

Therapy for illnesses of soul / by  
Claudius Acquaviva ; French  
translation from the original Latin  
"Industriae ad curandos animae  
morbos" by J.B. Mirabeau [i.e.  
Mirebeau], rendered into English  
by Sister Mary Patrick ; [foreword  
by James P. Moran].

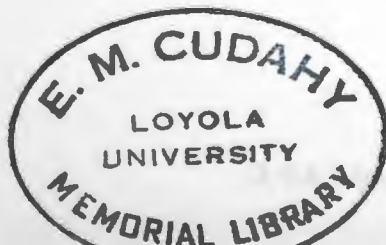
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PROGRAM TO ADAPT  
THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES  
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Ad UsUM PRIVATUM



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## FOREWORD

Chapter Six of "The Jesuits, Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice" by Joseph de Guibert, S.J. deals with Claudio Acquaviva, (Fifth General of the Society of Jesus), 1581-1615.

On page 232 — "In regard to Acquaviva's views about matters pertaining to the interior life our documentation is greater than that about his own personal practice. From him we have two books. The one was prepared by numerous sketches and an exchange of views throughout many years, but it was revised and published by him, the *Directory of the Spiritual Exercises* (*Directorium in Exercitia Spiritualia S.P.N. Ignatii*); the other was his own work, the "*Therapy for Illnesses of Soul*" (*Industriae Ad Curandos Animae Morbos*).

On Page 243 we read: "Still other letters offer to Superiors counsels and directives to enable them to be of greater help to their subjects in their interior life. However, the principal document in this line of thought is his "THERAPY FOR ILLNESSES OF SOUL FOR THE USE OF THE SUPERIORS OF THE SOCIETY." \*

This small volume was printed by Juncta at Florence in 1600, and sent on April 15 to all Superiors by the secretary, Bernardo de Angelis. The title was inspired by Polanco's INDUSTRIAEE. Two preliminary chapters describe the conditions necessary to bring about a successful cure of a soul and the manner in which gentleness and effectiveness (*suavitas et efficacia*) should be joined in good government.

The sixteen following chapters apply these principles to many spiritual illnesses, such as aridity and distractions in prayer, interior languor, disobedience, vanity, laxity in religious observance, imaginary illnesses, aversions for the Institute or Superiors, a worldly spirit, stubbornness, impatience, a spirit of complaining, discouragement and scruples. In these chapters, we notice above all advice that is exact, realistic and elastic, together with extensive inspiration from the Fathers.

St. Basil, St. Gregory, Cassian and St. Bernard are continually quoted.

By introducing this little book into the official corpus of the *Institute of the Society*, the successors of Acquaviva have shown their esteem of it and emphasized the importance of these wise counsels."

\* R.P. Cl. Acquavivae, Soc. Iesu Praep. Gen., *Industriae pro Superioribus eiusdem Societatis ad Curandos Animae Morbos*. This treatise was reproduced in successive editions of the Institute, and is in the *Inst. S.J.*, vol. III, pp. 395-440. French translation by Mirabeau (Paris, 1895).

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Feast of St. Ignatius  
July 31, 1972

## CLAUDIUS ACQUAVIVA

Born at Naples on September 15, 1543 and last son of Antonio, Duke of Atri and Isabella Spinelli, he received from early childhood a profoundly christian education. Religious life had always strongly attracted him.

When death had taken his parents and he had reached his twentieth year, the Duke of Atri, his elder brother sent him before the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius IV, to defend a family matter. He acquitted himself well of his mission and so charmed the Holy Father that he kept him as his personal chamberlain. Pope Pius V retained him.

During the plague of 1567 he came to know better the Society of Jesus in its service to the sick. On the feast of St. Peter, moved by an interior call, he cast himself at the feet of Francis Borgia, then General of the Society, and asked to be admitted. On July 22nd he entered the Novitiate at the age of 24.

On October 28th Stanislaus Kostka arrived in Rome. Acquaviva was asked to give him the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

Nine years had passed since Acquaviva left the Papal Palace, and completed his Novitiate and studies in Theology. In rapid succession he was director of the Roman seminary, Rector of the College of Naples, in 1575 Provincial of Naples, in 1580 Provincial of the Roman Province, and at the age of 37 elected General of the Society.

On January 31, 1615 Claudius Acquaviva died a saintly death after having directed the Society of Jesus for nearly thirty-four years.

## To Superiors of the Society of Jesus

Since Our Reverend Father\* knows full well how much it contributes to the honor of God, to the profit of the Society, and to the assistance of souls that Superiors should be well provided with suitable precepts and directives for right government, he has therefore put forward various Ordinances and Counsels to this end, as time and circumstances have warranted.

But, considering more earnestly the necessity and importance of this matter, and seeing that it is not possible for each and every Superior to acquire really sufficient experience and light in these matters especially on account of the numerous changes which must now be made at the end of the triennium\*, he has thought it well worth while and virtually essential to set things down in a particular Instruction. For it is certain that there is no art in which failings are more dangerous and are fraught with more serious harm for others than the art which is concerned with the spiritual care of souls.

Therefore, remembering that, at the command and insistence of our Blessed Father\*, as Fr. Polanco\*\* once drew some instructions known as *Industriae*, ("Resources"), for the use and teaching of those of our workers who are on the missions, he thought it would not be profitless but indeed very fitting if once again some "*Industriae*," tending to right government, were given to the Superiors of the Society.

\* **Fr. General at that time Claudio Acquaviva**

\* **triennium: three-year period of office of Superior**

\* **Ignatius Loyola**

\*\* **Fr. Polanco, Secretary of the Society and close companion of St. Ignatius**



Wherefore, out of the singular desire the Lord has given him for the happy progress and increase of the Society, he has dictated these "Industriae" for their benefit in the spare time left from his assiduous occupations.

Since the Fathers Assistant and some others who have seen them have so approved as to judge that they be of no small profit to those who could know and use them, it has been decided that it would be beneficial if they were communicated to the whole Society, and that in printed form as now presented so that copies be multiplied and more accurately.

May the Divine Goodness grant that this whole matter may bear the fruit which Our Reverend Father intends, and which we all earnestly desire,

Given at Rome, April 15th, 1600

By command of Our Reverend Father  
General

Bernardo de Angelis  
Secretary of the Society of  
Jesus

## PREFACE

### The Art of Healing Souls: Excellence and Difficulty thereof

#### \* The cure of souls: surpassingly excellent and accordingly more difficult.

Inasmuch as the art of healing illnesses of soul surpasses that of body-healing both in excellence and difficulty, so also does its exercise demand of us greater solicitude and skill. We who bemoan this burden of governing are not only aware of the anguish and dangers thereof, but we make them known in no concealed anxiety. For this reason we must seriously consider whether our efforts to restore our patients to that health desired through our vigilant endeavor and tireless charity be equal concerning the soul as concerning the body; and this equality we must earnestly strive to effect.

#### \* The healing of ever so many is the work of patience.

Indeed frequent and serious consideration and long experience have certainly convinced me that many of our sick people could be restored to health if their condition was handled with paternal patience filled with confidence and love. Through neglect or too routine remedies these same subjects are either given up as hopeless or allowed to go their way uncorrected.

#### \* Prescriptions for spiritual healing.

Therefore I deem it no futile task to set down briefly and orderly what I have discovered through careful observation during the course of many years, together with medical prescriptions, and also whatever else was found helpful or detrimental. They are matters wherein I have noticed myself and others to have erred, and furthermore, wherein some procedures were apt and others unsuitable.

In this way considerable light will be afforded those souls little versed in governing and directing the spiritual life of subjects. Moreover, these instructions will serve to refresh the memory, stir up zeal, and stimulate the will of others who, through the unction of the Holy Spirit, the writings of the saints and their own actual experience, are in no need of help.

## Chapter 1

### Requisites for Correctly Effecting a Cure

#### \* **Realization of the Superior's obligation.**

For the effective and beneficial correction of disorders in the spiritual life there are, both for the therapist himself and the patient, many requirements which will be briefly considered here. One thought above all must be kept constantly in mind, namely, the greatness of the obligation assumed before God in undertaking this work, so that according to the prophet (Ez. 34) — or rather, to the word of God Himself — “We must strengthen the weak,” etc. When asked what the guiding motive should be in a Superior assuming the charge of others, St. Basil aptly replied: “When a person helping the injured cleanses each and every wound of infection and applies remedies suitable to the particular nature of each wound, he will by no means accustom himself to perform this task while conceiving a vain estimation of himself but, rather, will do it with a humble and anxious concern, with vigilance and exquisite care.”

#### \* **The Superior is the spiritual physician.**

“So in like manner and even more so should he, to whom has been entrusted the healthy preservation of his brethren, give full deliberation to his duty and earnestly endeavor to fulfill it since, as the servant of all, he must render to God an account of each subject.” Such is the opinion of St. Basil.

#### \* **The spiritually sick are called patients.**

Assuredly there is need for constant care and vigilance: nor is Cassian's comparison (Libr. 10, c.7), borrowed from terms used in clinical services, to be considered far-fetched. Those whose spiritual healing we have under-

taken, are rightly called our patients, since they have become our responsibility and our charge. So like one having to give an account to God, let the Superior therefore reflect on what to do and what to avoid. This consideration should greatly stimulate us lest in doing nothing we should think ourselves blameless.

**\* Recourse must be had to prayer.**

With this fundamental consideration established, that being mindful that God is our refuge, that life and light and all good are produced in the hearts of the faithful by His Spirit, the Superior should not rely on his own prudence or labor, but devote himself to prayer and beg others to pray: verbal rebuke will avail nothing unless the person correcting speaks from the heart. Wherefore, in speaking of him who is in charge of others whom he strives to lead to God, St. Gregory says: "He should be so aflame with charity that he should seem to be not a petitioner, but the very petition itself, since he should so earnestly seek the salvation of the faithful that, from a constant interior relish, every affection of his heart find expression in the tenderness of his petition" (I Reg. lib. 5, c.3). And Job, as Cassian notes (Collat. 6 c.10), offered daily sacrifice to God for the purification of his sons, desiring them to appear the children of God rather than subjects and members of his own household.

**\* Count nothing incurable.**

The Superior should reflect on the above with an open mind: however, St. Leo's admonition remains true that inveterate diseases are long and difficult to cure. Still, as St. Basil teaches, there is nothing so defective in nature that cannot be remedied by dint of treatment, nor is there any serious vice so ingrained that cannot yield to the fear of God. This same saint elsewhere gives proof of this, for through a holy comparison with nature he proves that wilful wrongdoing is corrigible. He explains how bitter pomegranates and acidic almonds may, with agriculture, become palatable fruits through the grafting of a slip of

rich pine under their bark. Hence his conclusion: "No man steeped in vice should yield to despair. Let him be mindful that as the qualities of trees may be changed through cultivation, so also all disorders of soul may be conquered and overcome through care and zeal in acquiring virtues."

So we should never allow ourselves to become dejected, since the remedying of a disorder is not proportionate to either its difficulty, its seriousness, or our lack of strength, because through patience and confidence in God the uprooting of vice is to be accomplished.

**\* How reluctance of the patient is overcome.**

A difficulty arises here. In the case of physical disorder the patient readily recognizes and perceives his illness, and above all else he desires to be cured. He sends for his physician and, in his wish to be restored, he refuses no medicine however bitter and unpleasant. In spiritual disorders quite the contrary occurs. The sufferer is the last person to become aware of his complaint; he avoids his doctor and reluctantly yields to any curative.

**\* The disease must be admitted.**

Indeed the principal effort at effecting recovery ought to bear precisely on this point, namely, to make the patient cognizant of his disorder. As St. Basil teaches, the patient must first be persuaded that skilled physicians readily detect the positive symptoms of hidden ills even though these escape the attention of others, including the sick person himself. Let the subject therefore trust his Superior, especially since pride and self-love seriously hinder us from recognizing our faults. Then let him be spurred on to a more diligent self-examination while there will be pointed out to him certain undeniable indications of his trouble not previously recognized or perceived.

