

**THE RULE OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE HOLY FAMILY**

Table of Contents

<b>The End of Rule .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>AIM OF A RULE.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>OBEDIENCE .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>FIDELITY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>SIMPLICITY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PURITY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>THE CHAPEL .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>THE OFFICE.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>THE EUCHARIST AND COMMUNION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CONFESSION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>EXAMINATION.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>MEDITATION.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SPIRITUAL READING.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>INTERCESSION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>RETREAT .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>SILENCE.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>RECOLLECTION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CONVERSATION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>FASTING AND MORTIFICATION .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>ALMSGIVING.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>HUMILITY .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>OPENNESS AND SIMPLICITY .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>CITIZENSHIP .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>WORK .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>STUDY.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>BEAUTY.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>SCHOOL .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>RECREATION AND REST .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HEALTH .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>FRIENDS.....</b>	<b>14</b>

**CELLS** ..... 14  
**DRESS**..... 14  
**MEALS** ..... 15  
**FASTS AND FESTIVALS** ..... 15  
**OFFICERS' DUTIES** ..... 16  
**BRANCH HOUSES ABROAD**..... 17  
**FAULTS**..... 17  
**DIFFERENTIA OF C.H.F. RULE**..... 17

**The End of Rule**

Bound plainly in black, the letters 'C.H.F. Rule' and a cross stamped in gold upon its cover. This was and is insofar as is possible to a Hermit, my Rule. It is sadly no longer appropriate for a Teaching Order of the young, but can still be used as such for adults. However, the Sisters told me they came to roar with laughter reading it, re-wrote it excruciatingly badly, and so the Community died. It would have been written by Mother Agnes Mason, C.H.F. a century ago. It was placed in my hands ten years ago. It, with the memories of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in preparation for the convent, are my greatest worldly treasures.

-Mother Julia Bolton Holloway (2010)

## **AIM OF A RULE**

In Societies as in individuals, some workings are means to an end: and it is an economic saving and therefore gain to render these, by a rule, as far automatic as may be.

But beyond and above this, the Rule of a Religious Society embodies an aim and makes it practical. It is intended to provide an order in which each Sister and all together shall be able, in openness and simplicity, to lead a good life for the love of our Lord, in the humble practice of Fidelity, Simplicity, and Purity.

## **OBEDIENCE**

The keeping of the Rule is in itself a training in Obedience. Obedience is the willing acceptance of conditions which we cannot or ought not to alter. Religious obedience<sup>1</sup> is the doing and accepting of the perfect Will of God, none the less when this is shown to us through imperfect creatures. Sisters<sup>2</sup> must be ready to believe that the Will of God for themselves will be made known to them through the Community.

Obedience is the one thing required for salvation, being the only test of a true faith, and being our correspondence with our spiritual surroundings, which is life. It is not only remedial and accidental; but it has its seat, with law, 'in the bosom of God.'<sup>3</sup>

The obedience of our Lord's true disciples will always be growing more cheerful and loyal,<sup>4</sup> becoming more humble, and more ready and delicate, becoming more loving and intelligent.

Our aim in Religion is not our own perfection, but God's glory: and so Community life requires a quite unconditional self-surrender 'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath'. We put ourselves at God's mercy, thankful to be there. We renounce any right to pick and choose; it is His to appoint the cost, of whatever kind or degree; nothing is to be too low and nothing too high for us, at His Will: we only ask of Him to give what He commands.

Our obedience is due not only to a Rule but also to all those who administer the Rule. We must remember that obedience, loyal and cheerful and prompt so that its cost is hidden, is worth most when it costs most<sup>5</sup>: and that is when the thing is against our judgment or liking and is commanded by one whom we do not naturally look up to. For then it is the purest surrender of our will to God alone.

It is the duty of every Sister to tell those who are set in authority over her if anything impossible is required of her.<sup>6</sup> Also, to tell of anything in her conditions which she thinks seriously hurtful to herself in body, soul, or spirit, or to her work, or to others through her. There her

---

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 2.14-end; 5.5-11.

<sup>2</sup> Sister in this Rule means both Professed Sister and Novice of this Community.

<sup>3</sup> Hooker, Ecclesiastical Polity, Book I, Chapter 18.8.

