that they can derive from these exercises, which are the four exterior supports of the Institute; how easy it is by means of them to preserve great purity of heart.

22

The edifying and pious traits in the lives of the deceased members of the Institute; the faithful observance of the Rule and other virtues for which these Brothers are distinguished.

23

The virtues in general, especially those appropriate for religious.

24

The faults opposed to these virtues, the vice of impurity excepted.

25

The virtues that are suitable and special to the Brothers in the Institute, particularly those mentioned above in articles 14, 15, and 16; union among the Brothers; the reserve, mildness, and patience that we need; the edification that we ought to give our neighbor.

26

The defects against which we must be particularly on guard, such as disunion, dissipation, levity, violation of silence by sign or word, acting from natural motives, and neglect of school duties or of community exercises.

27

The good that is being done or can be done in the Institute for the salvation of our neighbor; the means that the Brothers can take to realize it.

28

The obligation of the Brothers to fulfill their school duties faithfully, to instruct their students well, to teach them the catechism competently, and to lead them to piety; how to do all this well.

29

The various maxims and practices that the students must be taught to have them enter into the Christian spirit.

30

The virtues that can be practiced in school, such as charity toward students, moderation, silence, and so on; the defects that must be avoided, such as impatience, harshness, familiarity, weakness, and so on.

The Brothers must always be careful to converse on some of these subjects during recreation and to see that the conversation is not purely speculative.



The Spirit of Faith

The following section on the spirit of the Institute is textually the same as chapter two of the early copies of the Rule, except for the introductory paragraph (*Rule and Foundational Documents*, 16–19).

Chapter two of the manuscript rule of 1705 begins abruptly: “The spirit of this Institute is, first, a spirit of faith . . .” Chapter two of the Rule of 1718 begins with a long introductory paragraph, different from the one in this section of *Collection* but reminiscent in tone of the preface to *Collection*:

That which is of the utmost importance and to which the greatest attention ought to be given in a Community is that all who compose it possess the spirit peculiar to it, that the novices apply themselves to acquire it, and that those who are already members make it their first care to preserve and increase it in themselves. For it is this spirit that ought to animate all their actions and be the motive of their whole conduct. Those who do not possess it and those who have lost it ought to be looked upon as dead members, and they ought to look upon themselves as such, because they are deprived of the life and grace of their state, and they ought to be convinced that it will be very difficult for them to preserve the grace of God. (*Rule and Foundational Documents*, 16)



The Spirit of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Which Is the Spirit of Faith

Faith ought to be the light and the guide of all Christians to lead and to direct them in the way of salvation. This is why Saint Paul tells us that the just, that is, true Christians, live by faith, because they are guided by and their actions are performed with views and motives of faith. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that we who belong to an Institute whose aim is to educate the children confided to our care in the Christian spirit and to procure this for them be imbued and so completely filled with the spirit of faith that we will consider the sentiments and the maxims of faith as the rule of our conduct and the spirit of faith as the spirit of our Institute.

The spirit of this Institute is, first, a spirit of faith, which ought to induce those who compose it not to look upon any-

thing but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in view of God, and to attribute everything to God, always entering into these sentiments of Job, “The Lord gave me everything, and the Lord has taken everything away from me; nothing has happened to me except what pleases him,” and into other, similar sentiments so often expressed in Holy Scripture and uttered by the Patriarchs of old.

To enter into this spirit, the Brothers will, first, have a most profound respect for Holy Scripture; in proof of this, they will always carry with them the New Testament and pass no day without reading some of it through a sentiment of faith, respect, and veneration for the divine words contained in it.

Second, they will animate all their actions with sentiments of faith and will always have in view the orders and the will of God, which they will adore in all things and by which they will be careful to guide and govern themselves.

For this purpose they will apply themselves to have great control over their senses and to use them only as needed, not wishing to use them except according to the order and the will of God.

They will make it their study to exercise continual watchfulness over themselves so as not to perform, if possible, a single action from natural impulse, through custom, or from any human motive, but they will act so as to perform them all by the guidance of God, through the movement of his Spirit, and with the intention of pleasing him.

They will pay as much attention as they can to the holy presence of God and take care to renew this from time to time, being well convinced that they ought to think only of him and of what he ordains, that is, of what concerns their duty and employment.

They will banish from their minds all vain ideas and thoughts that could withdraw them from these practices, which are very important for them and without which they can neither acquire nor preserve the spirit of their Institute.

The spirit of this Institute consists, secondly, in ardent zeal for the instruction of children and for bringing them up in the fear of God, inducing them to preserve their innocence if they

have not lost it and inspiring them with a great aversion and a very great horror for sin and for all that could cause them to lose purity.

To enter into this spirit, the Brothers of the Society will strive by prayer, instruction, and their vigilance and good conduct in school to procure the salvation of the children confided to them, bringing them up in piety and in a truly Christian spirit, that is, according to the rules and maxims of the Gospel.



Explanation of the Chapter on the Spirit of Our Institute

What is the spirit of our Institute?

It is the spirit of faith.

What is the spirit of faith?

It is a spirit which is regulated and guided in all things by the maxims and sentiments of faith, taken especially from Holy Scripture.

What effects ought the spirit of faith to produce in those who possess it?

There are three. The first is not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith; the second is not to do anything but in view of God; the third is to attribute all to God.

What is meant by not looking on anything but with the eyes of faith?

It means to see created things as God sees them and as faith requires us to think of them. Thus, when we see a beautiful building, if we wish to consider it only by the eyes of faith, we remember that all its beauty is external, that its purpose is only to please the senses, and that this beauty is only a passing thing of such little stability and duration that there will not remain a stone upon a stone or any idea of it.

In how many ways can we regard created things?

We can regard them in four ways: first, with the eyes of the flesh; second, with the eyes of nature; third, by the light of reason; fourth, by the light of faith.

What is meant by regarding things with the eyes of the flesh?

It is to regard them only according to their external appearance and because of the pleasure felt in their enjoyment. For example, we look upon eating as a very good thing, because it is agreeable to the taste, and we take pleasure in it. But were we to reflect on the nature of this action, we would find it very base, because it brings human beings down to the level of animals.

What is meant by regarding things with the eyes of nature?

It is to regard them according to our natural likes or dislikes. Thus, for instance, we might eat something not for the sensual pleasure it gives but because we feel inclined to eat it, or we might abstain from eating something because we feel a distaste for it.

What is meant by regarding things by the light of reason?

It is to regard them as our reason leads us to perceive them. Thus, we might look upon eating as useful for the preservation of human life. In the same way, we might look upon a table as useful, because it is adapted for writing, for setting a meal, for placing things.

What is meant by regarding things by the light of faith?

It is to regard them according to the teaching of faith. Thus, as Saint Paul says in Philippians 3:19, we regard those given to excessive eating as being similar to idolaters, who make a god of their belly and glory in their shame. Similarly, we regard poverty as a blessing, because our Lord said in the Gospel that the poor are blessed.

What is the second effect that the spirit of faith ought to produce in those who possess it?

It is not to do anything but in view of God.

What is meant by not doing anything but in view of God?

It is to keep our attention fixed on God when doing anything and to make God the principle and the end of everything that we do.

What is meant by keeping our attention fixed on God?

It is to think of the presence of God.

What is meant by making God the principle of all we do?

It is to look upon God as the prime author and the motivating force of our actions and to act only by the guidance of God's Spirit.

What is meant by making God the end of all we do?

We make God the end of all we do when we perform all our actions solely to glorify and to please God.

What is the third effect that the spirit of faith ought to produce in those who possess it?

It is to attribute all to God.

What is meant by attributing all to God?

It is to accept both good and evil as coming from God's hands, saying with Job, "The Lord has given me all; the Lord has taken all from me; blessed be the name of the Lord."

What are the most effective means to acquire the spirit of faith and to conduct ourselves by this spirit?

There are chiefly seven. The first is to have a profound respect for Holy Scripture. The second is to inspire all our actions with sentiments of faith. The third is to have in view in all things solely the orders and the will of God. The fourth is to have great control over our senses. The fifth is to exercise continual vigilance over ourselves, so as not to perform a single action, if possible, from natural impulse, through custom, or from a human motive. The sixth is to pay as much attention as possible to the holy presence of God and to renew our attention from time to time. The seventh is to banish from our mind all vain thoughts and ideas that might withdraw us from these practices.

What is the first means to acquire the spirit of faith and to conduct ourselves by this spirit?

It is to have a profound respect for Holy Scripture.

What are the marks of a profound respect for Holy Scripture?

They are the following: when we always carry a copy of Holy Scripture, when we read a passage of it every day through

a sentiment of faith, and when we perform both these duties through veneration for the divine Word and a spirit of faithful observance of the Rule.

What is the second means to acquire the spirit of faith and to conduct ourselves by this spirit?

It is to inspire all our actions with sentiments of faith.

How can we inspire all our actions with sentiments of faith?

It is by performing them through some motive of faith, calling to mind, for instance, passages of Holy Scripture that can help to inspire us to do them well. Thus, when eating, we might recall the words of Saint Paul in 1 Cor 10:31, "Whether, therefore, you drink or eat or whatever you do, do everything for God's glory." "The kingdom of God does not consist in drinking or eating but in putting on our Lord Jesus Christ."

What is the third means to acquire the spirit of faith and to conduct ourselves by this spirit?

It is to have in view in all things solely the orders and the will of God.

What must we do to have in view in all things solely the orders and the will of God?

We must do three things: recognize and adore the orders and the will of God in all things, regulate our conduct in all things by the orders and the will of God, and perform all our actions with the view to accomplish the orders and the will of God.

What is meant by recognizing in all things the orders and the will of God?

It is to be deeply convinced that nothing happens unless the will of God permits it.

What is meant by adoring in all things the orders and the will of God?

It is to adore God in all that is and in all the events of this life, especially those that affect us personally, for God wills and permits them through love for us and for our greater good. If, for instance, a man strikes me, I adore God and the orders and

the will of God, who permitted this and even willed that this man would so treat me.

What is meant by regulating our conduct in all things by the orders and the will of God?

It is to make the orders and the will of God the rule of our whole conduct.

By what sign can we know that we are making the will of God the rule of our conduct when we live under a Rule and are dependent on a superior?

It is when we act only in submission to our Rule and in obedience to our superior, with a view of obeying God and doing the divine will.

Can we be certain that in so acting we regulate our conduct in all things by the orders and the will of God?

Yes, because we can have no better assurance of doing the will of God than by fulfilling the duties of our state, and this we certainly do when we observe our Rule.

Can we be certain that in obeying our superior, we are doing the will of God?