**\* The way to point out the sickness.**

Finally, he will be more seriously urged to pray, since

the disorder has come about through his lack of enlightenment and spiritual awareness. Let him realize how far removed from health is he who is unaware of his secret malady. Should he have no sensible perception of his illness, let him believe the warnings of an expert. Should the physically healthy take medicine, harm can result; but for the virtuous the contrary takes place, since acts of mortification and self-abnegation cannot fail to produce an increase of strength and virtue in the soul. According to St. Basil's advice, let the patient use Holy Scripture as a mirror, so to speak, wherein he can see a reflection of the loathsomeness of his disease, namely, rancor, pride, detraction, etc., and from this same source let him draw those remedies appropriate for its cure. Let him tell himself: "That precisely is my malady," so that like a man consulting his doctor, and seeing a shelf laden with various medications, he will consider which are suitable for himself.

**\* The adroitness of the Superior will surmount the difficulties.**

Thus, and more rightly so, will the subject act, considering that he does so under the Superior's direction, for when the physician himself prescribes, the patient becomes more convinced of his trouble and more confidently accepts the prescription. Regarding the subject's good will and his desire for recovery there can surely be no doubt, for who can be so foolish — especially one who has forsaken the world so as to assume the obligations of religious vows — as not to wish for his own recovery?

But where there is coercion in the taking of bitter potions there is also lack of influence. Hence by the declaring of the existing malady, by the advantageous use of every opportunity, by suavity and encouragement, and finally by the mildness of his remedies — a mildness either inherent in the remedy itself or added thereto by extra seasoning and various applications — the experienced phy-

sician will accurately but patiently level out all existing difficulties.

Once the crisis is safely over, he may well hope the patient will submit to a treatment at present abhorred. In the meantime and while the patient does yet detest it (since it is a vice of the will), let the Superior realize that this, too, is matter pertinent to the remedy, namely, to make the subject desire his own cure, for with this difficulty removed or reduced, the Superior will note with great relief a daily increase of health and strength in the subject.

**\* Nine duties of the Superior are exacted which go by the name of condiments.**

For these remedies to be beneficial, it is extremely necessary that the Superior strive to do whatever is required on his part personally. St. Bernard aptly explains the Superior's duties through a comparison with the use of spices (Serm. II in Resur. ad Abbates). As he expresses it, there are spices of the mind, of the tongue, and of the hands.

Those of the mind are three: compassionate affection, zeal for righteousness, and the spirit of discretion. Let our mind possess the spirit of discretion, he continues, so that in taking advantage of opportunities, it may at expedient times stir up zeal and still make allowances for the weaknesses of another.

Likewise the spices of the tongue are three: mildness in rebuking, abundance in exhortation, efficacy in persuading. Spices of the hands are also three in number: restraint of the flesh from all pleasures, compassion for our confreres, consistent piety in the exercise of our duty. The explanation of these should be carefully read in St. Bernard's Sermon to the Abbots: it merely suffices to recall it here. Just as these virtues are essential to the Superior for fruitful correction, so also should they be diligently acquired if we do not wish to labor in vain.



\* **Suitable remedies.**

With these precepts understood, let the Superior take on the work at hand and prescribe remedies suitable to the nature of each disorder, curing contraries by contraries, as our Constitutions teach concerning pride and other evil propensities of the soul. St. Basil accurately expresses this: "Vainglory is to be cured by the imposition of more abject tasks; futile and idle chatter by silence; immoderate sleep by watches and prayer; physical sloth by enjoining heavier tasks; unbecoming gluttony by fasting; murmuring by separation from others."

In all this the Superior will strive to get the subject to consider these remedies not as a burden imposed by the Superior, but as a voluntary undertaking of his own. And the subject should persuade himself that if he strenuously attacks the disorders as does one who seriously wishes to be cured, he will find himself on the road to recovery sooner than one would believe. He will experience the truth of those words of the Holy Spirit concerning wisdom: "In working thou shalt labor a little and shalt quickly eat of its fruits" (Eccli. 6:20).

\* **Timeliness with remedies.**

In imitation of medical doctors, let the wise Superior take care to act thus opportunely for, as St. Gregory recommends after addressing Scargo, the bishop: "Physicians do not offer sick people freshly compounded drugs but, rather what is mellowed, as it were, by timely appropriateness," to which he adds: "for fear that if given sooner, they would be a source of danger instead of help" (Lib. 8, Epist. 110). The Superior must not refrain from employing every kind of remedy but, like doctors curing the sick, he should first use milder ones not repulsive to the patient.

Let restraint from certain things be prescribed and let the patient be urged to desire recovery. Finally, let this delay be in the nature of a deferral through paternal moderation and not at all in the neglecting of a cure,

which would be most harmful. Many are the Superiors indeed who, seeing their subjects not well disposed, do not so much put off the remedy to an opportune time as really neglect it. We shall return to this subject later on.

- \* **Under guise of loving, do not refrain from correcting.**
- \* **Under pretense of gentleness one does not use cures.**

The Superior should be diligently on his guard lest, being misled by his own gentle disposition or natural timidity, he refrains from correcting. But the Superior must understand and realize that he loves the offender more and shows him greater kindness when, in the words of St. Gregory, by not sparing, he really spares "Since he all the sooner frees his subject from fault, provided the admonition be not delayed. By freely indicating the fault the Superior does not spare it but he does spare the subject through what he has corrected" (Lib. 13 Moral). For what can be more cruel than that kind of mercy which allows the infection to spread and fester and which, easily curable at first, now needs the knife? Thus are created contagion and danger with regard to the other limbs, and because of our folly harm is done to the whole body.

Nor should the Superior be alarmed on seeing that the remedies to be applied appear somewhat harsh to his subject, for the patient's recovery is to be considered rather than his feelings. As Cassian says: "The cutting and salutary cauterization performed by a doctor on flesh putrified by infected ulcers are rightly regarded as evil by those undergoing such — for indeed the spur is not pleasant to the horse, nor correction to the erring" (Collat. 6, c.6). And St. Gregory likewise adds (Lib. 7, Epist. 112): "It will even happen that the very person temporarily embittered because of something that was prohibited will come to regard the prohibition as pleasant, due to the help it affords his soul, since he himself has overcome the very source whence the enemy could previously conquer him." Though remedies be bitter to the subject, the Superior must perform his duty which he

cannot inculpably neglect. He must perform it through charity and the desire for the welfare of his patient whom he would otherwise be afflicting: in the eyes of God omniscient he is seeking the good of this son whom he has received from God to be healed.

**\* Things to be pondered before assaying the cure.**

But before attempting to apply treatment to his subject's faults, let the Superior attentively consider and look into the nature of this disorder, the disposition of the patient and, as St. Gregory says (Lib. 29, Moral, c. 14), whether he be sanguine and jovial or melancholic and sad, choleric and impetuous or slow and remiss. Next he is to consider how long the malady has existed, what remedies were employed and which proved to be helpful or harmful; which members of the household were apt to help or hinder herein, so that from all these sources the subject may be appropriately assisted.

**\* The Superior should examine himself for humility's sake so as to correct the more fruitfully.**

Before all else let the Superior examine himself, both for humility's sake so that he fulfill his duty in all fatherliness and mildness and so as to thereby become a more worthy and apt instrument of the Lord in restoring His child to health. This must be attended to for, as St. Gregory urges: "We are to be mindful that we are still humans striving to correct personal faults — at least we used to — although we are now, by the grace of God, free from them. Thus with a humble heart we shall more moderately correct others, seeing a reflection of ourselves in those we correct" (Lib. 23, Moral c. 8). No words can describe how invaluable is this method with regard to either the merit or the manner of administering correction.

**\* Kinds of spiritual illnesses to be dealt with.**

The spiritual illnesses here dealt with are of sixteen principal kinds and suitable remedies will be prescribed for each. First of all care must be taken to use milder

and less harsh ones — a method highly praised by physicians. These remedies should be such as promise health not through their bitterness, but through their excellence blended with agreeableness. So, remedies are to be sought — not rare or exotic ones but, as we might say, simple ones from our very own gardens, meaning, from our Constitutions.

Since Superiors and other judicious men are sometimes too imperative in their requests and so insistent in their pressure, we shall explain somewhat this blending of mildness and strength in governing. Some think such a combination scarcely possible since mildness degenerates into indulgence, and firmness mostly into culpable harshness. Thus this blending needs to be briefly commented upon, for unless these two be wisely combined, all other means will be entirely lacking either in gentleness or effectiveness, meaning to say that they will no-wise produce fruitful correction, nor bring glory to God nor good to the Society.

## Chapter 2

### Combining Mildness and Effectiveness in Governing

#### \* Method of religious government should be strong and kind.

The method of governing should be strong and yet kind, especially with regard to souls who have voluntarily sacrificed themselves to God and who, being ready and eager in spirit and desirous of mortification, are to be urged to the fulness of perfection. The unanimous authority of the Fathers teaches us this, as also do our Constitutions and the admonitions and many examples of our holy founder, St. Ignatius.

#### \* This combination is difficult.

Many confess inability to discern a practical way of effecting this combination for, if subjects treading the way of spiritual perfection are to be treated justly, and if Superiors are to omit nothing that such perfection demands, then this blending would hardly seem secure, considering that the flesh and human frailty are reluctant to keep abreast with the desires of the spirit. Hence it arises that even though occasioned by sincerest zeal whereby the Superior omits nothing, this method of governing can yet become harsh and almost intolerable since that zeal is neither consonant with perceptiveness nor considerate of human frailty.

Inversely, if, on pretext of fraternal compassion, we are considerate concerning human weakness and all too easily yield to concerns of the flesh as opposed to the spirit, who cannot but see, as Scripture says, "that priceless soil consumed by gradual inundation" (Job 14:19) when we shall have tepid, carnal men in whom we shall have nourished not so much a spirit of abnegation and love of the cross as sensuality and self-love? As St.

Basil so benignly teaches, and as handed down by all masters of the spiritual life who have been taught this fundamental truth by Christ our Lord, this love of the cross is the very essence of the religious life.

#### \* To enable the Superior to combine both.

What, then, is a Superior to do so as to prevent firmness from degenerating into harshness, or gentleness into carelessness and laxity? I shall explain briefly whatever I have personally discovered from observation and experience in this matter. So as to do so clearly and succinctly, the following would seem the most suitable method, namely, to set down certain headings under which come nearly all types of asperity and harshness; likewise those sources from which laxity arises. Finally, having compared extremes, I shall indicate the happy medium to be followed.

#### \* Harsh government.

Herein are included almost all indications of harsh and severe government:

*Thing commanded is impossible.* 1. In the matter of giving commands, when the thing enjoined be in itself grave and overwhelming, as can happen for want of perspicacity or judgment in a Superior.

*Lack of potential.* 2. And more frequently, when the thing imposed is not hard in itself, but the assignee is lacking that physical or mental potential needed to fulfill the injunction.

*Harsh manner of commanding.* 3. When, whatever the injunction, it be given in harsh words and a domineering manner, especially if the subject suspects that it all arises from some excessive passion in the Superior.

*Inconveniently timed.* 4. When he urges extemporaneous fulfillment of his orders though the subject be not predisposed for this, being given neither time nor help so as to prepare.



**Equally exacting in trivial or grave matters.** 5. When matters grave or trivial are equally insisted on, all the more so and especially when the Superior is so exacting in less important things because this suits his particular mood.

**Subject given no hearing.** 6. When all the subject's reasons and excuses are rejected almost peremptorily as being temptations and are not given a kindly hearing.

**Superior suspicious.** 7. When a Superior appears so suspicious or prejudiced towards some that the subject is convinced of the impossibility to satisfy him in anything.

**Has ill opinion of subject.** 8. When, in betraying an ill opinion of the subject, the Superior appears to unfavorably interpret all that he does — a cause of most distress indeed.

**Nowise commiserates.** 9. When being concerned with the perfection of his Institute and its Rules and being unmindful of his own misery, the Superior can neither commiserate with the weakness of others nor reprimand them without amplifying their faults, so that actually in commanding he would appear to be dealing not with sons gifted with reason and will, but with inanimate tools that are to be moved around.

**Superior equivocal or obscure.** 10. When, in speaking or commanding, a Superior seems to do so equivocally or obscurely as if on purpose so as not to be understood, thus having the subject always liable to argue with him: it is amazing how greatly this manner of acting incenses subjects.

**Difficulties in requests.** 11. When the Superior refuses almost every request, when reasons must be given for the thing asked and consideration be shown the petitioner with regard to edifying outsiders as well as our own members and, finally, the utility this affords the person asking.