<sup>4</sup> John 15.14-15.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Samuel 24.24

<sup>6</sup> Constitution 22.

responsibility ends. If her appeal is disallowed, then with gladness and a clear conscience she may look to God's promises of strength in weakness and victory through failure, and thank Him for the opportunity.<sup>7</sup> Nothing is impossible with God the Holy Ghost: and He is dwelling within us, ready to help our infirmities.

Those who are in office should always be ready humbly and generously to consider suggestions concerning their office, especially when made by those working under them.<sup>8</sup> Such suggestions should be made modestly and diffidently, after prayer.

Sisters are put in office not to get their own way, God forbid, but to interpret and carry out the will of the Community, as humble self-forgetting servants, 'Never so safe as when our will/ Yields undiscerned by all but God.'<sup>9</sup> Hidden, lowly, loving obedience is the only foundation for 'the grace of office'.

The being in authority or not is no measure of what we are in the sight of God. In the Holy Family, St Joseph was immeasurably the least: yet he was its Head, and as such received and gave Divine guidance for it.<sup>10</sup>

Sisters' obedience cannot be too perfect: but it is quite possible that too little liberty may be left them. In our community, it is intended that Professed Sisters shall have a real though limited initiative and responsibility. They are to think for themselves, and must be encouraged to do so.<sup>11</sup> Head Mistresses and Sisters in Charge must be allowed, as far as possible, to work in their own natural way, making their own experiments and, if need be, learning by their own mistakes.

The (supposed) Will of God must never be put before God's Commandments.

The foregoing is true, *mutatis mutandis*, for the whole Community as for each of its members.

### **FIDELITY**

Fidelity is the joyful abandonment of herself to God because the sister, longing of her heart is to obey her loving creator God. It means she is called by the Holy Spirit to live obediently and to listen with full attention to the Gospels, aiming to fulfill the promises she made at Baptism. It means she listens to the Spirit through decisions of the Community. It means she listens to others, her leaders, and Members in meetings and other times. It means she takes time to listen with care. It means she listens to her inner voice which speaks in quiet. It means she listens to God in nature and cares for the natural world and her body. She lives as a listener so that she might know what to speak, to share, and to respond.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Mark 16.17.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Peter 5.5.

<sup>9</sup> Keble, Christian Year, Trinity 16

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 2.34-34, 20-21.

<sup>11</sup> Constitution 19.

<sup>12</sup> Vows – Little Sisters of St. Clare

Christian Fidelity is the working of the pure reverent love of Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord and Spouse, and of each other and ourselves in and for Him.<sup>13</sup> Its test is humble self-sacrifice.

This is not, like youthful innocence, a beautiful natural endowment, which once lost can never be restored; but it is the vehement fire of love which burns out stains and quickens soul and body into fullness and fruitfulness of life and good works.

It is certain that in the Name of the Lord we can drink deadly things without hurt: and we ought to do so courageously if charity should require it. Not ignorance of evil but the engrossing love of whatsoever things are pure make us pure.

In regard to outward things, Sisters should pay heed to George Herbert's admonition: 'Let thy mind's sweetness have his operation upon thy body, clothes, and habitation', and must keep the Community's Customary with all possible exactness. The Blessed Virgin is the pattern of purity for Sisters, and her house at Nazareth is the pattern for houses of the C.H.F.

Particular friendships between Sisters in this Community are to be cherished, if and so far as they help the friends to learn and practice more abundantly a right love towards Christ in all His members, and more particularly towards those Sisters to whom they are not naturally drawn, *'ne quis contristetur'*.

### **SIMPLICITY**

Christian simplicity is an inward and spiritual grace shewing and perfecting itself in outward practice.

A sister makes a vow of simplicity by living a life that respects all creation and recognizes that all we have is God-given. She releases her attachment to possessions and releases her desire to control things, situations, and other people. She recognizes our need for one another. Simplicity is a voluntary gift of love in response to the voluntary gift of love in Jesus. Her role and responsibility is to be a good steward, acting with humility and poverty of spirit, She uses all that is entrusted – her resources, time, abilities and gifts – for the benefit of God's people and for God's glory.<sup>14</sup>

### **PURITY**

A sister makes a vow of Purity by endeavoring, through self-examination and deep inner work, to learn who she is, who she is to become as the person God wants her to be, and to reconcile the two. She desires God's desire for her. She accepts the integrity and dignity and wholeness of all others. She accepts the gifts of the Holy Spirit to live with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control. She frees herself to love.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 5.2.