Yes, for our Lord Jesus Christ, in speaking of superiors, says, "Those who hear you, hear me." Saint Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews 13:17, says, "Obey your superiors, because they watch over you, for they will have to give an account for your soul."

What is meant by performing all our actions with the view to accomplish the orders and the will of God?

It is to perform all our actions simply because we are convinced that what we do is the will of God, for example, not eating, sleeping, or taking recreation except in submission to the will of God and because we believe it to be God's will. In this way we sanctify all our actions, even the lowest and the most natural, by doing them only to please and to fulfill the divine will. We ought to endeavor to have this general view in all our actions, so that they may be guided by a Rule that is so exact and true that it is not subject to change or alteration.

What is the fourth means to acquire the spirit of faith and to conduct ourselves by this spirit?

It is to have great control over our senses, using them only through necessity, not wishing to use them except according to the orders and the will of God.

What must we do to use our senses only through necessity?

We must use them only when this is necessary to carry out our duties.

What must we do to use our senses only according to the orders and the will of God?

We must use our senses only when we believe that it is the will of God. If, for example, we did not believe that it was the will of God that we look at a certain object, we would refrain from looking at it. For this reason we must desire to see things only when necessary, for God has given us our senses to be used only when required, not for any pleasure in their use. But this is what happens when we use our senses for some pleasure, separating ourselves from God's will.

What is the fifth means to acquire the spirit of faith and to conduct ourselves by this spirit?

It is to exercise continual vigilance, so as not to perform, if possible, a single action from natural impulse, through custom, or from a human motive.

What is meant by performing an action from natural impulse?

It is to act like an animal, according to natural inclinations, as, for example, when I feel inclined to eat or sleep, I do so with no other motive than that I feel this natural impulse.

What is meant by performing an action through custom?

It is to do something without any good motive, merely because we are used to doing it, as, for example, I rise at a certain hour, say my prayers, assist at Holy Mass, take holy water, or do any other good action without thinking and merely because I am accustomed to do so.

What is meant by performing an action from a human motive?

It means to act from some motive arising from human hope or fear. For example, I do a good action because someone is watching, because I fear to give displeasure otherwise, or because I expect some reward.

What means can we use so as not to act from natural impulse, through custom, or from a human motive?

It is to enter into ourselves from time to time to examine the motive for which we perform our actions and to adopt a good one.

What is the sixth means to acquire the spirit of faith and to conduct ourselves by this spirit?

It is to pay as much attention as possible to the holy presence of God and to renew our attention from time to time.

How does attention to the holy presence of God serve to regulate our actions by the spirit of faith?

First, it makes us perform them through respect for God; second, it causes us to act modestly and with recollection on account of the holy presence; third, it preserves us from sin as being displeasing and offensive in God's sight.

What is the seventh means to acquire the spirit of faith and to conduct ourselves by this spirit?

It is to banish from our mind all vain thoughts and ideas that might withdraw us from the foregoing practices, for they are so important that without them we can neither acquire nor preserve the spirit of the Institute, which is the spirit of faith. Because this spirit is the Christian spirit and the spirit of our state, we must do everything in our power to remove every obstacle that might hinder our possessing this spirit as perfectly as God requires of us.



Passages of Holy Scripture That Can Help the Brothers Perform Their Actions Through the Spirit of Faith

To rise in the morning in the spirit of faith, we must think as Saint Paul tells us to think.

Awake, you who sleep, and Christ will enlighten you [Eph 5:14], or as it is so well said in Acts, Arise quickly (Acts 12:7).

When Putting on the Robe

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ [Rom 13:14]. Clothe yourself as one holy and beloved of God [Col 3:12].

When Washing

Lay apart all defilement and sin (Jas 1:[21]).

My God, create in me a pure heart, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me (Ps 50 [51:12–13]).

When Saying Vocal Prayers

This people honors me with their lips, and their heart is estranged from me [Mt 15:8].

At all times I will bless the Lord; his praise shall be always in my mouth (Ps 33 [34:2]).

When Making Interior Prayer

God is a Spirit; accordingly, those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (Jn 4:24).

When you wish to pray, go into your room, and pray to your heavenly Father in secret [Mt 6:6].

When Entering a Church or an Oratory

My house is a house of prayer (Lk 19:46).

This place is awesome; it is the house of God and the door of heaven (Gn [28:17]).

When at Lunch or Dinner

The kingdom of God does not consist in drinking or eating but in the justice and joy that the Holy Spirit brings us [Rom 14:17].

Whether you drink or whether you eat, do all for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31).

For the Particular Examination

Before you, O Lord, I will review all my years in the bitterness of my heart [Is 34:15].

What will I do when the Lord comes and examines my life? [Jb 31:14]

For the Accusation of Faults

Those who hide their faults will never succeed, but those who confess them will obtain mercy [Prv 28:13].

There is nothing concealed that will not be uncovered [Lk 8:17].

After the Accusation of Faults

Blessed are they whose faults have been forgiven, says David (Ps 31 [32]:1).

Behold, you have been healed; go, and do not sin in the future [Jn 5:14].

When Eating

A person does not live by bread alone but by all that proceeds from the mouth of God [Mt 4:4].

When at Table

Do not let yourself be carried away by the intemperance of your mouth; some have died because of gluttony [Sir 37:28–30].

For Recreation

On the day of judgment, all will be brought to account for every idle word they have spoken [Mt 12:36].

If you speak, say only what leads to edification [Eph 4:29].

The fool lifts his voice in laughter, but the wise will scarce laugh quietly [Sir 21:20].

Woe upon you who laugh, because you will weep and mourn [Lk 6:25].

When Walking Outside the House

Do not look here and there when walking along the streets of the town [Sir 9:7].

Death has entered by our windows, and my eyes have carried off my soul [Jer 9:20].

When Insulted

All those who want to live a pious life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted [2 Tm 3:12].

Let them talk; they are blind [Mt 15:14].

You will find only tribulation in the world, but have confidence; I have overcome the world [Jn 16:33].

When Suffering

The short and light afflictions that we suffer will produce in us an eternal weight of incomparable glory [2 Cor 4:17].

Blessed are they who suffer, because after they have been tried, they will receive the crown of life, which God has prepared for those who love him [Jas 1:12].

When Working in School

Be on guard; take care to teach others; persevere in the exercises. By these means you will save yourself and save others [1 Tm 4:16].

Teach all nations, and have them keep all I have commanded you, says Jesus Christ [Mt 28:19–20].

When Correcting Someone

He who loves his son applies himself to correcting him [Sir 30:1].

Beat him with the rod, and you will save his soul from the fire [Prv 23:14].

You will be judged in the same manner that you have judged others [Mt 7:2].

When Writing or Teaching Writing

Lord, you write bitter things against me (Job 13:[26]).

Write this: how blessed are the dead who die in the Lord [Rv 14:13].

When Teaching Catechism

Blessed are they who apply themselves to wisdom [Sir 14:20].

Love to be instructed, and you will acquire wisdom that will stay until your old years [Sir 6:18].

Lord, your ordinances are admirable; this is why my soul applies itself to learn them [Ps 119:129].

The ignorant die in the poverty of their heart [Prv 10:21].

Wisdom is more valuable than any rich treasure, and all you can desire cannot be compared with it [Prv 8:11].

For Spiritual Reading

Blessed are they who hear the words of God and do what they teach [Lk 11:28].

Whoever loves me keeps my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him [Jn 14:23].

Do you understand what you are reading [Acts 8:30]?

At the Advertisement of Defects

One who is very prudent and well instructed will not murmur when admonished and chastised [Prv 15:31–32].

They who with a closed mind abuse the one who reprimands them will have a fatal fall from which they will never escape [Prv 29:1].

When Reproved

Anyone who welcomes reprimands will become wiser [Prv 12:1].

Accept with a good heart what happens to you. Be at peace in times of humiliation, says the Wise Man [Sir 2:4–5].

When Inclined To Answer Back

I was slain; I did not open my mouth, even to utter a word or a sound, because it was you who did this [Ps 39:10].

He was like a lamb that lets itself be shorn without crying out [Is 53:7].

When Speaking to the Superior

Obey, and be submissive to your shepherds, who watch as having to account for your soul, so that they can act with joy and not with lamentation, for that is not to your advantage [Heb 13:17].

Those who direct the Brothers ought to be held in honor among them [Sir 10:20].

Do nothing, my child, without counsel, and you will never have to repent, says the Wise Man [Sir 32:19].

When the Superior Speaks to Us

I listen to what the Lord my God says to me through the mouth of my superior [Ps 85:9].

Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening [1 Sm 3:9–10].

For Less Common Actions

For Confession

Do not be ashamed to confess your faults, says the Wise Man [Sir 4:26].

Confess your sins to one another, so that you may be saved, says Saint James [Jas 5:16].

When Receiving Absolution

See, you have been cured; go, and do not sin any more, for fear that something worse would befall you [Jn 5:14].

Blessed is the one to whom the Lord does not impute sin, says David [Ps 32:2].

When Receiving a Penance

I have sinned; I have greatly offended God; I have not been punished as I deserved, says Job [Jb 33:27].

In truth, if you do not do penance, you will all perish [Lk 13:5].

For Holy Communion

As a deer longs for the source of water, so does my soul long for you, O God [Ps 42:1].

The one who eats me will live by me [Jn 6:57].

Taste and see how sweet the Lord is [Ps 34:9].

For the Act of Thanksgiving

What return shall I make to the Lord for all the good he has done for me [Ps 116:12]?

My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior [Lk 1:46–47].

Now, Lord, let your servant die in peace [Lk 2:29].

Give thanks to God in all circumstances; preserve what is good [1 Thes 5:18, 21].

When Inclined to Impatience

By patience you will possess your souls [Lk 21:19].

Patience is necessary for you, so that having accomplished God's will, you will enjoy the effect of his promises [Heb 10:36].



Means That the Brothers Can Use To Become Interior

First Means

Renunciation

First Renunciation

1. Of the least sin
2. Of the least thing displeasing to God

Second Renunciation

1. Of sensual pleasures
2. Of the solicitations of nature

Third Renunciation

1. Of human conversation
2. Of useless talk

Fourth Renunciation

1. Of intellectual gratification
2. Of consolation of the senses in spiritual exercises

Fifth Renunciation

1. Of self-will
2. Of personal judgment

Second Means

Faithfulness

1. To the Rule
2. To the least community practices
3. To religious obedience
4. To inspirations and interior enlightenment
5. To the directions of our Superior or Director

Third Means

Application

1. To the presence of God
2. To actions performed through views of faith
3. To interior prayer during the time prescribed during the day

4. To frequent short prayers
5. To frequent acts of recollection, so as to adopt views of faith

Ways to Foster This Application

1. Modesty
2. Reserve
3. Exterior moderation
4. Interior recollection
5. Exterior retreat
6. Interior retreat



Reflections That the Brothers Can Make on the Means To Become Interior

It is necessary to avoid venial sins, however trivial they may appear,

1. because they can deprive the soul of many graces;
2. because they deprive the soul of some of the interior light to see what it must do to progress toward perfection;
3. because they impair the vigor of the soul and deprive it of the interior strength that enables it to do good with ease, especially the good opposed to the sins committed.