**Rigid interpretation.** 12. When, in doubtful matters, the Superior always interprets most scrupulously and rigidly.

\* **Remissness in governing.**

Inversely, the sources of weak and lax government may be condensed under the following headings:

**Lesser matters neglected.** 1. If only grave and potentially scandalous matters are considered and taken into account by the Superior while other matters are for the most part overlooked.

**Neglect of Rules.** 2. When on pretext of the multiplicity of Rules or our holy founder's mild parlance, the Superior places less insistence on the observance of these Rules.

3. When an injunction is easily rescinded or substituted because of some slight aversion manifested by the assignee, or at another's request.

**Over-indulgence.** 4. When, from his frequent witnessing the transgressions by some members, the Superior becomes accustomed to considering as trivial certain matters clearly perceived to be wrong.

5. When the Superior judges and disapproves indeed, but neither admonishes nor corrects the offender lest he hurt his feelings or stir up a hornet's nest against himself. Regarding this way of acting we find those words of St. Gregory to be so very true: "When by speaking, one can remedy wrong-doing, his consenting silence is to be feared" (Lib. 10 Moral, c. 4).

6. When, so as to satisfy a particular person or forestall recriminations, or in consideration for another's prestige, for his own friends or for personal reasons, the Superior easily grants what is not conducive to edification regarding his subject or his Community.

7. When, so as to avoid hurting the feelings of the offender or anyone else, the Superior does not investigate or remedy faults, nor apply the necessary precautions against new transgressions.



8. When, on pretext of humility and kindness, the Superior allows himself to be condemned and his injunction neglected.

9. When, from natural timidity or human respect the Superior admonishes so cursorily and insipidly as not to affect the offender in the least, and merely appears desirous of fulfilling his obligation before God and of freeing himself of remorse from a neglected admonition.

10. Lastly when, being content with having shown that such faults are displeasing to him personally, the Superior thinks his obligation to God fulfilled, and does not effectively prevent the repetition of the same faults, and like Heli he considers his duty done by merely saying: "It is no good report I hear about you" (I Reg. 2:24).

**\* Whence asperity and remissness are discernible.**

From the foregoing can be easily seen in what consist harshness and weakness, and what must be avoided in these two extremes lest we be found too stringent or unduly mild. Nor will it be difficult to see how effectiveness can be united to mildness whereby we be both resolute in pursuing our end and gentle in the manner of attaining it.

**\* How strength and gentleness are to be combined.**

In granting or denying, in correcting and reproofing, in punishing faults and giving injunctions, in leading subjects to virtue and perfection and drawing them to higher levels, both character and physical and mental powers must be considered. Opportunities are to be reckoned and exhortation resorted to, charity blended with zeal is to be equally manifest, magnanimity and patience are to be preserved. Nor is anything to be neglected whereby subjects might envisage impunity, so that they do only what they like and neglect what they dislike. Thus they begin to gratify their own inclinations and accustom themselves to acting and murmuring against the orders and injunctions of Superiors, so that they finally

come to regard the Rules as mere counsels whereby they are doing well in observing them, but doing no harm in neglecting them.

**\* Concerning the Superior.**

Tolerating such evils is not kindness but laxity, for in this manner of governing the Superior does not envisage the good of the Society or even that of those souls with whom he is thus dealing. In governing this way, Superiors must not consider themselves as kind, but remiss and weak. Nor, inversely, should over-demanding Superiors flatter themselves on their zealous observance.

**\* Concerning the subject.**

Subjects must pay attention and not label as harshness and asperity what in a Superior is really the urging of veritable zeal for perfection and religious discipline, nor should they demand of him a weakness that can be a pernicious indulgence. They are to realize that many things must be denied them if such be hindrances to perfection, so also whatever goes counter to their vows must be forbidden since this pertains to the glory of God and the common good. Penances and correction are not shunned by him who desires help and guidance. We are not to consider as kind any director who, in neglecting the correction of a subject lest he offend him, allows the malady to become perilously aggravated.

Finally, as so very truly observed by Serenus (whom Cassian in his conference on disorders of the soul so aptly calls the reflection of his name), indulgence on the part of Superiors is the unfailing mark of subordinates' tepidity. To my mind this Father's words should be quoted, for they truly express a deep horror of this indulgence and pernicious lenience: "We see some souls who have sunk so low in tepidity that it is necessary to placate them with light admonitions, lest deserting their cells they fall into graver faults and in wandering about, if I may so speak, become implicated in more serious vices. It is to

be considered a great achievement on their part if they can be got to simply remain in indolent and idle solitude. Instead of applying a real remedy, their Superior addresses them thus: Sit in your cells, eat, drink, and sleep as much as you please, provided that you remain constantly there."

**\* Wrong notions to be removed.**

Superiors, and more especially Provincials, should take care that such adverse thinking be eradicated by every possible manner as being most detrimental to the Society and to any religious Community. Kindness does not consist in yielding to the whims of subjects, but that in our commanding there appear nothing savoring of harshness, anger, or any other passion.

**\* Correcting with gentleness.**

Rather, let there shine forth a paternal gravity, a certain holy compassion and gentleness, but withal let it be nonetheless firm and effective. Regarding the person punishing, let him indicate not so much the desire to humiliate and punish but, rather, an obligation for such action arising from zeal for the common good and the utility of the offender. "When we refuse what we have to refuse, let it be done with certain signs of regret whilst seeming prepared to grant it when this or anything else seems expedient.

If we are desirous of correcting faults, we must not be like people who bring on nose-bleeds through excessive nose-blowing: while being exacting we must, however, be kind and act not for the pleasure of triumphing, but through concern for the good of the Society and the welfare of the subject. And so we join forces with him so that we may declare victory over the tempter. Let us command, but with circumspection and kindness, showing ourselves desirous of God's glory and the subject's profit. "What is not accomplished today let us patiently know how to await on the morrow.

While waiting, however, we must keep the desired end in view and be careful to employ those means necessary for its attainment. If victory be difficult to attain due to the subject's lack of zeal, there can be no more efficacious and milder means than in inducing him to become spiritual-minded and a diligent examiner of self. Finally, let our heart be so abounding in charity in dealing with our subject that he will come to us as a child to his mother, to lay bare his temptations before us and, despite all natural repugnance to his feelings, let the troubled son receive without resentment those reprimands we make as arising from our genuine love.

**\* Severity combined with kindness.**

Our saintly father also teaches us this mode of procedure when, in part nine of the Constitutions, he shows that severity is to be combined with gentleness and kindness, so that the Superior does not allow himself to deviate what he judges to be more pleasing to God and yet knows how to compassionate with his sons; and that he acts thus so that those who are reprimanded or corrected will, despite rebukes displeasing to their lower nature, still realize that he is in rectitude and charity discharging his duty before the Lord.

## Chapter 3

### Aridity, Distractions in Meditation, Desolation in Devotions

#### \* **Examine the many aspects of aridity.**

So as to apply a remedy suitable to the nature of the disorders we must examine and diligently consider many aspects. First we must examine whether this disorder be continuous or occasional. If the latter, are these onsets of long or short duration? if experienced only in the morning meditation or prolonged throughout his spiritual exercises day and night, as it were?

#### \* **Causes of aridity.**

We must examine whence this derives and consider the source of distractions; whether arising from a natural instability or mobility of character that leaves the subject no rest or composure; or from some inordinate affection and desire that constantly return to the mind, agitate it, and obtrusively deviate it; or from some defect such as digression, lack of matter, so that in having nothing to sustain the attention the mind wanders vaguely; or from neglecting custody of the senses wherein the imaginings begin; or from idleness, levity, facetiousness and the like which conduce the mind to things external and render it mercurial and puerile; or from excess activity that smothers the soul, so to speak; or, finally, from a prolonged trial and withdrawal of consolation. These and similar questions are to be examined.

Nor is there one universal remedy for all men and all disorders. Regarding the causes of and remedies for agitated or distracted prayer, the spiritual director will find many helps throughout the works of St. Gregory as well as in those of Cassian (Collat. 9). e.g. Abbot Isaac's treatise on prayer. However, although these authors treat

of certain matters more suited to contemplatives and hermits, prudence and discretion do not allow Superiors to propose the use of such among our brethren.

#### \* **When arising from instability of nature.**

So, as to whether or not the disorders stem from natural instability of character, this may be found out from examining if they have been continuous throughout several years, even dating back to one's entrance to the Novitiate. Also, if they arise without cause or occasion on the subject's part or if the remedies applied have accomplished nothing, especially when he has used them not sporadically over a short period, but with persevering diligence.

#### \* **How to be encouraged.**

Should the disorders be of such nature, the subject should be encouraged to patiently persevere and strive to arm himself with constancy and longanimity so as to work at acquiring solid virtues (as the Constitutions teach), and to make every effort to advance in the way of divine service. He will supplement his shortcomings by frequent and fervent ejaculations and, like a poor mendicant, by commending his spiritual poverty to our saintly Father Ignatius, to God, and to all His saints.

The subject's spiritual readings must not be extensive or long, but brief and with careful consideration and sustained attention. He will go through the different mysteries of the Rosary, the life and Passion of Christ, thanking, petitioning, humbly resolving to imitate this grand Model, offering this on his own behalf to the Eternal Father. Should the subject continue to piously and perseveringly meditate on the Passion, he will undoubtedly discover great enlightenment of mind and unwavering firmness of will, for when left to ourselves our way becomes dark and slippery.



**\* When aridity continues for long.**

Should the complaint continue for long, so that aridity and distractions be suffered in the daily meditation and religious exercises, the subject should be urged to resort to further seclusion and spiritual exercises for some weeks, for constancy in meditation and reading greatly conduces to attaining composure of soul and helps wonderfully to recall the mind from its wanderings, as experience wisely teaches. It will also be most helpful in these exercises to note down the lights and resolves experienced therein, to single out some particular item and subsequently make use of such either so as to produce acts of various virtues or to raise the soul interiorly to God.

**\* When it happens only during morning meditation.**

Should the subject experience this only during the morning meditation, its cause may be heaviness of head or some such indisposition whereby the mind is less apt to meditating at an early hour; or it may be that due to some excessive mental application he is unable to continue for a whole hour. In the latter case the meditation is to be divided up so that the complete hour be sectioned into a series of short and separate meditations; or the usual time prescribed for the meditation is to be changed (though this concession is not to be granted too inconsiderately, but only after due consideration). Meanwhile the meditation is to be supplemented with oft-repeated renewal of intentions and frequent elevation of the heart to God. By reciting psalm-verses the subject will bestir himself, at times to compunction or humility, at other times to petition, to praise of God, thus disposing himself to various pious affections according as the greater needs or movements of the soul suggest.

**\* When it stems from inordinate affection.**

If the disorder springs from inordinate affection or desire for something, he must work vigorously and relentlessly so that the root be either extirpated or crushed and left to die out lest it sprout anew. Unpremeditated

occasions are easily avoided since they do not derive from any particular affection or inclination of the will, nor are they difficult to expel since they do not greatly affect the mind. But here again caution, moderate care, and self-vigilance must be employed.

**\* From lack of matter.**

If difficulty in prayer arises from digression and lack of matter, let the subject first diligently prepare his points and read meditations on the same matter, for such reading is of wonderful succor. Then let him be taught how to amplify these points on the life and Passion of our Lord and to consider the questions: Who suffers, what He suffers, for whom, with what love, with what fruit; to consider the persons, words, deeds and so forth, reflecting on self, comparing and contrasting God's greatness with our baseness, His supreme goodness with our heinous ingratitude, and other such consideration. Finally, the subject should have at hand a supply of points thus prepared so that whatever matter be lacking within the one he will find within the other.

**\* From negligence.**

Should the cause of his trouble arise from neglected custody of the senses, the subject is to strive more diligently, examine himself more closely, and more carefully avoid what may be harmful to the soul for, as Cassian (Coll. 9, c. 3) all too truly says: "Whatever has been occupying the mind prior to prayer must inevitably return to the memory during this exercise. Therefore, whatever dispositions we wish to be ours during prayer we must strive to have prior thereto."

**\* From idleness and facetiousness.**

Should his trouble arise from idleness and facetiousness, let him avoid foolishness. During the day let him from time to time raise his mind to God, make visits in honor of Christ's sufferings and say a Pater or an Ave, or a Salve Regina in honor of our Blessed Mother. Let



him earnestly seek the gift of prayer, recommend himself to the intercession of the saints, frequently open up his soul to his Spiritual Father, and be mindful of Cassian's teaching (Coll. i, c. 17): "Though it be impossible for the mind not to be occupied with thoughts, it nevertheless lies within our power to modify the type of thoughts — whether holy and spiritual, or worldly and carnal. Therefore let there be frequent and attentive readings of Scripture so as to fill the mind with spiritual thoughts which it may meditate."