<sup>14</sup> Vows – The Little Sisters of St. Clare

<sup>15</sup> Vows – The Little Sisters of St. Clare

## **THE CHAPEL**

Everything that is had or done in chapel shall follow approved Anglican Communion Books of Common Prayer, Prayer Books, and approved Roman Missals.

## **THE OFFICE**

The Divine Office, '*Opus Dei*,' the special service which we are to render to God, is to be said with all possible care and devotion, the outward part so expressing the inward spirit that it may preserve and enhance and enrich it.

The Daily Office, antiphons, response, etc., shall not be changed nor altered except by a majority in Chapter and by consent of the Chaplain.

The Daily Offices, as found in the Book of Common Prayer, of Morning Prayer, Noonday Service, Evening Prayer, and Compline are to be said every day except Sunday in accordance to the Book of Common Prayer, or other approved source by The Episcopal Church.

If any Sister is of necessity absent, she shall at the least, do that which is appointed in the Daily Devotions section of the Book of Common Prayer.

## **THE EUCHARIST AND COMMUNION**

The Holy Eucharist shall be celebrated in Chapels of the Community at least once a week. The Sisters shall all be present every day, whether in Chapel or at Church; and this obligation shall have the first claim on a Sister's physical strength because the Sacrament of the altar is the very core and center and spring of our daily life. Every Sister may make her Communion on all days for which the current approved Book of Common Prayer gives an Epistle and Gospel, except Good Friday and Easter Eve; also on the Feasts of St. Joseph, and Visitation, the Holy Name, and Corpus Christ, and on All Souls' Day; besides this, on so many weekdays as the Chaplain thinks good for each. They will judge of this, not according to the desert - for then there would be no Communions - but according to the need of each.

Spiritual growth and advancement depend, not on frequency, but on the goodness of each Communion. And we ought to find in ourselves a continual desire for the time of our next Communion, even if we communicated every day. Humble and devout daily thanksgiving for our last Communion is most necessary to make frequent Communion safe and infrequent fruitful.

Those who are present at Mass without communication are on no lower footing, except in respect of their status at that particular Eucharist than those whom that day make their Communion; for we are all alike - being faithful - are communicants, evermore dwelling in Him and He in us, and together in our worship filling His hands with intercession and thanksgiving.

Our intention at the Eucharist should normally run through the whole day, being renewed at the Hours; and it is good that this intention should have been deliberately formed or renewed and offered to our Lord overnight.

## **CONFESSION**

The Chaplain shall give each Sister her rule for Confession. The Mother may occasionally give a Sister leave to defer or anticipate her Confession or make it to a Priest of the Sister's choosing, but must report it to the Chaplain. Sisters shall make a General Confession covering their whole life, before Clothing, and another before Profession, covering the time since their Clothing.

## **EXAMINATION**

Ten minutes every evening shall be set apart for examination. Besides this, each Sister shall make a particular examine in the middle of the day. Once in a month Sisters shall examine themselves by the Rule.

## **MEDITATION**

Professed Sisters shall meditate for an hour or at least fifty minutes every morning, except on days when they are present at a second Eucharist. On these days twenty-five minutes will satisfy the Rule. The meditation shall be, as a rule, on some portion of the Bible which shall be appointed from time to time for the whole Community.

## **SPIRITUAL READING**

Sisters shall spend half an hour daily in spiritual reading. When it can conveniently be done, a book shall be read aloud in Chapel and may be discussed at the time.

## **INTERCESSION**

Intercession is the goodly lot and characteristic work of Religious Communities.

Intercession is not words but a life: it is the offering of ourselves, our souls and bodies, to God, that His Will may be done in and through us. It expresses itself in the gold of hard work, the frankincense of prayer, and the myrrh of suffering. We can never be without one of the three, and it is for our Lord to choose which at any time He will accept from us.

Being the highest kind of work, intercession is perforce the humblest. It is only through the Blood of Christ shed for us sinners and for our sins that we have access to God at all. It is only as members incorporate in the Body of Christ Who is interceding in heaven that our prayers can work, through the joints and hands of His Mystical Body.