It must never happen that we willingly do the least thing displeasing to God.

1. If by one imperfection you would be deprived even of a single grace of God, would this not be a great loss?
2. A soul that is given to God must live and be inspired by the Spirit of the Creator; even one imperfection prevents the infusion of God's Spirit, just as a pebble obstructs the free flow of water through a pipe.
3. It takes only a slight matter to grieve God residing in a soul who wishes to belong to him. "You have," says the spouse in the Canticles, "wounded my heart with one of

your hairs,” as though saying that a single disarranged hair sufficed to offend the sight and to lessen the love of the spouse.

4. The desire of our Lord by his sufferings and death was not only to banish sin but also to separate from all imperfection the souls who seek to be with him. “Be perfect,” he says, “as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
5. Jesus Christ wished, says Saint Paul, to bring harmony and glory to his Church and, thus, to the faithful soul by making it free of blemishes and wrinkles. By wrinkles we are to understand imperfections.

We must deny ourselves the pleasures of the senses,

1. because our senses are given us to be used only when necessary and not merely for our pleasure;
2. because love of the pleasures of the senses makes us similar to beasts;
3. because the human animal, that is, one who loves the pleasure of the senses, cannot understand and taste well the things of God.

We must deprive ourselves of what nature seeks,

1. because nature destroys grace, and so the slightest search for the natural weakens grace;
2. because Saint Paul says, “You can live by the Spirit only to the extent that in faith you mortify the inclination of nature”;
3. because as disciples of Jesus Christ, we ought to follow in his footsteps, for he denied himself the urges of nature and the comforts of life to give us an example.

We must deny ourselves human conversation,

1. because according to the author of the *Imitation*, when you go out, you return less a human;
2. because such conversation empties a soul of the Spirit of God and of every good sentiment;
3. because the conversation of Christians, according to Saint Paul, and even more of religious, ought to be in

heaven. Saint Peter says that if anyone speaks, the words ought to be concerned with God.

We must dispense with useless words,

1. because as our Lord says in the Gospel, we will give an account on the day of judgment for all the useless words we have spoken;
2. because the time spent in useless talk is a waste of time, which, however, must be dear to us, because it is given to us to gain heaven;
3. because Christians and, even more, religious desecrate the heart and the mouth when speaking useless words; if we are to believe Saint Bernard, such words are blasphemies in the mouth of a religious.

We must deny ourselves intellectual gratification,

1. because intellectual gratification nourishes self-love of the sort that prevents the entry of the Spirit of God, but those who do not live by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to Saint Paul, cannot belong to him;
2. because intellectual gratification prevents the unction and the movement of the Spirit of God in a soul; yet, because we ought to live by the Spirit of God, according to Saint Paul, we must allow ourselves to walk in and to be guided by the same Spirit;
3. because intellectual gratification dries up the interior spirit and deprives the soul of the unction of the Spirit of God dwelling in it.

We must love the deprivation of any consolations of the senses in our spiritual exercises,

1. because God gives us consolations of the senses only as an aid in our weakness; God is free to withdraw them and can sustain us in other ways;
2. because consolations of the senses do not lead us with certainty to God; faith alone does this with no danger of deceiving us;
3. because when we become attached to consolations of the senses, we seek our own satisfaction, not God.

We must renounce self-will,

1. because Jesus Christ renounced his own will from the moment of his conception, although in him it was most holy and incapable of disorder. He could truly say, "I have not come to do my own will";
2. because self-will is the cause of all our sins and, consequently, withdraws our heart from its natural inclination, which is toward God;
3. because self-will alone draws down on us God's anger and vengeance, which made Saint Bernard say, "Take away self-will, and there will be no hell, for this alone puts obstacles in us to do God's work."

We must renounce our own judgment,

1. because our judgment has been so perverted by original sin that it no longer judges most things rightly; hence, we must strive to direct it by views of faith in those matters that lead us to God;
2. because our judgment can evaluate things only in a human way and furnishes us merely with human sentiments; hence, with regard to things that refer to God, we must rely on God's direction and inspiration;
3. because the Wisdom of God, which is the interior spirit, is hidden in us, according to Saint Paul, and unknown to our judgment; consequently, we are unable of ourselves to procure it.

We must maintain fidelity to the Rule,

1. because it is the first means of sanctification in a community;
2. because the measure of grace given to us in a community is proportionate to the fidelity with which we observe the Rule;
3. because we advance in the path of perfection more rapidly by fidelity to observance of the Rule than by any other means.

We must maintain fidelity to community practices,

1. because neglect of community practices denotes little esteem for them, whereas they are important before God;
2. because according to Holy Scripture, they who neglect small things fall little by little; the Gospel, likewise, tells us that the reward of heaven will be granted to fidelity in doing things that appear small in themselves, such as feeding the poor. “Because you were faithful over a few things, I will place you over great things,” says our Lord, speaking as the father of a family.

We must maintain fidelity to religious obedience,

1. because it is the virtue proper to the state of those who live in community;
2. because we draw down more graces by obedience than by any other virtue;
3. because progress in perfection is proportionate to the degree of self-forgetfulness, and perfect obedience leads to total self-forgetfulness.

We must maintain fidelity to inspirations and interior life,

1. because they are usually the light that God sheds upon the soul to make known what is good for its particular well-being;
2. because when we are not faithful to inspirations, God ceases to give them to us, seeing that they are useless;
3. because not being faithful to inspirations is what Saint Paul calls extinguishing the Spirit in us; we can say that it is equivalent to resisting and offering great offense to the Holy Spirit.

We must practice application to the holy presence of God,

1. because it is the way to drive all evil and useless thoughts from the mind or to prevent them from making any impression;
2. because it is the soul and the support of the interior life;
3. because spiritual exercises lose their vigor if they are not inspired by God’s presence.

We must practice application to do everything with views of faith,

1. because it causes actions otherwise of little worth to become Christian;
2. because it is the chief means of sanctifying our actions;
3. because in this way we share the holy dispositions of our Lord when he performed his actions.

We must practice application to interior prayer,

1. because it is the chief exercise of the interior life and also the chief means to become interior;
2. because, according to Saint John Chrysostom, interior prayer is the activity of angels, and those who apply themselves to it lead a life like theirs;
3. because it is a conversation with God and has the effect of making the soul occupy itself entirely with what pertains to God's service.

We must apply ourselves to frequent, short prayers and to interior recollection,

1. because these prayers withdraw from exterior things the soul that is not yet entirely given to God and lead it to occupy itself with spiritual and interior matters;
2. because such prayers drive away the useless thoughts that result from communication with the world, which, however rare it happens, provides an opening for the world to enter the soul;
3. because they enkindle and maintain in our heart the fire of the love of God, which from time to time diminishes because of the weakness of our mind and the laxity of our heart.

We must practice modesty, reserve, and exterior moderation,

1. because these virtues free our intellect and imagination from what is earthly, merely human, and belonging to the senses;

2. because these three practices prevent us from falling into many sins;
3. because these practices remove external things that might be an obstacle to the interior life.

We must practice recollection,

1. because it recalls the soul to itself;
2. because it helps to establish the soul in peace;
3. because it disposes and assists us to apply ourselves to the presence of God and to interior prayer.

We must practice exterior retreat,

1. because it removes all ideas of the world and things of the world;
2. because it takes away our relish of creatures, detaches us from them, and in this way enables us to attach ourselves only to God;
3. because when we love it, we acquire an aversion for the world and created things, so that we can say with Saint Paul, "The world is crucified to me, and I am crucified to the world."

We must practice interior retreat,

1. because exterior retreat is of little use if it is not joined to interior retreat;
2. because when interior powers are withdrawn from outward things, the soul acquires great facility in being occupied with God;
3. because while it lasts, interior retreat creates in us a sort of compulsion to be occupied with God and the things of God.



Means That the Brothers of the Christian Schools Can Use To Perform Their Actions Well

The whole of the following section on the means that the Brothers of the Christian Schools can use to perform their actions well, with the exception of the part on Holy Mass, is closely modeled on Canon Nicolas Roland's *Petit traité des vertus les plus nécessaires aux Sœurs du Saint-Enfant-Jésus*.

De La Salle, before founding his own Institute, had been associated for some six years with Canon Roland in the work of organizing a community of Sisters in Reims for the care of orphans and the education of poor girls. After Roland's premature death at the age of thirty-five, De La Salle obtained legal recognition for this community in the form of letters patent from the King. Because Roland had left no Rule for the Sisters, it was probably De La Salle who collected Roland's writings and instructions and put them together in the form of a document entitled *Advice of the Late Monsieur Roland for the Conduct of Religious People*. The first part, bearing the name, Barthélemi, Prêtre, is a biography of Roland; the unsigned second part has various items, including a treatise he had left. This *Petit traité* is reproduced in this section of *Collection*. The articles on humility and poverty in a later section, "Principal Virtues That the Brothers Must Strive to Practice," are taken from the same source. The original manuscript of *Advice* was destroyed during the First World War, but one of several accurate copies is preserved in the archives of the Generalate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.



Preface

If we wish to perform our actions with the perfection that God requires of us, we must be particularly careful not to perform any of them thoughtlessly or hastily. Before undertaking what we propose to do, it is proper to take some time to consider attentively four things:

1. whether what we intend to say or to do is contrary to the commandments of God or might offend God in any way;

2. whether it would withdraw us from our duty and the obligations of our state, which we ought to perform perfectly and in preference to all the other good works we might be able to do;
3. whether it is contrary to the Rule of the Community or to the resolutions we have taken to regulate our conduct;
4. whether it is opposed to some greater good regarding either ourselves or our neighbor.

After these short reflections, we consider interiorly our Lord Jesus Christ performing this action, and then we begin it, continue it, and end it in union with him and with the intent to imitate him as perfectly as possible.



Morning Rising

As soon as you are awake, think of God, and from the first sound of the bell, imagine that Jesus Christ is addressing you in these words, “Awake, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Jesus Christ will enlighten you” [Eph 5:14], or as in the Song of Songs, “Rise up, and hasten, my spouse, my beloved, my dove” [Sg 2:10].

Comply with these sentiments, and answer from the bottom of your heart, “Now I will arise and search for him whom I love with all my heart” [Sg 3:2].