**\* Maxims to be shunned.**

Finally, the subject must be thoroughly warned against falling into the senseless persuasions and harmful utterances of certain souls who take little or no care in keeping vigilance over their senses, act with liberty and laxity in all things, and are tepid and sluggish in pursuing things spiritual. And yet these are the very persons who attribute spiritual aridity, distractions in prayer, and insensibility of interior life to a trial from God who, they say, wishes to wean them from the milk of His consolations so as to nourish them on bread and solid food as though they were well advanced spiritually.

Let him reflect, rather, on the words of St. Gregory (In I. Reg. c.I) against such men: "We who have no guard over our senses — and much less over our heart — wish through contemplation to penetrate the secrets of heaven, and yet we keep no guard not only over our hearts, but also over our bodies. And indeed we often gaze at unbecoming sights, listen to idle chatter, talk effusively, sleep and eat, not so much to restore our bodily strength but to procure it sensual pleasure. So when we wish to meditate on divine mysteries, contemplate things heavenly, emerge from our spiritual darkness or savor the delights of interior consolation, we are all the more justly repulsed from such great and wondrous spiritual mysteries. When,

through negligence, we yield to ourselves and thereby are remiss in building up the fortifications of our hearts to defensive heights, so much the more difficult will it be for us to rise."

**\* Examination to be made.**

A diligent examination must therefore be made and even venial and slight faults attended to, seeing they cause no slight hindrance to our progress. St. Gregory (Lib. 2, c.I in 1 Reg.) earnestly warns us that since even the elect cannot be sinless, sinners must strive daily to overcome those sins to which human frailty subjects them, for he who does not have his faults removed in proportion as he commits them, slight though they be, will have his soul gradually cluttered up with such and be deservedly deprived of the fruit of interior contentment.

**\* Trouble from excess occupation.**

If the trouble arises from excess occupation, there is to be a retrenching of those that are neither necessary nor useful to fellow-men. The subject should take some time off for free relaxation: during work he will pause a few moments — no matter how brief — so as to raise his mind to God and recollect himself. Care will be taken to maintain freedom of soul and, according to St. Bernard's advice, he must not give himself up to, but lend himself to his occupation. He will ask his Superior for a decrease in his work and even for a temporarily complete cessation so as to return thereto with more alacrity and efficiency.

**\* From divine withdrawal.**

If the imposition comes from a divine trial and withdrawal, the subject must be exhorted to patience and resigned acceptance lest he become dejected; but first let him be careful to humble himself before God, to ascribe to himself the cause of God's withdrawal. Nor is he to grow too self-complacent, but will blame himself as often as he perceives even the slightest cooling off in

piety. "In truth," says St. Bernard, "I have learned that there is nothing so efficacious for increasing, retaining, or recovering grace as a heart that God finds constantly free from all pride but fearful of displeasing Him."

This same saint indicates the signs and effects of this withdrawal. "My heart," he says, "has dried up and curdled like milk: it has become as earth without water; nor can I have compunction unto tears — so great is the hardness of my heart. The psalms have no savor, nor reading any pleasure, nor prayer any delight, nor meditation any relish. What has become of that inebriation of soul, that serenity of mind, that peace and joy in the Holy Spirit?" And this holy abbot attributes this trial to sins of pride committed in the past, or as a preservative against similar ones in the future.

**\* Five causes of withdrawal (according to St. Bonaventure).**

In his work regarding religious progress, St. Bonaventure (Proc. 7 # 21) attributes this aridity and withdrawal of devotion to five causes: 1. To humble the soul. 2. To purify it, for the less purified it is, the less desirous is it of devotion and the less grateful in receiving it. 3. For the soul's instruction, so that it understand that devotion depends not upon itself, by reason of its own merits, but that it comes from the grace and liberality of God. 4. From a violent upsurge of emotion that sweeps away liberty of mind and seeks devotion as if it is to be extracted by force. 5. New and greater graces and glory are merited while this unfulfilled yearning purifies the soul: this enduring of desolation and the humble acceptance of sorrow are as a file, rendering the soul more gleaming and more befitting the divine glory.

**\* Seventeen causes according to Gerson (De Myst. Theolog. pract. Consid. vel industria 6).**

Gerson copiously but briefly sets down seventeen causes of this divine withdrawal: 1. As we have given from St. Bernard whom he quotes — so as to restrain

or avoid pride. 2. A stimulant to inflame more vehement desires. 3. For knowledge of one's frailty, so that man may esteem himself more vile. 4. So that he may compassionate the desolation of others. 5. In atonement, through that sensible grief that is suffered. 6. A warning to one who can help others, not to seek interior consolation at the expense of his apostolate and spiritual help to his neighbor. 7. That, by experiencing this trial he both acquire other virtues and teach them effectively to others. 8. A preservative against neglecting one's duties of state in exchange for the delights of contemplation. 9. In punishment for venial sin whereby God acts like a father showing a displeased countenance to his son so that he be circumspect in all things and diligently apply every care to reform himself. 10. So that he will know that such consolation is not the result of his own labor, or will, or seeking, but is a gift from the mercy of God (Rom. 9:10). 11. God's cleansing of the spiritual sea of the soul which, from a prolonged calm is apt to become covered with impurities which agitation and upheaval can dispel. 12. A proof whether the soul really loves God disinterestedly and if it is prepared to obey Him without any rewarding consolation or sweetness. 13. Lest in clinging to and delighting in the gifts of God, he begins to love them instead of the Giver. Like the best of fathers, God in His providence removes these as one would a fruit or other things, whilst preparing His son for an inheritance and a kingdom. 14. A preservative of bodily health and strength lest there be weakness and deficiency through tears, lamentations and alleviation in sensible consolation. 15. A means God employs so as to urge the soul to show more love, like the eagle coaxing its fledglings to fly (Deut. 32: 2), or a mother leaving her little one for an hour so that it will the more insistently call for her, the more eagerly seek her, the more fondly embrace her, and whereby she in turn will experience greater joy. 16. An exercising of patience, for being thus afflicted is not without great tribulation and anxiety. 17. Finally, so that the soul conjecture that if such a slight with-

drawal be such a trial now, how great indeed would be the future affliction of perpetual deprivation.

**\* That this withdrawal be for our good.**

According to St. Diadochus (c. 87), God through similar trials chastises our immoderateness of will by depriving us of consolation so as to teach us wherein vice differs from virtue. In humble repentance and holy submission we must hope with unwavering confidence in the divine goodness, says this same saint, for this is usually the lesson to be learned from such withdrawal of sensible favors.

**\* Take care to be adroit in every respect.**

Diligent care is to be taken in all this, as Theodorus says (according to Cassian: Coll. 6, c. 10), that we be adroit in every respect, meaning that we always advance whether we find ourselves in spiritual prosperity or adversity, so that whether we be fervent in spirit, elevated above earthly concerns and nourished with spiritual meditations, or in having all spiritual fervor withdrawn we suffer tepidity and gloom when through unbearable and bitter aversion all means of virtue become meaningless, let us then use both hands, as it were, so as to gain victory.

"Therefore," he adds, "he who enjoys that prosperity pertaining to the right hand, so to speak, must not let himself be elated by insidious vainglory: nor should he who is in that adversity pertaining to the left yield to despair, but fight valiantly and, rather, arm himself with patience to exercise virtue, so that in employing both hands as right ones, he is triumphant in adversity and prosperity alike and gains the palm of victory."

**Chapter 4**

**Apathy and Debility of Spirit, and in the Exercising of Virtue**

**\* Invigorating remedy for this disorder.**

To one suffering from this disorder, as to one buried in deep sleep, an invigorating remedy must be applied.

With a view to more effectively affecting the sleeper, we must first din into his ears: "No man knows if he be deserving of love or hatred" (Eccls. 9:1). Says St. Bernard (Serm. 33 in Cant.): "This text is terrifying and most disturbing. I am filled with dread when I apprehensively open Scripture at this section: "Who knows if he be deserving of love or hatred?"

This thought inspired dread in holy men who were the very pillars of the Church. And we, whose conscience so often sounds our death-knell, should we not tremble when we can find within ourselves nothing really reassuring concerning the great affair of our salvation? Do we honestly think that because we have embraced the religious state we are secure from all peril? This would be a deceptive and dangerous error indeed! St. Gregory speaks of certain religious souls who seem to speed ahead paving the way of perfection for others and then fall into the ditch, so that seeing their downfall, other souls who follow are made more humble and cautious. Therefore let us not act tepidly or indolently, but ardently and vigorously.

**\* Befitting a religious soul.**

The subject should be informed as to what comprises a truly religious soul. Says St. Bernard (Serm. 39 in Cant): "What discipline in his affections, what prayerful arming for strength in action, what intensity in his zeal, what unending warfare against the enemy, and what



numerous triumph!" In considering this and in striving to better himself, let him reproach and accuse himself of being a man given to worldly contacts.

**\* His wretchedness.**

To him will be pointed out the wretchedness of his state wherein he is like one being consumed by fever and is daily growing weaker and wasting away, so that the more enfeebled he becomes, the less he perceives the fever.

**\* Danger to be indicated.**

He will be made aware of the danger herein, for an ailing man will easily yield to temptations should he be tried. Like someone not established in God but, rather, like a pendulum, he will hardly do anything outstanding in his work or worthy of his vocation. And finally, let him be warned of the danger of abandoning the religious life.

"How many do we see and grieve for," says St. Bernard (Serm. contra pessimum vitium ingratitude), "who think themselves safe because they bear the tonsure and the religious habit. They unfortunately do not consider that the worm of ingratitude gnawing them from the inside refrains from piercing the visible external wrappings concealing it lest they be brought back to their senses, be ashamed and mend their ways. In assuming that it has ravaged all of the interior, this hitherto hidden worm no longer fears to reveal its venomous head to the outside. When we see souls openly apostatize from God, let us not think that their debased downfall has come about suddenly but rather, that it has been very gradual, their strength having been sapped from outside without their perceiving this."

**\* Apathy-coldness of soul.**

St. Bernard further explains this in the following words: "When this cold — the fruit of negligence and

somnolence — invades the soul and in encountering no obstacle (which God forbid!), has penetrated into the deepest recesses of the heart and the very seat of reason; when it deranges the affections, obstructs access to wise counsels, troubles the light of judgment, takes away freedom of spirit, then, as in the case of fever patients, the following will soon be evident: the soul is rigid, vigor is weakened, the faculties are blunted, austerity is held in increasing horror, poverty causes fear, the heart constricts, grace withdraws, one tires of living so long, reason slumbers, faith dies out, former Novitiate fervor crumbles, the burden of tepidity increases, fraternal charity congeals, pleasures flatter, security deceives, old habits are revoked. Anything else? Yes, laws are overlooked, right is forsaken, the fear of the Lord is cast aside. The soul finally gives itself up to impudence and takes that most desperate, most shameful, most disgraceful leap so full of ignominy and dishonor — from the heights into the abyss, from palace to dunghill, from throne to quagmire, from heaven to sordidness, from cloister to the world, from paradise to hell." Thus speaks St. Bernard.

**\* Many vices in tepidity.**

Let the subject understand that as in the order of nature there is an admixture of opposite elements and that there is nothing offensive in a thing's being simultaneously hot and cold in parts, so also through tepidity and apathy those virtues that we seem to possess can have an admixture of many vices and imperfections. Thus we flatter ourselves on our obedience because on many occasions we are prompt and there appears to exist in us a real love of this virtue. Yet should our obedience be apathetic and remiss, it will elicit many acts that are non-obedient, countless imperfections through neglect in circumstances or lack of diligence and fervor in those very acts we flatter ourselves on obediently performing.

We can say likewise regarding chastity, patience, zeal for souls, and all other virtues. Thus on the one



hand we have reason to praise God and to feel consoled; and on the other, to bemoan. So let us most seriously consider this so that it may serve to stimulate and arouse ourselves to perfection.