And, as we think, even the Son of God Himself could not have interceded for man if He had not set Himself where He was not, side by side with sinners, making Himself one with us that He might take upon Him our sin as it were His own.

So we in our intercession must set ourselves where we are, alongside the worst and meanest sinners.

This is the first and plain meaning of voluntary pain, such as fasting, in intercession. It is our humble acknowledgment of the plain truth about ourselves.

Together with and beyond this, it may be the expression of our willingness to suffer any pain which, in ways intelligible to us or not, maybe bound up with the granting of our petition. Or it may be the simple spontaneous expression of a love and sorrow and desire which cannot find utterance in words. But 'all these things are double-edged,<sup>16</sup> and work woe if not handled in the pure truth of humility. They are not for all of us to use, nor at our own pleasure. In any but a rudimentary degree, they are too high for some, and others not natural.<sup>17</sup>

What we must all do is to set our will to accept every sort of suffering which God may send us, saying 'we indeed justly; and to desire His Will before our own, if our intercessory prayer is to work rightly. Our Lord needs us each and all, not only to work through but also to suffer in and pray through.<sup>18</sup> And since it is His work, there is no end of its greatness and no limit to our hope. And since God is His Father and ours, we can ask Him simply and trustfully as children for whatever we want for ourselves or others. And the Holy Spirit by Whom the whole Body is governed and sanctified dwells in us, to teach us what to pray for and to kindle in us fervent desire.

From the first, it has been desired that within this Community there might be Houses set apart for intercession and worship, together with the care of the sick and aged sisters. A House of Prayer has now been vouchsafed us. We all join in its work at the daily Eucharist, in the Office, in our private prayers, and at special times. The Litany shall be said on Litany days. There shall be a paper of thanksgivings and petitions covering a wide range, to be edited weekly and said aloud at least once a week, and another paper of petitions and thanksgivings for private needs, for private and optional use. Ten minutes every day is to be set apart for intercession. On special occasions, continuous intercession is to be kept up, or else Sisters shall spend half an hour together in Chapel, as may best be arranged. This is most necessary where there seems to be a hurry of work.<sup>19</sup>

### **RETREAT**

Besides the general annual Retreat, each Sister shall make a day's Retreat about once a month. Sisters shall make at least two days' Retreat before Clothing, and four days' at Profession, and a month's Retreat at the time of the Renewal of Vows.

### **SILENCE**

Silence is to be kept for at least two hours in the day, except on Sundays and Principal Feasts/Holy Days of Obligation, Holy Days, and Days of Special Devotion.

---

<sup>16</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury, July 20th, 1898.

<sup>17</sup> See Fasting and Mortification.

<sup>18</sup> Colossians 1.24.

<sup>19</sup> See Fasts and Festivals.

There must be no talking in passages or on stairs.

## **RECOLLECTION**

The Angelus is to be said three times a day, and five times a day, a collect is to be read. When Sisters are together, the senior is to say the Collect aloud, all standing. At the giving out of letters, at the end of Recreation, at going out of the house and at coming in, prayers are to be said. These prayers and the times of silence are to help us to form a habit of recollection. 'He Whom we shall have for our Judge is our ever-present witness'<sup>20</sup> whether we recollect it or not; and there ought to be among us an ever-deepening consciousness of this Presence, our strength and guard, and peace. We ought to be like children playing and working together under their mother's eye and running to her to shew her all that they do. Always to sanctify the Lord God the Holy Ghost in our hearts would be to be always free from evil disquiet.

## **CONVERSATION**

More than others must Sisters, living in so close a fellowship, take heed that they offend not in their tongue.<sup>21</sup> Particularly in the matter of their three vows. It is one of the worst sins in Community to speak unnecessarily against other Sisters or against the Rule and its administration, grumbling about such things as work, food, and household arrangements.<sup>22</sup> We should remember that in talking on these subjects at all, we are on dangerous ground, particularly if we have any rebellious, unloving, or discontented feelings. It is better to avoid conversations in which we are likely to be thus tempted: and we ought to check disloyal speech in others. A Sister's safety-valve is Prayer, whereby evil is turned into good.