Rise promptly and fervently at the exact moment prescribed by the Rule. Do not hesitate a single instant. Dress quickly, thinking of God. While dressing, beg to be clothed with the Holy Spirit, saying from the bottom of your heart, “Clothe me with the new self, which is created according to God and in holiness” [Eph 4:24].

When completely dressed, remain before God like a newborn, acknowledging your Creator and sovereign Lord, who gives you life and preserves it only so that you can use it in his holy service.

Observe silence faithfully until the time for interior prayer, and long for the moment when it will begin. Resolve to be exact and punctual in the performance of all the community exercises, for fidelity in performing these actions well throughout the day often depends on this first action and resolution.



Interior Prayer

Hold in high esteem the holy exercise of interior prayer, because it is the foundation and the support of all virtue and the source of the light and the graces we need to sanctify ourselves and to discharge the duties of our employment.

Be very faithful to proceed at the first sound of the bell to the place where you are to make interior prayer; do not think that you are exempt from fault if you are late even for only a single moment.

In a humble attitude toward yourself and in a spirit of faithful observance of the Rule, always follow the method and ordinary manner of interior prayer, unless God favors you with a special attraction, which must be carefully examined and not followed without your Director's advice and order.

Do not seek emotional consolation in interior prayer, but attach yourself to what is of faith, to what tends to detestation and destruction of sin, to detachment from created things, to imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to practice of the virtues he practiced. Strive to imitate him as perfectly as possible.

Take care to use well all the time allotted to interior prayer. Devote more time to affections and resolutions than to reasoning and considerations. Do not make resolutions that are only vague and general, but always make them specific; take suitable means to keep them.

Persevere continually in your interior prayer, and faithfully devote to this exercise all the time prescribed by the Rule. In

times of spiritual dryness and temptation, apply yourself all the more diligently, no matter what trouble and difficulty you might experience. Believe that you are blessed that Almighty God does not destroy you because of your sins, and reflect that God does you a great favor in even allowing you to be in the divine presence.

When you converse with God in interior prayer or whenever you think of God, always bear in mind your lowliness and infinite unworthiness; this will keep you profoundly respectful and humble in his presence.



The Divine Office

When you recite the Divine Office of the Most Blessed Virgin, do so with the greatest attention and every mark of interior and exterior respect. Apply yourself as much as you can to the meaning of the words, to the mysteries alluded to therein, or simply to the presence of God or to some virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin.

Take a few moments for reflection, and recollect yourself before reciting the Office; then enter into the dispositions of our Lord when he prayed in the Garden of Olives, for you are performing the function of public penitent: praying, praising, and thanking God in the name of the whole Church and especially in the name of the community.

Always maintain the most humble, modest, respectful, and edifying posture possible. Before the Office begins, always make the interior and exterior preparation expressed by the words *Aperi, Domine*. . . . Dwell particularly on the words *digne, attente* (attentively) and *devote* (devoutly). End the Office, as you do with interior prayer, by an act of thanksgiving, an examination of faults, and an act of contrition for the faults you have committed.



Holy Mass

Always be very modest and respectful in church. Never speak while you are there, unless absolutely necessary; in that case do so in a low voice and few words.

Keep your eyes cast down or fixed upon some object of devotion; do not take the liberty of looking from side to side. Frequently recall the thought of the holy presence of God and the respect that the angels have before the divine Majesty.

When you assist at Mass, always unite yourself interiorly with the dispositions of Jesus Christ when he offered himself as a victim for the glory of his Father. Always make careful preparation for this action; afterward, offer a prayer of thanks.

To hear holy Mass with benefit, make use of the following method. This must not prevent you, however, from attending Mass in conformity with the intention of the Church, which offers this sacrifice for the four customary ends of the sacrifices of the Old Law: as eucharist to give thanks; as propitiation to obtain pardon for sin; as entreaty to ask for grace, and as holocaust to honor and to offer homage to God.



Method To Hear Holy Mass Well

To hear holy Mass well, we must enter into the spirit and the sentiments of the priest who offers it, sentiments that the Church inspires in him by means of the various actions he is required to perform in the course of this holy and adorable sacrifice.

To begin the holy Mass, the priest remains at the foot of the altar and humbles himself at the sight of the sins with which he is burdened: his own, the sins of those who assist, the sins of all the faithful for whom he prays publicly in the holy Sacrifice and for whom he offers it visibly, and the sins

even of those who do not belong to the Church but for whom he may pray in secret and for whose conversion he may ask, because he represents Jesus Christ in this sacrifice.

1

To enter into the sentiments of the priest at the beginning of holy Mass, we keep ourselves in a profoundly humble attitude, presenting ourselves before God as miserable, burdened with sin, and, therefore, unworthy of assisting at the holy Sacrifice or of offering the homage and duty of adoration that the Church gives to God by and with the priest in union with those who are present.

2

When the priest confesses his sins, we interiorly confess ours to God and are filled with shame at their gravity and number.

We can then unite ourselves with Jesus Christ, who, although innocent, experienced remorse when praying in the Garden of Olives, and with these same exterior and interior sentiments of the priest, who, according to the spirit of the Church, carries and is crushed down by the weight of our sins, which he is to destroy and wipe out by virtue of this sacrifice.

3

We then make an act of contrition in union with the priest, begging pardon of God for all our sins with a contrite and humble heart, so that the offering we make of ourselves in this sacrifice may be acceptable to and worthy of God, as far as our weakness will permit.

4

We remain in these sentiments until the *Gloria in excelsis*. Then, in union with the holy angels and the priest, we adore Jesus Christ coming into the world to destroy sin, and we unite with the whole Church in thanking him for so great a benefit whereby people of goodwill obtain interior peace and an abundance of grace.

5

From the Collect to the Offertory, we make acts of faith regarding the truths contained in the passages of Holy Scripture

that the priest reads to the people and in the *Credo*, which he recites afterward. In union with the Church, we beg of God the light necessary to understand these truths and the graces we need to relish the holy maxims contained therein, particularly in the Epistles of the holy Apostle and in the Gospel, whereby the Church instructs the faithful so that they can put these truths into practice.

6

From the Offertory to the Preface, while the priest is offering to God the bread and wine prepared for the sacrifice, so that they can be entirely purified, we unite with the priest and with Jesus Christ in offering our body, our senses, our inclinations, and our passions as a victim wholly consecrated to God, to be crucified and consumed by the practice of mortification, just as the bread and wine are to be destroyed and consumed in this sacrifice, with only their accidents remaining. We offer to God also all that we might have to suffer during the day, disposing ourselves to suffer all for love of God.

7

From the Preface to the Consecration, we unite with the holy angels in worshipping God and thanking God for deigning to receive this sacrifice. We pray to God for the Church, especially for our brothers, our students, and the needs of the community. We offer our soul with all its powers and motions to be entirely consecrated to God by the attention with which we act, so that during the day we can strive to think of and love God and do no action but with a view of pleasing God. We do all this in union with our Lord Jesus Christ, who, at the word of the priest, is now about to descend upon the altar to honor his eternal Father.

8

From the Consecration to the Our Father, we adore Jesus Christ present on the holy altar, and we unite interiorly with him to enter into all his dispositions as victim, adorer of his Father, and mediator and conciliator between the Creator and humanity, the

dispositions in which he speaks by the prayers recited by the priest, who is Jesus Christ at this time. We beseech Jesus to cleanse us from sin, so that like him we may become a spotless victim, holy and agreeable to the eternal Father.

At the Memento for the Dead, in union with the priest, we remember to beseech God to make this sacrifice effective for the dead as well as for the living.

9

From the Our Father to the Communion, we may recite the Lord's Prayer with the priest. If we intend to receive Holy Communion, we prepare to do so; if not, we try to make a spiritual communion by beseeching Jesus Christ to give us his Holy Spirit, so that we will act only for him and have no life but his, because we are his members. We abandon ourselves entirely to him to participate in his virtues, merits, and graces as the priest now asks in the prayers that he offers for himself and for the whole Church.

10

From the Communion to the Blessing, we thank God for the grace to assist at the holy sacrifice and for all the special favors we may have obtained from God during this time through the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. We also ask God, through Jesus, for the grace to profit as far as possible from this sacrifice. The priest asks for these favors for himself and for the whole Church, especially for those present.

11

During the Blessing we unite ourselves with the priest to receive his holy blessing as though it were given by God. We ask God to bless us and all our actions of the day and not to permit a single one that might not be agreeable to the divine will.

12

During the reading of the Gospel of Saint John, which sets forth the greatness and excellence of the divine Word and his

goodness in coming into this world and making use of so many means to save us, we thank our Lord Jesus Christ for all his mercies and beseech him not to permit us to make his sufferings fruitless by our ingratitude toward him and by our infidelity in not corresponding with so many graces.



Spiritual Reading

Read no book without the permission or the order of your superior. Do not begin reading without placing yourself in the presence of God and asking him by a short prayer for the grace and the light to understand and to practice what you will read.

Never read through curiosity, and do not read hurriedly to get through a book quickly. Stop from time to time to relish your reading. Reflect on and examine yourself about what prevents you from practicing what you read. When it is something you could do, ask yourself why you do not do so. Read your spiritual book as if it were a letter sent by Jesus Christ to make his holy will known to you. Above all, read Holy Scripture with the most profound respect; reverence even the least syllable. Read it with a submissive spirit. Practice what you understand; adore what you do not understand. If you want to know the meaning, ask for an explanation of the passage from those who have the intelligence for it.

Frequently review interiorly and strive to engrave upon your heart what you have most relished in your reading.

At the end of the exercise, do not fail to thank God for the truths you have appreciated and remembered, and beg God to enable you to practice them.



Examination of Conscience

Let the practice of examination of conscience be quite frequent and familiar to you. In addition to the daily examination, make a short one at the end of each action, such as after interior prayer,

Divine Office, holy Mass, meals, and so on, to see whether you have omitted anything necessary for their proper performance and what faults you might have committed.

Besides the examination of your daily faults, make a special one, before your principal meal, on some particular defect or virtue.

Make these examinations according to the five points prescribed by Saint Ignatius:

1. implore the assistance of the Holy Spirit;
2. be thankful for God's benefits;
3. seriously try to identify the faults you have committed;
4. develop sentiments of sorrow and shame for them;
5. make a good resolution, and determine the means to carry it out.

The main elements in this examen are sorrow and remorse, together with the effective resolutions taken. Hence, you usually ought to pause and to apply yourself more to these points than to the others.



Meals

Consider yourself a poor beggar to whom food is given in alms and who must not find fault with it, however poorly it might be prepared. Always be satisfied with what is served, and desire nothing special. Conform in all things to what is done in the community.