**\* This state of apathy to be examined.**

He must examine if his state of apathy and debility — as in physical ills — derives from excess biliousness, so that if he is acting through self-interest and self-seeking he must purge himself of these disorders, otherwise he toils in vain. Should it arise from want of nourishment, let him take stock of how he receives the sacraments, makes his meditations and prayers, and performs all his spiritual exercises. Let him ask himself why he is under-nourished, and resort to every means to find the cause of this. For in taking such nourishment without acquiring sustenance, or strength or vigor, is bad enough in itself and indicates that something else is lacking and which needs careful investigation and thorough remedying.

**\* Frequent Communion.**

He should be permitted to have confession and Communion more frequently, but at the same time let him be assigned as preparation some particular practices of piety lest this frequent reception be apt to worsen rather than lessen the disorder.

**\* Extra prayer.**

He will be given more time — at least a quarter of an hour — for prayer or some other devotional exercise or useful reading. Instead of doing this indifferently he will perform it zealously, as he would use medicine through eagerness for his recovery of health. Let him refrain from fearing that this brief prolongation take from his studies or other occupations but, rather, let him realize that all else will languish unless the spirit be strengthened.

**\* Read lives of the saints.**

He will read those lives of saints most in keeping

with his state; most profitable will be those of our own Institute such as Sts. Ignatius, Francis Xavier, and others. These are to be read not superficially, but with a desire to stimulate the spirit.

**\* Self-renewal through exercises and general confession.**

If the time for renewal of vows is still remote, it will be most helpful for him to make a few days' retreat and make a careful confession, either since his entrance into religion or since the beginning of his trouble. Then he will privately renew his vows with, as it were, the desire to begin anew, recalling and repeating the words: "And now what is to be my expectation if not Thou, O Lord? All my treasure is in Thee" (Ps. 38:8). And again: "I have said, Now I begin: it is the right hand of the Most High that has brought about this change" (P. 76:11).

**\* Exercising in some virtues.**

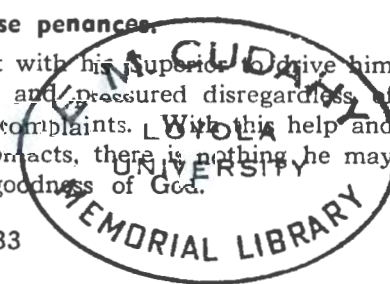
He will select one or more suitable virtues wherein he will carefully exercise himself; and should he find no occasion to perform such during the day, he will at least in the examen ask God for these virtues and offer himself as a man prepared and desirous to perform such.

**\* Practices some mortification however small.**

He will mortify himself and deny himself something no matter how small so as to stir up the spirit against the flesh and against self-will, and even through such acts to check his desires.

**\* Begs his Superior to impose penances.**

He will make a pact with his Superior to drive him unsparingly, to be urged and pressured disregarding of his own unwillingness or complaints. With this help and through their frequent contacts, there is nothing he may not hope for from the goodness of God.



**\* Is ever mindful of the teachings of Cassian (Coll. 7, c.6).**

Finally, he will be ever mindful of what Abbot Sere-nus teaches on this subject (as related by Cassian). Quoting from the Septuagint he says: "The careful man will abound, but the easy-going will be needy." And again: "The soul of him who labors, labors for himself, and he shall overcome want," And in St. Matthew: "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent bear it away." And he adds: "No virtue is acquired without effort, nor is it possible without heartfelt contrition to attain that desired stability of soul, for man was born to work."

**Chapter 5**

**Lack of Obedience**

**\* Beauty and necessity of obedience.**

The beauty of obedience is to be pointed out, as also its necessity, the peace it can procure for the soul, its merit, the high esteem in which it is held in the Society and, finally, the fact that the saints and Doctors of the Church constantly teach its pre-eminence over the other vows since this is what really makes a person a religious.

**\* Careful reading of St. Ignatius' letter.**

The subject will be advised to dedicate several days to reading the letter by St. Ignatius on obedience, and will see as in a mirror his own failings in this virtue and behold thereby how far he has departed from the way of true obedience, and finally to lament, be ashamed and disconcerted, and to bestir himself to doing better.

**\* Meditate on this virtue.**

He should fittingly devote several days to meditating on obedience so that consideration be given such copious matter — much of which will be suggested by his spiritual father and taken from holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church — while he strives with great humility to develop those subjects indicated in the first paragraph, especially if there be additional points treating of helps and hindrances.

**\* Make own compilation of examples from saints.**

He will compile examples of this virtue from the Lives of the Saints so as to have them at hand with which to rebuke and reprehend himself.

**\* Examine causes of repugnance.**

He is to carefully examine himself and confer with his Superior and spiritual father on whatever points his obedience causes greater repugnance and whence this derives — whether from pride, vanity, indolence, inordinate attachment to study or any such like involving self-seeking and desiring, so that he may apply the remedy wherever needed.

**\* See God in Superior.**

He must constantly endeavor to see God in his Superior and not listen to human reasoning and arguing, for when these glide imperceptibly into the soul it is astounding how they drain up all simplicity of obedience, alacrity, promptitude, and finally all perfection. Hence he will vigilantly keep guard so as to repel as fatal poisoning any such consideration whenever it comes.

**\* Examen: Beseech God.**

He will incessantly beg God for this virtue, and this will be the object of his most special attention in this particular as well as the general examinations.

**\* Prepare soul for whatever is to be done.**

It will be helpful that the Superior at times tell the subject to hold himself ready for some undetermined assignment two or three days hence which may possibly be quite counter to his will and liking, so that he strengthen his will against all interior sentiment of insubordination.

**\* Before proffering reasons, let there be prayer and resignation.**

Let there be no proffering on his part before fulfilling the two conditions prescribed by St. Ignatius — prayer and indifference of will. Should he not have this indifference, let him at least desire and beg it from God with the firm resolve to do it even though this cost much

effort against self for, as says St. Macarius of Egypt, even though being practised with reluctance, this virtue will gradually become easy and consoling.

**\* Accustoming subject through easy things.**

The Superior will frequently enjoin lighter tasks which he knows will cause the subject no difficulty and thereby accustom him to flexing his will to that of another, and will praise and encourage him on achieving the injunction.

**\* Two days to prepare for difficult assignment.**

At times the Superior will select some definite task wherein the subject has experienced great difficulty, adding that he is being given two or three days to prepare for this, so that in actual deed his will be in harmony with that of his Superior. On its being achieved and if it be done enthusiastically, the Superior will commend and hearten him, showing him from his own example how things can be made easier. But should the subject have obeyed reluctantly, the Superior will praise his patience and give him promise of a victory that will precede easier conquests and from the exercising of which he will gradually emerge stronger.

**\* Condescendence from time to time.**

The Superior will sometimes kindly condescend to allow the subject to overlook something that causes him strong repugnance, but in such a fatherly way as to give the subject to understand that he is being shown so much kind consideration and paternal favor so as to help him to progress and grow in virtue when, having become stronger, he will be able to do with alacrity what he cannot be burdened with just now. But even while acting thus, let the Superior make the subject realize that he would have acquired merit and that his now weakened virtue would have increased had he courageously and magnanimously conquered self.



**\* Admonishing through intimates.**

The Superior will admonish him through the intermediary of his spiritual father or other dependable persons on friendly terms with the subject and in whom he confides.

**\* If desire for recovery be weak.**

Should the desire for recovery be so lacking that the subject recoil from all remedies, then he must first of all be rather sharply aroused, as it were, by the application of cauterizing instruments so that he realize that he is in an evil and bad state indeed, for there is no recovery of health for a man who abstains from remedies. Secondly, let all the community fervently pray for him as for a man who is dangerously ill. Thirdly, let the Provincial be warned. But should the remedies I have hitherto indicated be employed, we can hope that few souls will show insubordination.

**Chapter 6**

**Effusion of External Commitments**

**\* Causes from which this stems.**

We must examine whether this comes from a certain restless and mobile nature, for even though such a nature be restrained and confined, the person will hardly rise to becoming an interior and recollected religious. For such a change to come about would need the intervening of a singular grace and the subject's own frequent and strenuous efforts to overcome nature and repress himself through constant and valiant application.

**\* Useful occupations.**

Before all else it is necessary that obedience regulate his use of time in pious and useful works, and that he be kept from external undertakings and effluence regarding others, for a prudent Superior will know how to make good use of his subject's talents. This latter will be recommended to come to a halt from time to time in his time-consuming work, and if he does nothing else, to at least remain quiet in his room and do some pious reading there, or recite the Psalms or say the Rosary, or examine his conscience, so that he refrain completely from all external activity in the meantime.

**\* Recommendations.**

He will be recommended to frequently renew his intention, to examine himself concerning those faults that frequently appear in such temperaments — loquacity, curiosity, impatience, idle gossip, flattery, vanity, grumbling, criticism and the like. From such self-scrutiny he will become more reserved and more humble, seeing himself through compassionate eyes as a vile and abject man (comparable to a heifer that customarily loves to



tread out corn) and incapable of raising himself any higher or of remaining uplifted for any length of time. Amid such sentiments of shame he will thus study to be more prompt in his obedience, more patient in bearing with insults, more lovingly disposed to abject offices, more compassionate towards others in their weakness, more zealous in mortifying the flesh. Finally, he will strive to compensate by various pious practices and exercises whatever he lacks in recollection.

\* **If arising from interior aridity.**

Should the fault in question stem from a state of interior aridity so that the soul no longer relish things of the spiritual and interior life and seek solace in externals, another treatment is to be employed:

**Restrain divagations:** 1. Occasions favoring divagations are to be countered by withdrawing from the subject various concerns wherein he could be useful to others.

**Refrain from visiting:** 2. He will refrain entirely from any visits, not only for weeks but even for several months, so as to accustom himself to remaining at home and restraining himself.

**Rule of not speaking to externs:** 3. He will strive to perfectly observe the Rule of not speaking to externs unless called by the porter at the Superior's bidding.

**Frequently recollect self:** 4. After having attended to these obstacles the subject will begin to examine himself more frequently, to recollect himself and often make brief examinations of conscience so as to consider the depths of his soul. At the same time he will raise his thoughts to God and in sentiments of shame will repeat: "Lord, see my abasement and my toil!"

**Spiritual readings:** 5. He will fix for himself a certain time for doing spiritual readings at least twice a day so as to restore his strength.

**Say Rosary:** 6. He will say the Rosary in the course of the day, one or two decades at a time, making acts of petition, resolve, contrition, desire, thanksgiving, etc., and will produce holy affections — if not with savor and fullness of heart, at least with that humility which loves to express its thanks and its desire to turn over a new leaf.

**Scripture verses:** 7. He will arrange to have at hand some verses of Scripture apt to excite compunction. These verses will be of his own compilation or memorized from other authors, for example, such as those words from Habacuc: "I will stand upon my watch, and fix my foot upon the tower: and I will watch to see what will be said to me, and what I may say to him who reproveth me." And again, as from the Psalms: "I am poured out like water." "My son, let not thyself be so outgoing." "The Holy Spirit Who is Master of all knowledge will flee from the deceitful and will withdraw Himself from thoughts that are without understanding." "He that is less in action shall receive wisdom." These and other verses will be frequently exclaimed as so many expressions of desire.

**Exercises:** 8. He will strive to do the Spiritual Exercises for several days despite well-nigh intolerable restraint.

**Recollect self before action:** 9. He will take care to recollect himself before his every action and repeat with St. Bernard: "In whatever place thou be, be thyself: never yield thyself up, but lend thyself thereto." As soon as he has finished a thing he will promptly enter into himself and take as much respite as possible from his work. A little rest by the wayside when one is weary restores lost energy, for it is not given to all to remain united to God amid the turmoil and concerns of wayfaring.

**Repress eagerness:** 10. Should eagerness to undertake something make itself felt, let him repress himself through a few moments of quiet inactivity so as to accustom himself to not immediately obeying the first impulse of nature.

***Do violence to self:*** 11. Finally, let him understand that unless he do himself violence, enchain his will, as it were, and resist the clamors of nature and the impulse of habit, he can do nothing whatever in the line of virtue. But if he will take these precautions, he will gradually savor how sweet is the Lord and how felicitous it is to serve Him, and thus for this soul the exercising of things spiritual and interior will every day become more easy. As we learn from Cassian and also from experience, this malady of restless effusion never increases so much as when one accustoms oneself to yielding thereto without resistance.