The recollection which we gain in prayer and silence, we are to practice in speech. So doing, our speech may always be seasoned with salt,<sup>23</sup> in loyalty, cheerfulness, and gravity, ministering grace to the hearers.<sup>24</sup>

Community matters are private to the Community, and must not be told or discussed outside, without leave.

Sisters are under a special obligation not to speak against other Communities, their ways, or their members. Also to discourage silly talk about ecclesiastical matters and persons.

## **FASTING AND MORTIFICATION**

All days of fasting or abstinence are to be kept by abstinence from meat. On ordinary Fridays, there is to be porridge and dry bread for breakfast, dry bread for tea, and only one course for dinner and supper. In the community's house, dinner is to be in silence. On

---

<sup>20</sup> Profession Office.

<sup>21</sup> Psalm 39.1.

<sup>22</sup> See Obedience and Health.

<sup>23</sup> Colossians 4.6.

<sup>24</sup> Ephesians 4.29.

Ember Days, tea is to be later, ten minutes before tea being spent in Chapel, in intercession. So, also, every weekday in Advent and Lent: and in Lent, there shall be dry bread for tea.

But Sisters must not feel it enough to keep the common Rule. It is never healthy nor safe for anyone, rich or poor, sick or sound, to live up to the limits of comfort allowed by his circumstances. Much less could it be right for Sisters. They must find opportunities of daily self-denial in small unnoticed ordinary ways, each mortifying her own special faults and likings.<sup>25</sup>

But no physical mortifications which in any way go beyond this are to be used without the Superior's leave. Self-chosen penances, even if not dangerous to health, maybe so too humility.

Interior mortifications are safer and more efficacious. We must thankfully embrace them when given to us: and we can be ready to do this only through habitually seeking them for ourselves, as aforesaid, in matters concerning our affections, mind, and will.

It must not be forgotten that mortifications have no value in themselves, but only as a means to true mortification of spirit; and this, in turn, means dying to self only in order to be set free to live to God.

### **ALMSGIVING**

The Community's alms are to be given, generally speaking, not through Societies but directly, and chiefly to people whose need is unapparent, such as poor teachers or friends of the Sisters. Hospitality is an excellent form of alms: and (when not economically wrong) so is teaching.<sup>26</sup>

### **HUMILITY**

We must not trust that the many humiliations of Community life will of themselves secure us against pride. Conceit, vanity, and haughtiness, when beaten down, readily rise again as forms of spiritual pride: and this is by far the worst pride because it is the abuse of the gifts which are nearest to God Himself, *Corruptio optimi pessima*.

We are not to be puffed up for our own Community as against others; nor for Sisters as against those who are 'living in the world'. On the contrary, it ought perpetually to humble us to think of our many and great privileges and helps, seeing how poor our lives are, even with all this advantage.

Sisters are to behave to all Visitors as to their betters, lowly and reverently, curtsying to them, opening the door for them, and waiting on them as handmaids of the Lord's handmaids.

---

<sup>25</sup> See Poverty.

<sup>26</sup> See Citizenship.

## **OPENNESS AND SIMPLICITY**

Openness and simplicity are a growing joy of Community life. Being all of one heart and of one mind, we are able simply to acknowledge our desire for the love and service of God and also our own failures. The spirit of the whole of our common life ought to be of a piece with the openness and simplicity of our common prayers and mutual intercessions and saying of Faults. So, while not always necessary, it is yet natural and helpful to speak one to another of spiritual things, as occasion arises, with all modesty and reverence. Also, we ought to be always ready meekly to acknowledge our faults. Also, we ought, as may serve for edification, boldly and humbly to confess our own faults and to tell other Sisters of theirs,<sup>27</sup> whether against ourselves or others or the community. Thus, evil may be cut off immediately, and charity will grow.

But if this best method should fail or be impossible, Sisters must not allow any serious wrong to go unchecked but must tell those in authority. There is no absolutely binding secrecy between Sisters; but any Sister, if she feels bound in conscience to do so, may tell the Mother, Chaplain, or Chaplain General, anything that has been said to her by Mother, Sisters, or Postulants.

## **CITIZENSHIP**

Good Christians ought to be good citizens: and the Community must study and carefully fulfill its social obligations. 'In investment and spending of money, it shall have regard to the moral character of the investment and to the social conditions of the work for which it pays'.<sup>28</sup> It must neither be in debt nor allow others to incur any burdensome debt towards it, and it must be perfectly business-like and exact in all money matters.<sup>29</sup>

All and every kind of work done for the Community, unless it is a free gift, shall be paid for at fair rates. So, as a rule, shall work done for others by the Community; but the Council may exercise discretion in special cases.