Consider also that the food, however insipid, can never compare with that of the reprobate in hell and that you would be numbered among the damned if God had not mercifully spared you.

Never forget to mortify yourself in something, but do so without attracting notice, so that you do not appear singular.

Reflect on the banquet in which you will eternally participate if you voluntarily deprive yourself of something for the

love of God. Often descend in spirit into hell, and observe how the sensual are treated there.

Observe strict silence during meals; be attentive to the reading at table in order to occupy your mind and withdraw your attention from what you are eating. Look upon eating as a necessity that places you on a level with brute creation and that caused the saints to lament having to perform such an animal action while the blessed are praising God in heaven.



Recreation

Take a short recreation period every day after meals, so that you can resume your duties afterward with greater affection and effort. Look upon this relaxation as similar to what our Lord sometimes accorded his Apostles when he said to them, "Take a little rest" [Mk 6:31].

Do not go to recreation too eagerly or with too much effusiveness. Be careful not to become dissipated, and do not lose sight of the presence of God. Never allow yourself to laugh in a boisterous and exaggerated way or to act indecently. Behave in a sedate, refined manner, as becomes Christians and, especially, people withdrawn from the world, whose every action ought to be holy and edifying.

Banish all raillery, trivialities, and worldly topics.

Never use toward your Brothers uncouth, unkind, and rude expressions. Always treat them courteously and respectfully.

Let your recreation be useful and Christian; always speak of good things, and behave as a person whose conversation is in heaven and whose modesty is known to everyone.



Silence

Hold silence in great esteem, and observe it willingly. It is the guardian of all the virtues and an obstacle to all vices, because

it prevents detraction and all language contrary to charity, truth, and modesty. We must use language only for necessary things and not distract ourselves with worldly conversation and useless words.

Often reflect that a person who is not reserved in speech cannot become spiritual and that a sure means of attaining perfection rapidly is to avoid sins of the tongue.

Do not speak without necessity outside of recreation time, and when you are obliged to speak, do so only with permission, with reserve, in a low voice, and in a few words.

Avoid speaking even of necessary things when this can be postponed to another time. This act of mortification is very advantageous and serves well to advance the soul toward perfection, for when there is an abundance of words, God's graces and inspirations are like a liqueur that has gone stale.

Strive always to unite interior silence with the exterior silence of the tongue, forgetting created things in order to think only of God and of the holy presence of God, with whom you must always endeavor to converse interiorly.



Interior Renewal

The practice of interior renewal is all the more necessary because our nature is of itself inclined to laxity and because we easily forget the best resolutions that we made on entering God's service. Hence, apart from the annual retreat, set aside an hour every week, as mentioned in the Rule, on the eve of the day you have to give an account of your conscience. Spend it entirely in interior prayer and spiritual reading, going over the Rule, the Directory, and your resolutions, examining whether you have followed God's will in all things and in the manner you proposed. If need be, note all the faults you recall having committed during the week, so that you can give a faithful account of them to your Brother Director.

Act in such a way that your principal virtues are firmness of purpose and fidelity in doing well, especially with regard to your Rule and the spiritual exercises. Take care never to be remiss on these points. Often pray for the firmness and the fidelity that you need in order to obtain the grace of perseverance. You will thus avoid the misfortune of those of whom Holy Scripture speaks, “Cursed be the one who does the Lord’s work negligently” [Jer 48:10].



Principal Virtues That the Brothers Must Strive To Practice

In this treatment of virtues, the articles on humility and poverty are taken from Canon Roland's *Petite Traité*, alluded to in the prefatory note on page 53.

The article on modesty stresses the conventions of deportment, decorum, and propriety more than the humility and restraint that the English term modesty often connotes.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, considerable attention was paid to deportment, civility, good manners, and correct etiquette. There were numerous works of *Civilité*, of which the most noteworthy are those by Erasmus and by Mathurin Cordier, based on a long tradition of Christian behavior traceable through the writings of the Fathers of the Church from Saint Ambrose on. De La Salle composed a school manual, *Règles de la Bienséance et de la Civilité Chrétienne*, published in 1702 (*The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*, 1990); it is not unusual that he would include a section on the subject in *Collection of Various Short Treatises* for the use of the Brothers.

De La Salle composed the article on modesty based on *Regulae modestiae* in the Constitutions drawn up by Saint Ignatius for the Society of Jesus. Although De La Salle uses all the items of *Regulae*, he expresses them in somewhat different words; overall, he follows a more logical order for his presentation. He adds only one extra item, which prescribes that the Brothers keep their feet together when at rest.

This entire section on modesty, with only slight variations, appears in the Rule of 1718 (*Rule and Foundational Documents*, 81–82).



Faith

Always remember these words, “The just live by faith” [Rom 1:17]. Let your first care be to act by the spirit of faith and not by caprice, inclination, or whim. Do not let yourself be governed by human customs, by those of the world, or by mere

reason but solely by faith and by the words of Jesus Christ, making them the rule of your conduct. Hold fast in all things to what is of faith; shun novelties. Follow the tradition of the Church; accept only what she accepts; condemn what she condemns, and approve what she approves, whether by her councils or by the sovereign Pontiff. Give her prompt and perfect obedience in all matters.

Let your faith be active, be enlivened by charity, and detach you from all things. In other words, take great care to be always ready to lose all rather than God, to abandon all rather than the divine will, to sacrifice everything, honor, health, and life itself, for God's glory and interests, imitating Jesus Christ according to these words: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him renounce himself, take up the cross, and follow me" [Mk 16:24].

The first result of faith is to lead us effectively to knowledge, love, and imitation of Christ and to union with him. Faith leads to knowledge of Christ, for eternal life is knowing him [Jn 17:3]. Faith leads to love of Christ, for anyone who does not love him is a reprobate [1 Cor 16:22]. Faith leads to imitation of Christ, for the predestined ought to conform to him [Rom 8:29], and to union with him, for we are to Jesus Christ like branches to a vine, dead when separated from him [Jn 15:5–6].



Obedience

No other virtue is so necessary for you as obedience, for obedience is the essential virtue of your state; it alone can sustain you therein. Even were you to have all the other virtues without this one, they would have only the semblance of virtue, for in members of a religious community, obedience gives them their proper form.

Often adore the simple and exact obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ. He obeyed with such simplicity that he never answered back, interiorly contradicted, reasoned with, or merely

questioned any command. “Holocausts,” he said, “do not suffice, my Father, to satisfy your justice. Then I said, Here I am coming, O my God, to do your will” [Heb 10:6–7].

Take the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ as the model of your obedience, and strive to conform to it, recalling the words of Saint Paul, He was obedient even to death, the death on the cross [Phil 2:8]. With this in view, submit your will and judgment in all things, no matter how painful or difficult you find it to obey, bearing in mind again the words of Saint Paul, You have not resisted up to shedding your blood [Heb 12:4].

Faith must always accompany your obedience as its principle and sole aim; otherwise, it would not be the Christian and religious virtue that it must be for you in your state.

You must obey God alone in the person of your superior, because obedience is due to God alone; God alone deserves the submission of creatures. In the practice of this virtue, no other view than what concerns God ought to influence or induce you to obey.



Faithful Observance of the Rule

Faithful observance of the Rule establishes and maintains good order, peace, and union in a community, because it is the source and the unifying principle of the motivation and behavior of its members. The more exactly the Rule is observed, the more fully will the Spirit of God and grace abound; the greater also will be the interior consolations enjoyed by the religious, and the happier they will be in their state and the more blessed by God.

Faithful observance consists in observing the Rule and the practices of community in the manner, order, and time prescribed.

Maintain faithful observance in all community customs, believing that such is the will of God and that it is the best means

to do what Saint Peter says, which is to make your calling and election for heaven as firm and assured as you can in this world [2 Pet 1:10].

Take as the model of your faithful observance what our Lord manifested in everything that his Father prescribed. Such was his exactitude that despite the urgent solicitations of the Most Blessed Virgin and the great respect he had for her, he would not perform his first miracle until the time fixed by his Father, simply saying to the Most Blessed Virgin, “My hour has not yet come” [Jn 2:4].

Even in lesser practices that appear of trivial consequence, be most exact through a simple view of faith alone, because you perceive in them God’s holy will, which you must obey in the least as well as in the greatest matters.

To acquire faithful observance of the Rule perfectly, never judge community practices by external appearances, but look on them solely in their relation to the will of God, which is the same in them all, whatever they may be.



Mortification of the Mind

If you allow your mind too much liberty and distraction, you will find it impossible to apply yourself as you must to interior prayer and to the other exercises of piety. You will become so attentive to what is exterior that you will be unable to maintain the interior recollection that is so necessary to control your passions and to prevent passion from escaping on the various occasions that occur in the course of your work.

Hence, always keep your mind under control; for this purpose strive as far as possible to dwell on some good thought that will occupy it, so that nothing will distract you.

Act always to control your mind, so that you will receive whatever light the Spirit of God may favor you with; act according to this light, with wisdom in all things.

Be careful never to apply your mind to anything through mere curiosity or to aim solely at intellectual gratification; apply it only to what relates to your profession.

Often remind yourself that God's primary purpose in giving you intelligence is to enable you to think frequently of your Creator. Hence, one of your principal concerns must be to disengage your mind as far as possible from all creatures, for it would be an insult to God to think of them without necessity and apart from the divine will.

By these means you will acquire the mortification of the mind that is so necessary for people like you, who ought to belong entirely to God, having been chosen by a special grace for a holy state like yours, one in which everything refers to God and leads you to give yourself unreservedly to your Creator.



Mortification of the Senses

The senses are the door through which sin usually enters the soul, which is why the saints were most careful to curb them in order to fall less easily into sin.

Watch so carefully over your senses that you will refrain from using them in whatever has the least appearance of sinfulness, rejecting everything that has a look of evil about it, as Saint Paul advises [1 Thes 5:22].

Furthermore, it is important that you not allow your senses to dwell indiscriminately on every object that presents itself and that you accustom yourself not to use them without due reflection; otherwise, you will contract the habit of indulging your sensuality, which you will find very difficult to correct.

You must of necessity use your senses, but because they can easily be misused and because such misuse leads to great disorders, it is most necessary to mortify them. What ought to induce you to mortify your senses is the fact that the more you do so, the more you will enjoy interior peace and know the presence of God.

You can be encouraged to bear willingly the trouble you experience in mortifying your senses by the thought that people have been severely punished for abandoning themselves to gratification of the senses in apparently trivial cases. Such was the punishment of Lot's wife for looking behind her at the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as they were consumed by fire.