## Chapter 7

### Love of Honor and Excelling

#### \* **Minor complaint betokens greater one.**

Let the subject realize first and foremost that as ailments of the body whose indications, although apparently slight, nevertheless give cause for just fears if their source be probed, so also certain signs of vanity, love of excelling and the like that come to the surface indicate no small dose of pride. As explained by the saints and particularly by Cassian in Book 12 of his *Institutes*, this malady comprises two kinds: the one we deal with here is very worldly and crass.

#### \* **Some of the fruits of pride.**

The subject will be mindful that from this malady are garnered countless and very bitter fruits on which his poor heart pastures very often in the course of the day. Should a matter of obedience have nothing attractive about it, he will find great difficulty at the least semblance of irksomeness. Should it be a task whereby he is not made much of — a none too rare occurrence — he is subject to great gloominess and impatience. Should he not receive universal praise in his ministeries he grows despondent.

On the other hand, when praised to his liking he is elated, despises others and becomes unbearable. What he does is often spoiled through his lacking purity of intention: through pride he omits much that he would otherwise do. He heeds neither counsels nor exhortations, frequently injures fraternal charity and never acknowledges himself at fault. But where sin is defended, what good can be hoped for? Hence he will be recommended to read most attentively Cassian's *Book 12, Chapter 29* on "Signs of Pride". He may even read carefully

and prayerfully — and more than once — the whole of Book 12 as also the preceding one on vainglory, and he will discover the causes of his complaint as well as a clear and detailed account of its remedy.

**\* Remedy through meditation.**

He will meditate carefully on the virtue of humility, its beauty, usefulness and necessity: then the loathsomeness and injustice of pride, its shamefulness and chastisements, etc. This is not to be done trivially, for the sake of form, but in exercising diligent care he will pursue the matter for several days, being thoroughly convinced that the cure of such a malady is neither lightly nor easily obtained. So through his own earnest prayers and those of his friends let him beg the Lord for recovery.

**\* Through examination.**

When through examination he perceives the evil fruits of the deadly source, he will immediately turn against this, will reproach himself, bemoan his faults without laying them at anyone else's door, and still less blaming others.

**\* How he can exercise humility (Exam. c.4 #28).**

He will constantly apply himself to practising the opposite virtue and to being exercised in the humbler tasks, not only in the line of domestic assignments such as in the kitchen, etc., which indeed will help him in attaining his goal, but much more in those employments less to his liking and less esteemed by others. If the choice be allowed, let him always choose what is lowliest.

**\* Remedy in what is most counter to personal liking.**

He will make known to his Superior which remedies are most repugnant to his self-love and will beg him to employ such, for the subject must be made aware that if he be seriously desirous of a cure, he must join forces with the Superior against his own self and do himself violence. The Superior as an ally should assist him to vanquish self through various mortifications and humiliations.

**\* Public reprimands useful herein.**

The subject will request to be publicly reprimanded — not only for form's sake, so to speak, but in a manner truly apt to humiliate and shame him. Let these trials be also imposed without his asking them and when he least expects them provided, however, that they be agreed upon beforehand with his Superior so that the subject hold himself better prepared and draw greater profit therefrom.

**\* Emulation.**

Should there be any member of the Community whom the subject particularly emulates, let him carefully cultivate his friendship; but, inversely, this religious should exteriorly show disregard in his respect, according to the arrangement with and the order of the Superior.

**\* Reticence regarding self.**

He will never relate to others anything involving himself, even on pretext of edification, for what is food to the healthy is poison to the sick. Such is his ailment that in such talking it is not the glory of God that he is seeking, but his own.

**\* What we must adhere to.**

In striving to triumph over this particular foe he must pursue him relentlessly and demean him always by acts of opposite virtue, repeating with holy Scripture: "I will destroy the name of Babylon and the remains, and the bud and the offspring" (Is. 14:22). And again: "I will pursue after my enemies and overtake them, and I will not return till they are consumed" (Ps. 17:38).

**\* Fight manfully.**

Finally, he must fully realize that unless he fight manfully not only will he daily find himself weaker against the enemy, but he will soon lose awareness of this malady, so that while continuing to progress in pride and desire for self-glory, in his own eyes he will always seem humbler and holier, for the very nature of this disorder is to cause lethargy of soul.

## Chapter 8

### Tendencies to Sensuality and Particular Friendships

#### \* **Nature of this illness.**

In its being grosser and more carnal, this disorder is cured without too much difficulty provided the sick man take moderate precaution to cure himself.

#### \* **Unbecoming of such fault in a Religious.**

Let the subject therefore realize how shameful it is for a rational man to yield to such a base tendency, and how unworthy this is of a religious whose life ought to be a crucified one.

#### \* **Singularity to be avoided.**

Regarding food, clothing, or recreation, he must accept no distinctions whatever, and still less seek them. Should externs offer these he will reject them, or if for just reasons of courtesy it be not possible for him to make a refusal, let him give them to the Superior for the use of the sick.

#### \* **Sobriety always of necessity.**

Outside lunch and dinner-time let him eat nothing, even though he be strongly tempted to do so; otherwise, and even with the Superior's permission, his keeping eatables in his room so as to take some when he wishes is not to be condoned, for this would not edify the dispenser and would incite the rest of the Community to do likewise.

#### \* **Avoid complaining.**

He will be mindful of poverty and mortification and will never complain about the meat, bread, wine, or any other food served in the Community but, rather, let him

take care to choose what is inferior, and should he inadvertently be served anything less palatable, let him thank God for this little opportunity to practise holy poverty.

#### \* **Love to chastise one's body.**

Let him remember to add some corporal penance to his mental prayer and exercise of virtue lest in nourishing the flesh he incite it against himself. He will ask for these penances and will also have certain fixed ones: nor should he foolishly flatter himself in that having no grave temptation of the kind, he has no need of applying and practising penance.

#### \* **Silence.**

He should diligently strive to keep silence for indeed it is hardly believable to what extent the observance of silence can contribute to preventing countless faults arising from inordinate talking, and to repressing a certain liberty of the senses that nourishes sensuality: this he should put into practice and experience for himself.

#### \* **Cessation of work.**

Should labor and fatigue oblige him to take some repose, he will not call upon other members or form get-togethers for talks: instead he will for a while take walks alone in the garden or elsewhere, conversing with the Lord, recalling verses from a Psalm or hymn — not in the manner of intense mental prayer, but with that naturalness which reposes and re-animates the mind, giving thanks, petitioning, expressing desires. He who does thus will experience an inexhaustible flow of pious affections from the heart. These will not only elevate the soul but will also refresh the body amid its toils. And he who does not experience this should realize that his deprivation arises from seeking worldly consolation and delighting in mundane affairs and idle gossip.

#### \* **When contacting externs.**

When he is called into contact with, or visits externs, he should make the resolve to carefully refrain from face-



tiousness, frivolous talks, listening to or retailing news. Should the conversation take such a turn, let him seek an occasion to disrupt this and bring it back into some religious subject.

**\* Guarding against particular affection.**

Should he experience with regard to another — even naturally and through kindred spirit — a particular feeling of affection, his very first concern will be to break off with him all relation outside the common order and only show him that general sentiment of communal charity. It is surprising how many faults one can spare oneself through this practice of virtue — breaking silence, detraction, bitter complaints and outpourings of heart, suspicions, enmities, cliques, giving little presents and such like arising from too intimate friendships. All and every-one must be loved with equal charity.

**\* Apply self to prayer.**

Finally, he should give himself up to prayer and things interior, for through savoring the things of God he will despise these empty frivolities.

**\* Temptations against chastity.**

It is fitting to speak here of temptations against chastity for there is no doubt that such persons frequently experience these, even though sometimes they conceal or neglect such. But the iniquity of this sin, the seriousness of such a downfall, the accompanying shame and many other considerations should urge him on to curative treatment of soul.

The writings of the saints abound in these remedies: prayer, fastings, penance, fleeing from occasions of sin, humility, manifestation of temptations, assiduity in reading, pious occupations, frequenting of the Sacraments — all these and many more are to be employed in resisting assaults. Diversity of attack demands diversity of defense, and the nature of the temptations must be looked into — whether they originate in little things, through implications reacting on the senses, or in downright wan-

tonness of the flesh when they end up with the soul; or whether unchaste thoughts constantly assail the imagination through the malice of Satan.

As to the discreet discernment and corrective treatment to be employed herein, these are to be found explained among the copious writings of many Doctors of the Church, especially St. Bonaventure in Chap. 12 of his treatise on "Purity of Conscience" and "Reform of Mind" (part 2, Chap. 22): also Gerson's "Exercises in Simple Discernment" and "Causes and Treatment of Sinful Thoughts" (Chap. 3 and various other passages).

## Chapter 9

### Uncommunicativeness and Lack of Enlightenment

#### \* **Serious examination of conscience first of all.**

Should the subject be desirous of seeking cover behind obscurity he will be recommended first of all to most seriously examine and study himself, for this external darkness is usually linked with internal obscurity so deep that it prevents any clear knowledge of enlightenment as to action, as also that ray of divine splendor from appearing to the soul. His mind is darkness and confusion so that he never experiences that quiet motion of divine inspiration and action, nor does he perceive the beauty of virtues except most obscurely and hazily, if not completely blind thereto.

#### \* **How the Fathers of the Church esteemed this.**

He is then to consider how highly the Fathers of the Church always esteemed this sincerity and openness in dealing with one's Superior and spiritual father. The examples they give are many, and herein he will consider what St. Basil writes (Reg. fus. disput. resp. 46) on the text from Proverbs (18:9): "He who brings no remedies to his own illness is brother to him that wasteth his own works." Such also is the thinking of Cassian, St. Ignatius, and all those who have treated of spiritual perfection.

#### \* **Uncommunicativeness is devil's doorway.**

Let him realize that no other vice has to the same extent the power to open the door of the soul to Satan, the spirit of darkness. When this evil spirit contacts souls of this kind he makes his entrance with the greatest ease, facility, and liberty, and in encountering no resistance therein he easily induces them to do many things. Hence in the subject's opening up of soul the temptation is easily overcome; through his remaining silent he succumbs.

#### \* **This reticence is evil.**

Even were this silence not reprehensible in other respects, it certainly is so in its motive, and on this point we must hold it as suspicious. At times it may be pride, when the subject fears that through the manifestation of his defects he will fall short in the esteem of others; or he neglects to open up his soul, thinking that his own sagacity suffices — and this stems from presumption and pride; or it may come from some human end he has in mind whereby he fears that his self-manifestation will hinder its fulfillment. Finally, whoever reckons even indifferently with his own conscience will promptly discover that the underlying source of the matter is not good indeed.

#### \* **This openness evokes Superior's esteem and endearment.**

He will be made aware that thus manifesting himself will not render him less dear to his Superior: on the contrary, he will mean all the more to him, for not only is the manifestation itself an act of virtue, but the humility shown in doing this, the desire for correction, his confidence in the Superior, his hope for amendment — all this has something indefinably good, gracious, and disarming, and evokes the Superior's affection more than the defect itself can diminish his esteem, especially since he is always inclined to favorably estimate a subject who comes candidly to manifest himself and desires help, and to consider him not as a culprit whose fault evokes indignation, but as a patient whose maladies he needs to commiserate.

#### \* **How Superior can be helpful to him.**

The Superior will find powerful help if, in keeping with the Rule, he contacts his subject frequently and with a marked show of charity so that such display of affection will beget in the subject a trusting confidence in his Superior. This repeated contact will gradually eliminate embarrassment, and such paternal kindness will embolden the subject against his own pusillanimity (Reg. 25 Rect. et 26. Praep.).

**\* Others' faults quoted as examples,**

Should the manifestation of certain faults cause the subject to experience greater shame and distress, it will help if the Superior take advantage in such cases to quote on occasion and with prudence the examples of other souls who were subject to similar feelings. However, let no names be mentioned unless those persons were saints and their trials made known in books. To this the Superior will add the duration of the disorder, the difficulties in overcoming it, those means employed in gaining victory — in a word, all those relevant details of a nature to give the subject confidence and courage.

**\* Complaints made by others.**

Should the subject's faults be made known by other persons, he will first be gently questioned and encouraged to explain why he has let himself be deprived of the merit of his own manifesting. Let him also realize that even from a purely human viewpoint he could, through spontaneous avowal, spare himself this additional shame.