Sisters must be very careful to provide things honest in the sight of all men. They must be equally true and just in all their dealings, with poor and rich, with individuals and societies. They must religiously keep engagements, though to their own hindrance.

## **WORK**

What Sisters are is far more important than what they do: their life comes first and their work second. Yet as their life ought to be very good, so ought their work which springs out of it and reacts upon it, and which is its outward-shewing fruit. Especially is this so in Education, which deals with the whole of human life. Our aim in this Community is that the Sisters themselves shall carry out every part of the education of our pupils which is consistent with wearing the

---

<sup>27</sup> Matthew 18.15.

<sup>28</sup> S.H.F. Rule.

<sup>29</sup> See Property in Constitution.

habit. And 'we shall be content to aim at nothing below the highest standards of the time in all our work for our pupils.'<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, 'The Rule must be such as to provide for making and keeping the Sisters thoroughly efficient as teachers and mistresses.'<sup>31</sup> It must allow the largest liberty possible in all necessary studies; it must foster the spirit of a liberal education by giving time and opportunities and means for enlarging our discourse.

It follows: (a) that, for the life's sake first, but also for the sake of the work, the Community must learn to be stern with itself in refusing new openings for work; ( b ) that it must accept no large proportion of Novices of narrow education and understanding, and no Professed Sister of character and religion too weak to 'gather up these manifold attachments into the single love of God alone.'<sup>32</sup>

Each Professed Sister ought, so far as practicable, to be set to the work which she can do best: and ought to find her needful spiritual discipline in that.

But while as regards life the Sister is the unit, as regards work the unit is the Community; and each Sister must cheerfully do whatever portion of the Community's work is assigned her.

The most hidden, low, and uninviting work is what we shall naturally covet if we truly aspire to be handmaids of the Lord; for He took upon Him the form of a servant. Hard work, religiously and humbly done in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth is a true intercession for sins.

### **STUDY**

Every Sister ought to be so systematically studying at least one subject that she makes real progress from month to month: and the Community must aim at securing this. Generally speaking, each Sister ought to go on studying the subjects in which she has specialized.

It is greatly to be desired that the C.H.F. may become a home of real learning and art by receiving and by educating student and artist Sisters.

### **BEAUTY**

Sins against beauty, albeit negligence or ignorance, are yet really sins, and more harmful than sins concerning merely physical wellbeing, inasmuch as the spiritual is higher than the material: for true beauty, moral and sensible, comes from God and leads to God, Who Himself is the Eternal Loveliness.<sup>33</sup> So we shall lovingly and reverently study to make and keep our surroundings beautiful with the seemliness appropriate to each part, from Chapel downwards.

Means to secure this shall be embodied in the Customary for each House of the Community.

---

<sup>30</sup> Memorial to the Archbishop of York.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Profession Office.

<sup>33</sup> St Augustine, Confessions, Book X, Chapter 27.

The love of beauty is only superficially and not really opposed to the love of poverty, but the union of the two produces a peculiarly clean and attractive type of Christian character and work,<sup>34</sup> 'Let thy mind's sweetness, etc.', Poverty, 'Sisters ought to make, etc.'<sup>35</sup> And we should aspire to have our pupils enrich and purify the world with this salt.

### **SCHOOL**

As regards work, the very purpose of our foundation is to give good education, and it would be absurd if we forgot this. In our schools, then, the first aim is not what is called success, in popularity, numbers, or income, but the good of the pupils, all and singly. And in this good, the training of character, through the Sisters' and especially the Head Mistress's loving, reverent, firm, and patient care, is the most important element.

These principles must be carefully kept insight in all school questions, especially in regard to Scholarships examinations and Divinity teaching.

### **RECREATION AND REST**

Our calling in this world is to warfare and service: and our rest and our amusement should be so much and of such a kind as best to renew our strength for glorifying God in body and spirit.

Sisters shall spend at least seven hours in bed every night.

We must jealously guard Sunday, our Christian Sabbath, and the Lord's Day, as a day of rest and spiritual refreshment; putting away our weekday work and taking care to secure quiet spaces for Communion with God.