Offer God from time to time some act of mortification of one or other of the senses. By making you imperceptibly die to yourself, this will be an almost continual sacrifice by which you fulfill your duty to God, one that rises like an agreeable and sweetly fragrant incense in the divine presence.



Penance

Adore our Lord Jesus Christ in his state as a penitent. Make your principal care to be clothed by him with a penitential spirit. Often ask him to give you the heart and the dispositions of a true penitent; enter into the strength and the virtue of these practices.

In the first place, like Jesus Christ, who was made a man, a sinner [2 Cor 5:21], and a penitent for us, we penitents must always have our sins before us. This must be the foundation of all the duties we are obliged to offer to God because of our sins. "My sin," says David, "is always before me" [Ps 51:5].

Secondly, as a sinner, continually express the perpetual remorse that you experience because of your sin, on your countenance and before God, like our Lord, who bore in the sight of his heavenly Father the disgrace of our iniquities. "His face," says the Prophet, "has been covered with shame." Also feel ashamed before the whole world at finding yourself among the servants of God who are charged with these crimes and are laden with the horrible and shameful burden of your sins. For this reason seek solitude as much as possible, and always remain there in spirit. Finally, be ashamed of your inability to bear or to endure this shame and pain, just as the Son of God said, "I have become a burden to myself" [Is 53:2ff].

Try to maintain continually in your heart sentiments of remorse, sorrow, and detestation for your crimes, in union with our Lord, who lived a life of perpetual sacrifice with a heart truly contrite for the sins of the world. In view of so many crimes, often submit yourself interiorly to the infinite, eternal, and all-powerful justice of God, so as to suffer the effects of divine retribution and all the punishment to be inflicted on you for your sins. Occasionally make the following Profession of a Penitent. Every day take as a penitential practice the acceptance of what you find most painful in your state and in your work.



Profession of a Penitent

O my God, in honor of our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, and in union with him, a victim before you for my sins and those of the whole world, I declare that I will do penance every day of my life and look upon myself always and in all circumstances as a poor, miserable sinner and a most unworthy penitent.

To fulfill this pledge, first, I resolve always to carry with me an image of Jesus Christ, the sovereign victim for sin, to contemplate and to embrace it frequently, so that by his benign, interior glances, he may remind me of my obligation to do penance.

Second, I offer my most humble amends to the justice and the holiness of God, whom I have offended by my sins.

Third, I wish to enter this day into all the interior dispositions of our Lord Jesus Christ, the penitent, and to do penance with him as one of his members and one of his children.

Fourth, I offer all my actions to you, O my God, and beseech you to accept them in satisfaction for my sins.

Fifth, I propose, with the assistance of your holy grace, to perform such and such an action today in a penitential spirit, to bear such and such a thing, and to mortify myself on such occasions, so that God, who is just, will not lose any of his rights over his creatures or exact total vengeance and rigorous satisfaction of me in the next world.

Inspire me with the holy spirit of penance, O my God. Renew within me what I received in Baptism, and grant that I may give expression to these sentiments and dispositions by my entire conduct. This is what I promise you and the grace I beseech you to grant me through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



Humility

Look upon humility as the foundation of all the other moral virtues without which there can be no true piety, for piety without humility is usually mere hypocrisy or an illusion.

To acquire this virtue, we must work vigorously to understand what we have been in the past in body and the soul, what we are now, what we will be in the future, and the nothingness from which we have sprung, the sins we have committed, the anger of God that we have provoked, and the eternal hell that we have deserved.

Often call to mind and convince yourself that you are the weakest and most imperfect of all people, that nothing but pride can make you think differently, and that any wicked person you might hear of is far superior to you.

Have a low opinion of yourself, and do not believe that you are good for anything, considering that God uses you only as a vile instrument fit only to draw down displeasure. Never say the least thing that might raise you in the good opinion of the world.

Shun human praise and approval. When you hear anything said to your advantage, remember that the honor is due only to God and that you deserve only disgrace. Remain silent; humble yourself before God, for you are only nothingness and sin.

At the same time, humbly endure contempt and rebuffs as being just. Always select what is least when a choice is allowed. Do not be eager to speak during recreation time or in conversation. When you speak, do so in a simple and unaffected manner, without trying to improve what others say or interrupting

them; speak in a low voice. When reproved or warned of your faults, do not attempt to justify yourself unless your superior orders you to tell the truth.

Remember without ceasing what you are capable of when left to yourself and what little, in fact, you have done when God has so left you. Look upon yourself as being able only to lose yourself; fear even the actions that you think are your best.



Modesty

Generally speaking, show great reserve and humility, together with the wisdom befitting your profession, in all your actions, but be particularly careful about the following items.

Always hold your head erect, inclined slightly forward, so that it does not rest on your shoulders. Do not turn it around or from side to side. If you need to turn, turn the whole body sedately and with gravity.

Show cheerfulness on your countenance rather than sadness or any other ill-regulated passion.

Keep your eyes usually cast down. Do not raise them unduly or turn them from side to side.

Avoid wrinkling your forehead or, especially, your nose, so that people will see in your exterior composure a sign of the interior.

When you must speak, particularly to people in authority and especially to women, avoid looking them steadily in the face; be very reserved in their regard.

Do not keep your lips tightly closed or too open.

When speaking, be mindful of modesty and of the edification that you must give to your neighbor, both by your words and by your manner of speaking. For this reason take care not to speak too much, too loud, or too fast; avoid making signs or gestures with your head or with your hands.

Keep your hands still and your arms becomingly folded; refrain from making gestures when speaking; never let your arms hang down or your hands be in your pockets.

Keep your feet together when at rest without crossing them. Do not keep your legs wide apart or cross them when you are seated.

Walk sedately without swinging your arms back and forth and without overhaste, unless there is a need to hurry.

Be careful that all your gestures and bodily movements are such as will edify everyone.

When two or three of you go out of the house together, observe the order prescribed by the superior.

Finally, always keep your clothes neat and clean; wear them with the dignity becoming a person in your profession.



Poverty

Cherish poverty as Jesus loved it and as the surest means you can take to advance in perfection.

Always keep yourself disposed to beg, if Providence so requires, and to die in extreme misery.

Possess nothing; dispose of nothing, not even of yourself. Strive to be detached and to lose everything, so that you can be like Jesus Christ, who spent his entire life in need, because of his love for us. This has been the practice of all the great saints, such as the Apostles and a great many others who withdrew from worldly society and labored for the salvation of souls. Imitate them in their contempt for temporal goods, because your state and duties resemble theirs.

Have nothing of your own; look upon everything you have as being in common with all your Brothers. Give up or hand over without hesitation whatever is asked of you.

Deprive yourself as far as possible not only of what is superfluous but also of what is useful and necessary; be content when you lack something.



Patience

Patience ought to be inseparable from poverty. This virtue disposes the heart to suffer all the trials of mind and of body for the love of God and in imitation of Jesus Christ.

Esteem this virtue highly, and practice it frequently; abandon yourself entirely to God to endure all things, no matter how trying they may be. When such occasions seem likely, accept them with submission to the will of God. When they occur, accept them patiently, humbly, without complaint, and silently, not speaking to anyone about them but looking upon them as blessings, desiring them, and suffering with joy and thanksgiving.



Temperance

Adore Jesus Christ as he gives us an example by the way he practiced this virtue and by his admirable austerities in eating, drinking, and sleeping. To imitate your divine Master and to observe temperance perfectly, be satisfied with uncomfortable accommodations, and never complain about food or drink or the hardness of your bed.

Never eat between meals, and be sure that when you leave the table, you are ready for intellectual work.

Beware of wine, for it leads to impurity, as Saint Paul says. If you drink wine, always add plenty of water. Be watchful on this point, especially when travelling, for it is very important. Saint Timothy, although infirm, drank but little and only on the express command of Saint Paul.



Reflections on Their State and on Their Work That the Brothers Are To Make from Time to Time, Especially During Retreat

The following section on the reflections on their state and their work that the Brothers are to make is closely modeled on a 1685 abridged edition of a work by Julien Hayneuve, SJ, entitled *Méditations pour le temps des exercices qui se font dans la retraite de huit jours, sur le sujet de vingt-quatre vérités et maximes fondamentales*, originally published in 1643. It seems strange, though, that these reflections, intended principally for retreat time, are arranged in nine groups, presumably one for each day—for the Brothers' retreats customarily lasted eight days.

It is significant that some of the items mentioned in this section are to be found also in “Rules I Have Imposed on Myself,” which De La Salle drew up in the first years after the foundation of the Institute, which are quoted by Canon Blain (CL 8:318–19; *Rule and Foundational Documents*, 199–202). Thus, the third item, “Make no distinction at all between the work of your state and the work of your salvation and perfection,” is reproduced almost word for word from De La Salle’s personal rules. This idea is, however, a commonplace of the more optimistic writers of the French School of spirituality, particularly Saint Francis de Sales.



1

Consider what your state is and why you embraced it, and examine whether in so doing you had in view only the order and the will of God.

2

If you were influenced by any wrong motive, disown it. If your intention was imperfect, rectify it. Then, as if you were just entering, affirm that your sole reason for persevering is your belief that God wills it.

3

Convince yourself that it is most important for your salvation that you be faithful in your state and that this fidelity consists in not failing in anything that God requires of you, for you will have to give an account to God of even the least circumstance.

4

Make no distinction at all between the work of your state and the work of your salvation and perfection. You can be sure that you will never achieve your salvation more certainly and acquire greater perfection than by fulfilling well the duties of your state, provided that you do so in view of the will of God.

5

Consider that you are in this world and have been called to the religious state solely to do good. Examine in what this good consists, insofar as your state is concerned, how you go about it, what faults you commit in doing so, where they occur, and what can be done to remedy them.

6

Consider how you observe the rules of your state and your work. Examine yourself on this subject now.

7

With what attention and interior dispositions do you perform the duties of your state and of your work? Do you perform all your actions in union with the actions and the intentions of Jesus Christ?

8

How do you act with regard to those with whom you have to deal, whether they be your superiors, your equals, or your subordinates?

9

How do you behave, and what self-control do you observe when things that you undertake in your state or in your work do not succeed as you had expected or hoped?

10

Do you willingly accept as coming from God everything that you have to endure in your state and in the performance of your duties, no matter from where it arises?

11

In performing the duties of your state or of your work, are you led by natural impulse and your own inclinations rather than by the Spirit of God?

12

What is your weak point in the performance of your work? Does it consist in being too hasty and overeager or listless and negligent?

13

Are you preoccupied by something that prevents you from applying yourself to your duties of state and of work?



Regarding the Use of Time

1

Consider how important it is to make good use of time. To do so, you must live in an ordered way, but if you wish to have order in your exterior actions, you must control your interior life and be determined to live only by the guidance of grace.