While most prudently extenuating this fault, the Superior will at times point out to him that there is no reason why he, the subject, should wish to conceal his defect, that though it be inconsiderable in itself, it can be worsened through concealment. At times he will be enlightened as to the harm caused through cowardice or self-esteem, since what could have been set right through his manifestation is now of such consequence that inquiring, probing, etc., has become a necessity.

**\* Frequent opening up of heart.**

The subject will be exhorted to frequently — and even without great necessity — lay bare his conscience and his defects: thus will he become accustomed to such manifestation and each day will find it easier and more agreeable. Moreover, as he is to be told, if through unexpected assault or force of bad habit the semi-benumbed will could commit such a fault, why could not a fully awakened and self-possessed will freely carry out a much easier avowal?

**\* Dangers of this uncommunicativeness.**

Let him also be given to understand that if he be not aware of this, he must at least believe that without constant combat and self-conquest his condition will worsen from day to day, for the manifestation of a long-concealed defect brings on greater shame indeed: also, the habit of non-communicating is contracted, obscurity deepens, and conscience becomes imperceptibly hardened.

**\* Readings and meditations pertinent to this matter.**

Finally, it will be helpful to read treatises and examples pertinent to this matter and to meditate, on the one hand, the dangers besetting those religious who live thus; on the other, the serenity, merit, the peace of mind and countless other blessings of those who trample upon shame and open up their soul and entrust themselves to the guidance given by their spiritual father. Let the subject consider whether a sick man really desirous of his cure should conceal his illness or if, through his humble avowal, he could be reconciled to God our omniscient Father, but prefers nevertheless to bundle up his sin and shame within his own heart? This would truly be senseless folly indeed!



### Irascibility. Impatience. Aversion to Confreres

#### \* **When aversion is of long duration.**

Should aversions be of long duration, the subject must first be admonished paternally but most seriously as to how unworthy this is of a Christian, let alone a religious who, in dwelling amid brethren, should be of one mind and heart with regard to all. He will be made to realize that his lack of humility begets impatience and anger, so that the doings of another are not so much the cause of his vehemence as the manifestation of a concealed truth—his own secret malady of soul. He should read and meditate Cassian's apt treatise (Collat. 18, Chap. 13, 14, 15, 16) wherein he will encounter very fine expoundings on this matter.

#### \* **Confessor is to exhort reconciliation.**

The subject is to be strongly aroused by his confessor. This defect is nowise to be given the same long-sufferance as another, but the subject will be obliged to effectively conquer self, cast aside all bitterness and dwell in union with the brethren, being mindful that neither his prayer nor his work can ever be what they should unless this wrong be thoroughly corrected.

#### \* **Reconciliation to be urged by the Superior.**

The Superior in his turn will exact the subject's prompt reconciliation with his confrere. Should he notice that there be mutual avoidance in greeting, speaking, and rendering service—in a word, in mutually refusing to give those common and ordinary signs of graciousness whose omissions even military customs would not tolerate among soldiers living under the same roof—he will not allow this. Under no pretext or reason whatever will he close his eyes to such, for not only is the matter

serious in itself, but it also fosters dissensions and is a subject of scandal to our members.

#### \* **Superior is also to urge the one offended.**

The Superior will privately confer with the person offended so that although the offence occurred through no fault of his own, he will overcome evil by good, take the lead in all humility in speaking kindly and cordially to the offender, and resort to every means to bring about a reconciliation. Finally, the Superior or someone else will intervene as mediator so as to restore harmony as soon as possible.

#### \* **Remove all causes of bitterness.**

Nor should the Superior accept the cool justification that whereby through the grace of God the subject wishes his colleague no evil nor has any hard feelings against him, he nevertheless cannot deal freely or act unrestrainedly in his regard since diversity of temperament and procedure impedes their harmonious co-existence. All such pronouncements must be completely rejected as being foreign to us and merely excuses in a matter that is sinful—real seedlings of a bitterness that is the miserable fruit of a putrified source. Hence the poison is to be spewed out lest in our retaining it the longer we be the more seriously infected, for reason will not tarry in darkening, and anger will dare much. As St. Augustine says: "When the sun sets on this passion and leaves it in darkness, then it blushes at nothing whatever" (Ad Profuturum epist. 149).

Indeed, when the sun of charity and unity is extinguished or obscured by the clouds of passion and the murkiness of sinful affections, one's own soul and the souls of others will be overtaken by a disaster much worse than that befalling a person walking in the dark.

#### \* **Mutual exchange of exceptional tokens of charity.**

The Superior will see that the wrong-doer show his offended confrere special tokens of outstanding charity

by dealing kindly with him, substituting for him whenever opportune, visiting him if he be laid up, rendering him service even though he feel reluctant to do so. Finally, the Superior will urge him to no longer allow the virulent passion of anger to dominate a heart wherein should reign only the meekness of Christ. He will also urge means likewise concerning the person wronged so as to evoke between them a contest in charity and reciprocal good offices and whereby, with God's help, he will be completely cured.

**\* If there be mutual blaming.**

But should each continue to blame the other, they are to have presented to them the teaching of Cassian on despondency of spirit. Since his doctrine is so admirably to the point and also brief and momentous, I should like to quote his words here (L. 9, c.7-8):

"God, the Creator of all, alone knows how to guide His works, and in that the roots and causes of our woes exist not in others, but in ourselves, He nowise commands that we flee from contact with our brethren, nor should we avoid those we believe we have hurt or who have offended us; for true perfection is attained not through withdrawal from others, but through patience. If, when this virtue has taken deep root, we can live in peace with the untractable, so too, if patience be wanting, we shall constantly be at variance even with those who are better and more perfect than ourselves. For those very occasions of conflict we think we are avoiding in fleeing from our brethren will certainly not fail in our contacts with others. Thus we change the cause, but not the effect, of a personal trouble that alienates our old friends. Hence let us determine to correct our personal faults and hasten to reform our habits, for with these attended to, we shall get along peacefully not only with men, as I say, but even with wild animals, according to the words of Job(5:23): "Ravens beasts will be in league with thee." We shall not fear lesser clashings from without, nor will external injuries find entrance to our

soul if we ourselves do not take and plant their roots within us. As the psalmist David says: "Much peace have they who love Thy law, nor is it a stumbling block for others" (Ps. 118:165).

Thus speaks Cassian, and the whole substance should be read, including his treatise on the Spirit of Anger (Bk. 8, ch. 8-15); also his 16th Conference (ascribed to Abbot Joseph) on Friendship — it deserves to be read — but at least do not omit ch. 15, 16, and 17 to the end.

Neither should we overlook the very apt and forceful passage of that lovely ch. 27 of this same Conference wherein is explained what the Apostle Paul means by his words "Give place to wrath" (Rom. 12:19). As he says: "Do not allow impatience and miserable pusillanimity to tighten up your hearts so as to make them so narrow that they cannot resist the violent tempests of anger. No, let your hearts be expanded so as to receive the adverse upsurgings of anger with the ample folds of a charity that suffers and withstands all things (I Cor. 13:7). And with your hearts thus expanded and extended in boundless longanimity and patience, open up within them those deep sanctuaries for wise counsel to be heard wherein are instantly evaporated the malodorous fumes of anger." And thus we conclude this subject of aversion and anger.

**\* What is to be done concerning passionate outbursts.**

Should there be sudden and explosive outbursts of impatience and anger — as frequently happens, but which are short-lived — the subject will be taught to foresee those occasions when he knows he will give way to anger, and will thus be prepared and armed to meet them. When he perceives his emotions becoming more turbulent, let him control himself in silence a while, for it is scarcely credible, once he starts freely verbalizing his feelings, how difficult it will be for him to stop with seething emotions. On the other hand, when these are checked he is easily soothed and becalmed.

**\* Superior to warn household to avoid contentions.**

Let the Superior warn those of the household for whom he deems this expedient, to avoid all kinds of contention when they perceive this religious to be irate, and to politely steer clear of the conversation or discreetly switch to another topic. Short of acting thus, quarrels will be fomented, passions will be fanned and then explode in extremely hurtful words not easily remedied when the heat of anger has subsided.

**\* Superior not to harshly receive overwrought member.**

Should an infuriated religious come to the Superior and give way to an outburst of vociferations so common to overwrought persons, the Superior should most carefully avoid receiving him harshly but, rather, let his soothing replies extinguish the other's anger. (Prov. 15:1). Let the Superior be careful not to pounce on and exaggerate a few displaced words with rebukes such as: "What! Is that the way to speak to a Superior? Do you forget to whom you are speaking? Do you realize you are a religious?" etc. This can only violently enrage and further exasperate the already vehement man. Rather, the Superior will affably urge him to first resort to prayer and then to return to him when he, the subject, will find him most understanding; that when this personal perturbation has subsided, things will sort themselves out for the best.

When anger has cooled off and peace returned, the Superior must paternally correct the subject whereby he be shown the shamefulness of his fault and manner of acting, but in such wise that on his leaving the Superior he be ever animated with the firm resolve to amend himself and be filled with hope for becoming better. We have known religious subjects violently vehement to the point of blenching and trembling, and in their passionate upheaval demanding their dismissal from the Society and who, when becalmed by a Superior, became not only repentant of their faults and more humble, but also filled with more gentleness and promptitude of obedience than they ever evinced before the storm.

**\* Superior not to be perturbed.**

It is of prime importance for the Superior to be most self-vigilant should he be offended through hurtful words — as often happens — lest he himself erupt and in impassioned anger return retort for retort, for this would be a most unbecoming and detrimental procedure. Despite any recriminations whatever in his disfavor, the Superior must not let himself be swayed against the offender, but by those sentiments of a mother tending her frenzied son whose words and actions rather arouse her compassion and move her to tears.

**\* What Superior is to do with erring subject.**

However, as often as a member happens to err in this respect, the Superior must see to it that the offender imposes upon himself some minor penance as soon as possible, for apart from the humility it involves as well as the disruption of agitated emotions and the impetration of divine refuge and mercy, this facile and mild remedy will prove to be of no small value if persevered in.

**\* Particular Examination most useful.**

To these practices let the subject add the particular examination as well as his own personal prayer. Let him ask for public reprimands and penances, for through constant effort he will not only be cured, but also be transformed into a gentle, patient, and tractable religious.



## Chapter 11

### Laxity in Observance of Rules. Audacity of Conscience

#### \* **Subject to consider why he gave up everything.**

The subject should be urged to consider for what end he so manifestly gave up all and everything — parents, wealth, honors, etc., — and then undertook to subject himself to the command of another if not for the purpose of tending to perfection and purity of heart. Why, then, after so much sustained toil and felicitous achievement, does he now act so senselessly in lesser matters and not see that by this laxity he will fail to attain that goal for which the greater deeds were performed? Numerous examples can be given to illustrate this.

#### \* **Sinning through surprise does not mean sinning with facility.**

Let him understand that it is one thing to sin through human frailty when a religious courageously applies himself to the practice of virtues, resists temptations, frequently renews his resolve to do better, aspires to perfection, neglects nothing, at each lapse is promptly prodded by a delicate conscience to rise more ardently than before, and through increasing virtue and fervor makes good those lesser losses incurred through minor faults. But it is quite another matter for him who sins facilely, whose concern is little short of downright mortal sin, who frequently contemns, and who not only does not rise from imperfection to higher levels, but sort of propels himself from one imperfection into another as if deliberately. Thus a subject must not flatter himself nor foolishly appropriate those Scripture words quoted by similarly lax religious: "That in many things we all err," etc., and "The just man shall fall seven times a day", for such imperfections are more deserving of tears of compunction than of frivolous jesting.

#### \* **Effects of tepidity,**

Unless the subject seriously strives to avoid this tepidity, he is to fear lest he fall into the abyss: God is wont to vomit out the tepid. Let this member peruse Cassian's treatise on Concupiscence of the Flesh (Coll. Bk. 4, ch. 19 De Inst. Renunt. ch. 34) wherein he so strikingly teaches a truth so well proved through the baneful experience of so many souls — that men of this kind live amid great danger indeed; that even if by the grace of God they fall not into worse harm, we can expect from them nothing worthwhile regarding the glory of God, the benefit of neighbor, or the edification of the Society.

If nothing else, this very tepid life of his is extremely wretched and intolerable and, as St. Bernard says, full of misery and grief, and in its bordering on hell it is justly considered to be the shadow of death. We should also see what this same saint teaches concerning those words: "There are many among us . . ." etc., and Serm. 3 and 6 "De Ascensione", and also the one beginning "On the contrary, faint-hearted and lax men are to be found. . ."