### **HEALTH**

Each Sister is primarily responsible for the care of her own health. If she is seriously ailing, or if she thinks that she needs anything for her health, it is her duty to tell the Infirmarian or the Superior.<sup>36</sup> If need be, she must tell them more than once.

But we must all remember, (1) that sickness is our one precious opportunity of really feeling the pinch of a physical want; (2) that, for women, self-forgetfulness is the best physician in ordinary.

The sick are to be cared for charitably and sensibly; the doctor's recommendations carried out according to the Community's best ability.

---

<sup>34</sup> See Chastity Original Rule

<sup>35</sup> The Office.

<sup>36</sup> See Obedience.

## **FRIENDS**

The Community in which we have vowed ourselves to the Lord is our common home and family and has the first claim on our love and duty. After this and subject to this, each Sister's old ties of home and friendship still hold and are to be kept up: the community at its discretion permitting and encouraging Sisters to go home for their holidays and when needed at other times, and to see their friends in moderation at convenient times.

Visitors are not to be admitted to see Sisters on Sunday.

When away from home, Sisters may keep their ordinary rule for Confession and Communion, or lessen it according to opportunity and their own judgment, taking advice on it.

They must read the Bible daily, besides their reading for meditation. They must say Compline daily and make up the other Hours. They must meditate for at least ten minutes each day, and not less than two hours a week. They must keep days of abstinence and especially Fridays not only be abstaining from meat, but also by some special devotions and mortification, however little. Once a week they shall examine themselves carefully by 1 Corinthians 13, remembering that just so far as they fulfill the other functions of charity will they not behave themselves unseemly, but to edification.

## **CELLS**

Sisters may be in their own cell whenever they please, but they must not go into each other without leave.

Cells shall be furnished only with the barest necessities, to leave room for a little of the joy of poverty. If when we go to our cell, we remember the Son of Man who had not where to lay His head, we shall covet the worst cell and the poorest furniture.

## **DRESS**

The habit shall be blue. The rope cincture shall be of the same color. The full-length scapular of the same color as the habit. A blue-gray cotton habit may be worn for coolness or work under certain conditions. The Collar of soft cambric made like a cape. The cross to bear a crucifix. A small black cape may be worn for warmth. Out of doors, a round black cloak may be worn, Fully Professed Sisters shall wear a silver ring.

Novices shall wear a white habit, The Collar of soft cambric, made like a cape, a plain wooden cross, and the rope cincture shall be of the same color as the habit. The full-length scapular shall be blue. Out of doors a small black veil; and they may wear a round black cloak.

Sisters shall be buried in their ordinary dress, except that professed Sisters shall wear their old Novice's cross on a red cord.

The above is to be worn at all formal events. Ordinary dress can be worn at other times.

## **MEALS**

Food shall be sufficient and good of its kind, and well cooked, and suited, so far as may be, to the needs of each Sister.

In the Community's House, at one meal the Old Testament Lessons shall be read and at another the Psalms which are not said in any Office, so that all be read through in a month.

## **FASTS AND FESTIVALS**

Advent is not a lesser Lent but has its own character. It looks not within but without, not back but forwards. Its special grace is Hope and its special work common intercession for the coming of our Lord's Kingdom.

There shall be few formal obligations to mortification or retirement; but Sisters shall voluntarily, each as God enables her, cut off needless amusements and conversations and throw a serious heart and will into the time thus gained for intercession 'buying up the opportunity.'<sup>37</sup>

Continuous intercession shall be made on two days in the week.

Christmas, being our great Community Feast, is to be much observed. Compline is to be sung on the Eve, and Antiphons doubled through the Octave, and Alleluias said with the Community Memorial till the Purification. The Professed Sisters are to spend the week following Christmas Day all together at home.

In Lent, There are to be long hours of silence.

Lent is not a time of spiritual enjoyment. It is a time for self-examination and fighting against our sins as Christ's faithful soldiers and servants; we must not be surprised if it is hard and dull and weary, and seems long at the beginning. When it is over, we shall find it was none too long for its work.

In Passiontide and Holy Week we are to look off from ourselves to our Lord and follow Him in thought day by day.