2

How do you order your activities? Do you look for your own convenience, or do you do the first thing that enters your mind instead of following the practices and the regulations of the community?

3

Do you perform your ordinary actions in a spiritual manner, having in view only God and his good pleasure, or do you perform them only through inclination, for mere form's sake, out of human respect, or for some purely natural motive?

4

Do you ever allow yourself to waste time by neglecting to keep strictly to the order that you ought to follow?

5

Do you consider yourself fortunate to be able to live according to a Rule, as you do at present? Resolve to observe the Rule perfectly.

6

Do you ever permit yourself, solely through whim, to change something or to fail to do something pertaining to the good order of the community? Do you ever excuse yourself, sometimes without reason and on your own, without permission?

7

Have you not often taken as a pretext for changing the time or for omitting your ordinary spiritual exercises merely the difficulty or natural disinclination you experience? Examine now whether you have not frequently deceived yourself, and be on your guard hereafter.

8

Do you believe that it is enough that you do everything at the proper time, without bothering about whether you are doing it perfectly? Are you convinced that doing an act at the proper time is part of its perfection? Do you perform all your actions as perfectly as you can?

9

Do not be concerned so much about knowing how to do a thing perfectly as about doing it as perfectly as you can, for by doing it as well as you know how, you deserve to learn and to understand what you would not otherwise know.

10

Be satisfied with what you can do, for this satisfies God, but do not spare yourself in what you can do with the help of grace. Be convinced that provided you are willing, you can do more with the help of God's grace than you imagine.



Regarding Rising and Interior Prayer

1

Consider that morning rising is a matter of such importance that the Holy Spirit has expressly stated in Holy Scripture that we must be prompt about it, never discussing, questioning, or bothering ourselves as to whether we ought to rise when the moment to do so has arrived and the bell rings, as if he meant to say that the matter is settled and that our only thought must be to carry it out immediately. How do you act in this matter?

2

When you dress, your first thought ought to be of God, either by a fervent prayer or by a short but devout act of adoration. How do you behave in this matter?

3

While dressing, you ought to think about the subject of the interior prayer you are going to make, and you ought to testify to God how anxious you are to do it well. Are you too slow in dressing, too easily distracted, or preoccupied by useless thoughts?

4

Are you careful to occupy your mind solely with God before the time of interior prayer, and are you ready without fail before the “Live Jesus in our hearts” is said at a quarter to five?

5

With what fervor do you set about making interior prayer? Do you love making this holy exercise? What posture do you take? What attention do you bring to it? What resolutions do you make?

6

Considerations by the mind and affection by the will properly constitute the body of interior prayer; its soul is the Holy Spirit, who enlightens and instructs the mind and urges the will. What benefit do you derive from this holy exercise? What helps or prevents your profiting from it?

7

Do you make resolutions during interior prayer? How fervently do you make them? Do you take the trouble to put them into practice?

8

At the end of interior prayer, do you review the manner in which you have gone about it and what you have accomplished during this exercise? This review must always be made.

9

At the beginning of morning prayer, are you careful to give some forethought to what you will do during the day, especially to prepare for whatever is likely to cause you some difficulty or for occasions when your human nature will have to suffer? Do you foresee the good actions you can perform and the faults you must avoid, the intention you ought to have in all your actions, the virtues you can practice, your duties of state, or similar subjects?

Are you afraid that this examination will be a waste of time? It is important, because you surely would not retire to bed at night without making your examination of conscience to see in what you had failed during the day and to atone for it. It is far better to foresee in the morning the faults you might commit, so as to avoid them, than to have to deplore them at night, because you had not foreseen them. Therefore, never neglect this.



Regarding the Divine Office and Vocal Prayers

1

Consider that because God has promised to grant our prayers if they are well said, there can be no doubt that we will obtain all that is contained in the Lord's Prayer if we place no obstacle in the way, for it is the noblest, most excellent, easiest, and most effective of all prayers. What obstacles do you think you place in the way?

2

Carefully note your faults, any lack of exterior respect and attention in your prayers, to see how far your interior dispositions are out of harmony with what you are praying for. Perhaps you do not want what you are praying for; you pray only with your mouth and merely utter so many words. Is not this a great obstacle to gaining the answer to your prayer?

3

What use do you make of short, exclamatory prayers inspired by piety and fervor and expressed by words in keeping with the need in which you find yourself?

4

Examine whether you say some prayers without much attention, such as the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Angelus, and grace before and after meals. Also examine your other prayers, and remedy any faults you might commit in saying them.

5

With what attention do you say the rosary? Do you ever pass a day without saying it?

6

Do you ever begin work, move from one action to another, or enter or leave the exercise room or dormitory without saying a prayer? Do you allow a considerable time, half an hour or an hour, to pass without saying a prayer, even if only to raise your heart to God?

7

Familiarize yourself with some verses of the Psalms or some passages from the other books of Holy Scripture. Learn by heart some passages of the *Imitation of Christ* or of other books that you read. Retain some good thought from your morning interior prayer to nourish your mind from time to time during the day, or allow your mind to develop good thoughts and holy affections. Do you make use of any of these practices? What benefit do you derive from them?

8

What devotion do you show toward the Most Blessed Virgin, your guardian angel, your holy patron, the saint you are given each month as your protector, or other saints for whom you have a special reason to show devotion?

9

What use do you make of what are called sacramentals, such as holy water, images of the saints, holy relics, medals, and indulgences, by which we can always obtain some grace, provided we treat them with the respect they deserve? What respect do you have for these sacramentals? Do you use them with faith and piety? Have you misused or neglected some of them?

10

Do you pray for the Church, for your superiors, benefactors, friends, and enemies, for the conversion of souls, especially those under your care, for the souls in purgatory, for public needs, and particularly for the needs of your neighbor? The liturgical prayers of the Church for these purposes are always the best.

11

In your prayers and devotions, always submit to the guidance of your Director and to the good pleasure of God, who knows our needs better than we do. Unite your prayers with the merits and the intentions of Jesus Christ, who has merited special graces for us, and perform them all by the impulse of the Holy Spirit, who enables us by divine inspirations to pray more effectively than we can by our own merely natural effort.



**Regarding the Practices and Activities of the Day:
Meals, Recreation, and Conversations**

1

Pay attention to what you have to do and what pertains to your work. See whether you fall into either of these two faults: acting too eagerly and through human motives or acting too indolently, forgetting that you are serving God in every action and in your work.

2

When opportunities arise to choose, such as several books to read or several things to do, are you inclined toward those most agreeable to nature, or, on the contrary, do you listen to reason and heed the promptings of grace, which tell you what is most fitting, even if it is opposed to your inclinations?

3

Do you rely more on the help of grace for the accomplishment of God's will than on your own understanding, cleverness, or organization?

4

Do you give way to self-seeking and natural taste in the things you have to do?

5

Do you pay attention to what the world might judge or to what is to your personal advantage, instead of striving with disinterestedness, not being the least concerned about anything else, for the true and enduring harvest to be reaped from your labor for the glory of God and from the simple accomplishment of the good pleasure of God, who has chosen you for this work and for these purposes?

6

Do you perform your exercises and the duties of your work at the time prescribed? Do you read any books other than those you are authorized to read?

7

In view of your profession, do you make it a matter of conscience whether you do what you ought not to do and do not do what you ought to do?

8

Do you act with moderation between too much and too little, even in the practice of virtue? Do you perform your actions without overhaste and undue anxiety? Are you not, for instance, too hasty to finish what you have begun and troubled when commanded to do what you find disagreeable?

9

Do you often think of God during your spiritual exercises and daily actions? Are you careful to offer them to God at the beginning, to be thankful at the end for the graces given to you, and to beseech God to continue to bless you? Do you ask pardon for the faults you might have committed in performing these exercises?

10

How do you behave during meals? Are you more occupied with your food than with the reading? Do you eat eagerly or too slowly, the better to relish what is placed before you? Do you drink your wine with plenty of water? Do you commit any other fault during meals?

11

Make it a rule never to speak of food or drink. Do not even pay any attention to these things, and no matter how you might be served, show that you are satisfied. How do you observe these points?

12

Do you faithfully practice the lesson given by Saint Paul, namely, to be content whether living in want or living in plenty?

13

How do you spend the time of recreation? Are you moderate in your conduct, and do you observe discretion in your words? Do you watch over yourself during this time that can be so dangerous, and do you fear committing some fault? Does your tongue cause you some disquietude of conscience during this time? Does the experience you have of your failings make you resolve to make the effort to be wiser? Have you corrected yourself? Have you sought the means to do so? Have you made use of them? Dwell seriously on this article, for it is most important. Weigh it well, and pay attention to all these points without passing lightly over a single one.

14

Never be sad or cast down with the kind of dejection that the world experiences, which arises from lack of mortification and from discontent at having what you do not want and not having

what you do want. Be equally careful to avoid excessive joy, which gives rise to immoderate laughter, raillery, unbecoming jokes, and so on, which cause the loss of piety and of the interior spirit that ought to reign in a community.

15

When you talk to anyone in the house or to outsiders, are you as polite as possible, and do you avoid all human affectation? Are you careful not to talk too much and to end your conversations as soon as possible, unless the superior desires you to prolong them?

16

Are you persuaded that true virtue is not found in affected mannerisms? It is true that virtue requires us to be civil, polite, and cordial, giving no offense and taking none, but it excludes whatever savors of worldly ways. Examine how you behave in this respect, particularly in your relations with seculars.



**Regarding Exhortations, Conferences,
and Spiritual Reading**

1

Consider how great a good it is to hear the word of God and what an evil it is not to profit by it as we must.

2

Have you benefitted from conferences and spiritual reading? There are none from which you cannot profit.

3

Curiosity and negligence are the two great obstacles to the spiritual profit that we ought to draw from hearing or reading the word of God. Have you fallen into either one of these faults?

4

When you read or hear the word of God, do you apply it to yourself? Have you examined to what extent your exterior and interior conduct is in conformity or at variance with the truths that you hear proclaimed?

5

Because neither the books we read nor the reasons we listen to of themselves touch our conscience, but God does use these means, we must pray for the grace to draw from them the benefit that God desires to communicate to us. Have you done so?

6

What do you do after spiritual reading or an exhortation? Do you thank God for having allowed you to read or to hear these holy words? Do you ask pardon for the faults of which these means have made you aware? Do you ask yourself what profit you might derive from this book or this discourse? Or are you satisfied with merely reading or hearing once, without striving to do anything more?

7

Do you have a book for spiritual reading? Do you read it at the appointed time without fail? What profit do you derive from it? Do you find any difficulties? What obstacles do you create for yourself?

8

Often call to mind some text of the New Testament or of the *Imitation of Christ*. Always keep some such passage in mind. Read these books from beginning to end methodically, but a passage at random might be read when you have a moment to spare.

9

Do you ask for or take books for spiritual reading according to your fancy, which is always tainted with self-love? Leave the choice to your superior. This submission will give you an easier, clearer understanding of these books and much more inclination to profit from them.

10

Carefully note the difference between spiritual reading and reading for study, and see to it that you observe the distinction exactly.

11

Do you make sure to give an account of your conduct to your superior on the appointed day? Do you give this account in a general manner or in detail? Do you ask for the advice you need for your guidance? Are you careful to put it into practice?

12

Do you act forthrightly and with God in view in all your conduct, as if you were dealing with God alone, especially with regard to your superior? Or are you, instead, distant and deceitful in your relations with him by using craftiness and dissimulation, which you mistake for prudence? This is merely folly in the eyes of God, who will confound you and punish you severely, for God loves openness of heart and forthrightness.



Regarding Examination of Conscience and Confession

1

Consider how important it is to make your examination of conscience and your confession well, because they are the remedy for our spiritual ills, a remedy they provide only to the extent that we perform them with all possible exactitude and right dispositions of heart.

2

In your examination of conscience, do you focus on the five points indicated by Saint Ignatius? Which ones do you most neglect?

3

Is your contrition heartfelt? Do you strive to break your attachment to the things that cause your sins?

4

Understand the components of what you have resolved to amend. What use do you make of the examination of conscience to correct your significant defects?

5

Would you feel prepared for death after your examination of conscience? If this is not the case, fear that you did not make it well.

6

What penances and satisfaction do you offer up for your sins? Do you perform any for the faults of which you are unaware? Do you realize that your unknown sins exceed those of which you are aware, those which are not hidden?

7

Are you more recollected and more filled with horror of sin after your examination of conscience? If not, this is a bad sign.

8

What preparation do you bring to the sacrament of Penance?

9

With what candor, straightforwardness, and sincerity do you make known your faults, despite the repugnance that nature makes you feel?

10

Do you disregard too easily certain sins that you ought to dwell on, so as to have greater compunction for them and to satisfy the justice of God, whom you have offended?

11

Realize that a second sin of the same kind is more culpable than the first; the third, more culpable than the second, and so on. Yet this is perhaps the hundredth time that you confess it, after promising so often not to commit it again. You commit it with as little caution and excuse as the first time.

Do you realize that there is never any excuse for sinning or for committing even the least imperfection, even though the whole world might otherwise perish? The little account you make of your faults ought to cause you to deplore them most bitterly.

12

Do you clearly understand that to receive absolution for a venial sin, you must have such sorrow for it that you are resolved not

to commit it again? If, then, after having confessed it, you still love your sinful act or its causes, must you not greatly fear that you have made a bad confession?

13

What would you say to a heretic or to some great sinner after he made a general confession? Would you not tell him that afterward he must be careful not to fall again? Must you, then, not address the same language to yourself after confessing a venial sin? You are as obliged to renounce it to obtain pardon as another is to correct a grievous sin to have it forgiven.

14

What penance do you perform for the many sins you have committed? What fasts and other acts of mortification, either self-imposed or of obligation, do you perform? In what interior dispositions do you perform them? Do you perform them only with the approval of your superior?

15

Regulate your acts of mortification in such a way that you are able to continue them. Do not undertake too much, but at the same time, do not spare yourself because of laziness. Sloth is more to be feared and has worse consequences. When you omit some act of mortification, let it be as much through virtue as when you mortify yourself.

Examine yourself on all these points, every one of which is important. Pray to God for the light necessary to know the moderation you must observe and to make it known to your Director.



Regarding Holy Mass

1

Consider that the benefit you will derive from holy Mass will depend very much on the dispositions with which you assist at it.

2

When you go to holy Mass, do you go as to Calvary to renew what happened there? It is the same sacrifice and the same Jesus Christ, who is about to do for you individually what he did on the cross for all humanity. How do you prepare yourself for this holy sacrifice?

3

Purity of heart and of the affections is the best disposition we can bring to this action. Because Jesus Christ gives his divine life for us, we cannot do less than offer him our own sensuous and lower nature. We must offer this sacrifice if we wish to participate in that of Jesus Christ. Are you willing to do this? How do you make this offering?

4

Here are some things to think about before going to holy Mass. Never forget to form an intention in conformity, as far as possible, with the spirit of those sacrifices in which holy Mass consists. In the first place, Mass is a holocaust in acknowledgment of God's sovereign dominion over us. The Mass is also the Eucharist, by which we return thanks for all God's gifts. Mass is likewise a propitiation by which we beg pardon for our sins and a petition for all necessary graces. We can also have some special intention when assisting at Mass and even change it every day or every week according to our needs. Do you act thus?

5

The best way of hearing holy Mass is to unite ourselves in mind with what the priest does in fact. Those who assist also participate in the sacrifice with the priest, although he alone consecrates; therefore, we must, if possible, be of one mind and heart with him. We may, however, think during this time of the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ as represented in the holy Mass. We may also occupy ourselves in other ways or beseech our Lord to enable us to acquire some virtue or be delivered from some vice by virtue of the holy sacrifice. How do you act in this respect?

6

The general confession at the beginning of holy Mass is very important. Examine whether your contrition at this time is such as to merit the grace of absolution, which the priest pronounces and which can remove venial sins.

7

You know very well that by rising for the Gospel when it is read during holy Mass, you proclaim your readiness to fight and to die in defense of the truths it contains. Are you inspired by this sentiment of faith, and do you express it from your heart?

8

Because you assist at holy Mass to make a sacrifice of yourself, why not offer yourself with the host at the part of the Mass called the Offertory? Do you think of doing so? As Jesus Christ sacrifices himself, do you make this offering truly from the bottom of your heart and with similar dispositions?

9

What are your sentiments at the moment of the elevation of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ? With what faith, love, and respect do you then adore our divine Lord?

10

Do you know what spiritual communion is? Do you make it daily with the priest? This practice is most meritorious when the desire is ardent and when you are fully disposed to receive all the graces that our Lord wishes to bestow on you.



Regarding Holy Communion

1

The benefit you derive from Holy Communion depends largely on the dispositions with which you receive it. What are your dispositions, and with what purity of heart and intention do you go to Holy Communion?

2

Before approaching the holy table, you can easily make the following four considerations to place your heart in the condition in which it ought to be for so holy an action. The first is, "What am I about to do?" The second is, "Who am I compared with almighty God?" The third is, "Why and for what purpose do I wish to approach the altar to receive him?" The fourth is, "How and for what reason ought I to receive Holy Communion today?" Do you make these reflections before Holy Communion?

3

Do you approach the holy table with the same dispositions that you would wish to have on entering heaven? Surely we must not have less respect in receiving Jesus Christ than in being received by him.

4

It would be a great abuse and a sad disorder of your soul if the frequency of Holy Communion were to diminish your fervor. On the contrary, nothing disposes us so well for the next Holy Communion as the previous one. If we do not resist the grace given in this sacrament, our hunger will be sated without our losing the desire to receive Holy Communion again. In this same way, heavenly bliss satisfies the blessed but does not diminish their desire to see God. After beholding God a million times, they long as much for the beatific vision as if they had just entered heaven. Do you feel such a desire for Holy Communion?

5

At the moment of Holy Communion and during thanksgiving, it is a good suggestion to call to mind what we find most difficult in the service of God and to say to ourselves, See, our Lord gives himself entirely to you; will you not give yourself entirely to him? Because this difficulty is the only obstacle, will you not overcome it through love of Jesus? Will you not make him this sacrifice through the respect you have for him? No doubt you would not dare to refuse. In this way we ought to urge ourselves gently to overcome ourselves.

6

Rest assured that there is no time in life more precious than the moment of Holy Communion and the time immediately following, when you have the happiness of speaking face to face and heart to heart with Jesus. But if you are careful, you will find that you have not derived all the benefit you could from this holy communication. Examine the cause. Is it because you wish to speak all the time and do not listen to our Lord, who also wishes to converse with you? Or is it because you are indolent during this time? Do you give yourself unreservedly to our Lord to enter into and to realize his designs in your regard?

7

There is no need to worry about having new thoughts every day in order to receive Holy Communion worthily. The simplest and most ordinary are the best, for there is nothing more touching or more powerful in uniting us interiorly to God than the most common teaching of faith with regard to the Most Blessed Sacrament. Is this not true? Why not, then, fill your heart daily with these sentiments?

8

If what they say is true, namely, that it would require but one Holy Communion well made to make us perfect, must you not admit that you are greatly to blame that after so many Communion, you are still so imperfect?

9

Acknowledge your faults in detail, especially the more considerable ones; beg God's pardon, and resolve never to commit them any more. Renew your past resolutions on this point. This practice during the time of Holy Communion and thanksgiving cannot but be very helpful.

10

Do you ever go to Holy Communion without asking God for some special grace or for some virtue that you need? Examine what you require, and ask for it most earnestly at the moment of Communion or immediately afterward, when our Lord is still within your body. No doubt because you then possess him within you, he will be so good as to refuse you nothing that you have requested.



Epilogue



The Testament and Last Recommendation of Saint John Baptist de La Salle

First, I recommend my soul to God and, next, all the Brothers of the Society of the Christian Schools with whom he has associated me. I urge them, above all else, always to show entire submission to the Church, especially in these evil times, and to give proof of this by never separating themselves in anything from our Holy Father the Pope and from the Church of Rome, always remembering that I sent two Brothers to Rome to ask God for the grace that their Society might always be entirely submissive thereto. I also recommend them to have a great devotion to our Lord, to love very much Holy Communion and the exercise of interior prayer, to cultivate a very special devotion toward the Most Blessed Virgin and toward Saint Joseph, the Patron and Protector of their Society, to fulfill the duties of their employment with zeal and disinterestedness, and to maintain close union among themselves and blind obedience to their superiors, which is the foundation and the support of all perfection in a community. (*Rule and Foundational Documents*, 205)

His Last Recommendation

If you wish to preserve yourself in your state and to die in it, never have any familiar dealings with people of the world. Little by little, you will acquire a liking for their way of acting and will be drawn into conversation with them, so that through politeness, you will not be able to avoid agreeing with their language, however pernicious it may be. This will cause you to fall into infidelity, and no longer faithful in observing your Rule, you will grow disgusted with your state, and finally you will abandon it.

His Last Words

I adore in all things the guidance of God in my regard.
(Both citations are from Blain, *Life*, Book Three, Chapter XVIII, 738.)



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