In order that Holy Week may be spent quietly, the Lent Term shall end not later than Friday in Passion Week, and from Saturday to Saturday visitors are not to be admitted to see Sisters. The week is to be kept as a sort of Retreat, each Professed Sister being free to use it to her own good, subject only to charity and our customs.

On Sundays and Festivals and all through the Great Forty Days, there shall be no afternoon silence.

Trinity Sunday is the one day set apart for the worship of God, not in his relations to us, by as He is in Himself; and we must not let slip so high a privilege.

---

<sup>37</sup> Ephesians 5.15, Revised Version margin.

## **OFFICERS' DUTIES**

What is required of the Mother is set down in the Installation Office, which she must often read with shame and sorrow for her failures and her sins against the grace of office.

The same is true, in its measure, for all Sisters in Charge.

The Assistant Superior must above all be self-forgetting, loyal, and tactful.

The Novice Mistress must have a strong love of souls and a sense of responsibility to God for those entrusted to her care; she must have spiritual insight and common sense: and from these will spring the patience and faith and all else that her work requires. She must teach the Novices to understand and practice and love the Rule: so that they may be good Sisters not to please her but God.

Since as Professed Sisters they will have a large liberty, she must lay a deep and strong foundation for it by teaching them most thoroughly the spirit and practice of obedience and mortification.

At her discretion she may temporarily dispense any of them from any part of their religious duties, reporting it to the Chaplain and Mother.

As a rule, Novices are to have half an hour's meditation in the morning, and another half hour in Chapel later, to use as they think best.

It is above all required in a Housekeeper that she be found trustworthy.<sup>38</sup> She must be punctual, diligent, equally thoughtful for Sisters, children, servants, and visitors, and careful of the Community's goods.

It must be her joy to think that she is literally a steward for Christ's poor, and so every pot in the house will be to her as an altar bowl.<sup>39</sup>

The Infirmarian must be<sup>40</sup> cheerful and full of strong loving-kindness, using neither softness nor harshness. She must religiously and punctually keep her word.

The Guest Mistress must be filled with the spirit of holy fear,<sup>41</sup> remembering that more than she knows may hang on a short visit and the sample she shews of the Religious Life; and that it is her part not only to serve her guests humbly and willingly, caring for their comfort but also so to instruct and guide them that they may profit by their stay in our house.

The Sacristan, Librarian, and the Workroom Sister must be methodical and orderly, not making other people's carelessness an excuse, but rectifying it with patient tidiness. The Sacristan must be discreet.

---

<sup>38</sup> 1 Corinthians 4.2.

<sup>39</sup> Zechariah 14.20-21.

<sup>40</sup> Romans 12.8.

<sup>41</sup> Rule of St Benet, Chapter 53.

The Doorkeeper must be courteous and sensible.

The Head Mistress shall be large-minded and generous, open to suggestions from Sisters or others, keen about education and always seeking to improve her methods, magnifying her office and sinking herself.

The Boarders' Mistress, besides the qualifications necessary for bringing up children, must be full of Community spirit.

### **BRANCH HOUSES ABROAD**

In Branch Houses abroad, the Rule may be modified, with the consent of the Chapter, in details of the timetable, food, dress, etc.

### **FAULTS**

There shall be a Chapter of Faults daily, in Chapel, when Sisters shall report their breaches of the timetable and of engagements and other matters specified as 'Faults'.

The saying of Faults is primarily for the sake of openness. It is to be presumed that the faults were made of necessity or in the exercise of a reasonable and conscientious discretion.

On the other hand, each Sister must remember that it is always *prima facie* wrong to break the Rule; and so must be careful not to break it without a clear conviction that, in this case, the breach is according to the Community's mind.

There shall be no fixed penances for breaches of Rule.

### **DIFFERENTIA OF C.H.F. RULE**

There are two hedges which enclose all Communities, but women's more than men's: the one outward, of not giving scandal; the other inward, of cherishing recollection. These two run not always but for the most part together. Neither is to be broken except for some weighty reason.

We, in our Community, having a large liberty in reading, talking, going out, seeing friends, and the like, must each of us be the more careful to use our liberty as the servants of God, giving no needless offense,<sup>42</sup> and to shun every danger of distraction, in a more jealous faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ.

---

<sup>42</sup> 2 Corinthians 6.3.