#### \* **Examine progress in spiritual life.**

Let the religious in question consider and deeply ponder what signs he shows of advancing and, as says St. Bonaventure, of robust charity: after his initial sacrifice and so much time in the religious life he should surely have more to show for it. What sentiments of remorse should pierce his heart when he fears to displease so great a Father, so loving a Spouse! If it be thus, herein lie the riches and treasures of salvation, says Isaias. And in his lovely passage on this fear, Cassian writes (Coll. II, c.13): "He fears even slight offences against this love, and is alert not only in all his actions but also in all his words, lest his soul experience the least cooling off of fervor in this divinely inspired love." Let him weep, then, who conceals a worldly soul beneath his garb, and let him promptly amend.

**\* How much merit squandered.**

Let him consider the wonderful occasions of meriting and of practising obedience and virtue which he lets slip through his fingers, and let him entertain no doubt at all that day by day he is incurring greater mental obscurity and lasting hardening of conscience.

**\* Always envisage perfection in all things.**

In taking a decision as to what he ought to do, let him never limit himself to examining just whether or not there be mortal sin, for what kind of love is it to act thus with God? Rather, let him accustom himself to considering whether the act be one of greater perfection, and do it to please God. Who could tolerate a son who says: "I certainly do love my father, but short of mortal wounds and death, whatever harm and trouble I can cause him I shall let him have them inconsiderately and freely. It matters nothing at all to me to what extent I please him provided I be neither deprived of my inheritance nor punished with death."

**\* Encourage renewal.**

Although it be good to at times enjoin some penance on the subject for violation of the Rules and unrestrained behavior, still the Superior should be mindful that this can never be a type of remedy that restores health of mind and body. Wherefore he will take the patient aside in private and will kindly and most gravely warn him to earnestly consider his state of life, to seriously enter within himself and ponder on his obligations as if once again he were deciding to enter the religious life.

**\* If fault be more serious.**

Should he happen to have failed in matter more serious than usual such as giving, receiving, or some similar act of proprietorship involving some value though not grave enough for mortal sin, then to be emphatically pointed out to him are the danger and doubt he incurs, lest he sin mortally, and the dread that he may see how true are those words: "He that contemneth small things shall

fall little by little" (Eccli. 19:1). If he has received or forwarded letters unknown to his Superior, he is to be seriously reprimanded and be told to carefully look where he is going and be on his guard against the snares of the devil, to recall that Satan incites a soul to things that seem slight to the lax, but only so that he may draw him on to more serious faults.

Should he have recriminated against another or committed any other transgression of a somewhat more serious kind, then he should be warned paternally but seriously, and have penances, chapters, and other corrective means added; but as has been said, grave admonition given in private is preferable to all else. If the fault be known to others, he is to be admonished in their presence, should this be deemed expedient, so that he at least experience shame and realize that he is a religious and one bearing the yoke of the Lord.

**\* Virtuous companion is a powerful help.**

The subject will be given a room-mate or work-companion whose good example and observance of the Rules will both shame and encourage him, and whose appropriately-timed converse will uplift him. This procedure can be much more effective and remorse-provoking than admonitions purposely given as such.

**\* Zeal in performing Spiritual Exercises.**

Finally, interior recollection, Spiritual Exercises, meditations on perfection, the particular and general examinations done seriously and not for the sake of form, and whatever else that can be apt to stimulate the soul will be of help. And since this infirmity described here is very similar and related to that second malady — spiritual languor, as mentioned in Ch. 4 — nearly all the methods mentioned therein will be most helpful here.

## Chapter 12

### Imaginary Illness. Desire for Rest. Refusal to Work

#### \* **Superior is not to condemn easily.**

When, after having edifyingly labored for some time, a subject who is normally a good religious now alleges ill health and excuses himself from work, it is of prime importance that the Superior does not easily condemn him as imagining things or trying to escape work. This can cause great distress and can often smack of callousness to the subject whose word is given no credence. However, if from the doctor's opinion and other indications the Superior understands that there is some admixture of imagination and malingering, let him proceed circumspectly.

#### \* **Is to compassionate with the one suffering.**

So let him show himself most compassionate to the suffering religious, confer with doctors and ask their opinion individually at the outset. It will be well indeed for the doctors to bolster the patient's morale with strong assurances of prompt recovery, and for the infirmarian and other household members to do likewise. For some days the subject will be given the greatest care and be often expressed wishes of soon seeing him better: thus he will gradually rid himself of his imaginary illness and declare himself already feeling better — as has happened in more cases than one.

#### \* **When there are no symptoms of illness.**

Should he still continue to believe himself ill and no symptoms appear, and to complain that physical exhaustion and great mental fatigue and the like have caused him suffering over a prolonged period, then we must show even greater signs of compassionate tenderness as well as further alleviations which he personally con-

siders helpful, such as walks taken more frequently, minor exceptions in food, drink, and sleep, etc.

After some days of this kind and considerate treatment whereby he can be easily convinced that the Superior is motivated by charity, it will be expedient to ask him if he does not find such idle living to be tedious and a source of depression? He will doubtlessly reply in the affirmative, whereupon he will be asked to express his desires, what he thinks could be done to help him, and to which he may propose some unusual diversions and relaxations. Of these, some will have to be refused, but with marks of sympathetic understanding, as being a source of disturbance to other members in their occupations and ministeries, for he will agree that consideration must be made for others. Other concessions will be refused with good reason, especially as being unsuitable in his regard: others again, though not really needed, may be granted as a token of condescending goodwill.

#### \* **Other remedies.**

Contrary to what is done for people really needing company, care must be taken lest others foster his idleness through talk and gossip. He should be left alone so that through sheer tedium he finally take to reading or doing something else, and begin to detest his idleness.

#### \* **Try change of occupation.**

He should be asked what he finds most harmful to himself and what kind of occupations he finds most onerous. He will name two or three from which let him desist and substitute with other work less adverse to his taste and at which he will gradually busy himself freely so as to divert his tedium or lessen his aversion, for he will hardly admit that he is still incapable of anything.

#### \* **Let him do what he can.**

On the other hand, he will be asked what assignments he thinks he can fulfill without incurring any great detriment to his health. Let him try these and see what



best answers his purpose, and so as to encourage him let him be given a work-companion. His ordinary occupations are to be given less time: if he cannot work for two hours consecutively, then let him work for one only. Should he dislike hearing confessions, let him be asked to make his own choice either of preaching, teaching Christian doctrine, or any other function outside. In this way he will gradually and as if of his own accord come to undertake some activity.

**\* After a certain time, press with gentle insistence.**

After a certain time he can be gently told to think over whether, in his being able to do more, he be not depriving himself, the Society, and his fellowmen of the fruit that could be garnered from his labors. Should he not wish to acknowledge this, let him be gently urged to at least give it a try for a short while.

**\* Forbearance.**

By dint of showing him sympathy and forbearance, one will gradually learn with time and experience to better know which goad prods more sharply and bestirs the subject more, lest in there being some real illness there also be some admixture of imagination.

Examples will also be given of several virtuous and discerning fathers suffering from this malady who, after placing themselves trustingly in the hands of their therapist, were cured solely by this act of obedience. Nor should we overlook the religious who, from a somewhat persistent apprehension, thought his own death would ensue if he obeyed his doctor regarding the diet and treatment entailed by his alleged illness, for he averred that to all appearances obeying would mean endangering his life, and this he could not accept with a peaceful conscience. When, on appealing to several theologians, the Superior had commanded him to keep quiet and repudiate his self-imposed scruple, he finally yielded and with God's help was cured.

**\* Let all refrain from speaking unfavorably.**

But the Superior must take care that in the Community there be no speaking unfavorably against the subject lest this be adding a still greater harin in causing him tribulation. Nor must they take too seriously everything they hear about him, for this would only confirm what he imagines; but, rather, they should always show him by their words and behavior that he is deserving of credence and should encourage him thereby to do more, to refer to his physician, follow his Superior's advice, and convince himself that a reasonable amount of occupation, far from being oppressive, is stimulating to the will and helpful to nature. For indeed what will he be capable of if he is going to let himself pine away in idleness? Through these and other such words spoken in mildness and expressive of compassion they can do him much good indeed.

**\* A change of air.**

Finally, should the subject consider a change of air beneficial, let the Provincial be notified, especially if the doctors recommend this change and declare that this alone will suffice to bring about a complete cure. For, as experience has shown, the influence of impressions and apprehensions is so astounding that whereas no real bodily alteration has taken place, the subject thinks that change of locality has fully restored his health and he will then undertake great work.

But, inversely, should it be extremely difficult to get him to leave his present abode, the doctors will all the more urge a change of locality. Then perhaps he will hasten to say that he is better off where he is, and will start doing something for fear he will have to leave a house that he likes to live in. Such, then, are human weaknesses which have to be borne with patience and healed by gentleness.

## Chapter 13

### Temptations against the Society, and some Rules that Displease

#### \* **This malady is difficult to remedy.**

This disorder is clearly dangerous and its treatment is difficult, especially in older persons. Hence it must be closely examined, skillfully analyzed and carefully remedied, since those members suffering from this usually keep it concealed, and — apart from an occasion that forces the issue — they seldom betray themselves except to those they perceive to be of like mind.

#### \* **Prescribe prayer.**

Before all else let the prayers of the Community be offered as for a person seriously and dangerously ill; then let the treatment be most carefully undertaken.

#### \* **Exhort subject to open up to his Superior.**

It is of prime importance that the subject trustingly open up his soul and declare in what matters he experiences temptations against the Society — whether of long duration? what occasioned them? through what circumstances they became more violent? if he expressed his doubt to anyone, especially his Superior? if he was satisfied with the replies given him and on what points? and what particular point is now upsetting him most that he is hesitant to manifest himself sincerely? For perhaps his distress arises from fallacious ideas he has formed, or perhaps from a lack of knowing how to deal with them: it thus often happens to many souls to be tormented not so much by genuine as by false and imagined difficulties in matters of this kind. Nor should he ever doubt that if, with the help of God, he indicate this thorn that is pricking him, it will be plucked out: he is neither the first nor the only one to have gone through such a trial.

However, since not all Superiors have pursued studies advanced enough concerning the Institute so as to give him clear and satisfying answers and solve his objections through their mental grasp or practical experience in these matters, it will be expedient for the Superior to refer his subject to the Provincial, unless he himself be Rector of a "Collegii Maximi" and a prudent, considerate man deeply versed in these matters.

#### \* **Make known the seriousness of this disorder.**

Should the subject unburden his disorder, he will doubtlessly mention those Rules coming under attack in his malady, meaning to say that he disapproves of the diversity of Community ranks, the deferring of Profession, the ample power of Superiors, the manifesting of conscience, the obligation imposed on all to manifest the faults of others, and anything else learned outside the seal of the confessional.

#### \* **From every point of view.**

At this point the Superior will speak to the subject and set before his eyes the seriousness of his disorder so that he realize that without prompt treatment he can neither live peacefully nor perhaps even persevere long in the Society, any more than a Carthusian can dwell amid Franciscans to whose life he neither felt nor feels any calling.

So let him gird himself for the task and first of all declare whether he understood all these matters in the two years of Novitiate and during the frequent renovation of vows. He will doubtlessly reply that he understood them but without comprehending them thoroughly, time alone having opened his eyes and fully enlightened him. Thereupon let him look well to it lest his eyes be perversely opened as were those of our first parents opened to their shame (Gen. 3:9). Indeed, he will realize that it was only so that they might see maleficently that carnal prudence opened those eyes which innocence had more felicitously closed — eyes that should envisage all in the light of the spirit of God. Hence it has followed that with

the withdrawal of the light of the Holy Spirit, this prime cause of his vocation which sees all things in their true colors, the subject now reverts to carnal and purely natural comprehension, for he no longer sees things as formerly.

Thus let him bemoan his misfortune and return to the light of his first years in the religious life, for "Wisdom by the flesh is death" (Rom. 8:6); and in the light of his own ever self-seeking nature whatever pertains to mortification, abnegation, and perfection cannot appear to him as being beautiful or radiant as it really is. Indeed, the Apostle Paul declares (2 Cor. 1) that carnal man cannot perceive the things of the spirit since to him they are folly. And Cassian (Collat. 18, c.2) has Piammo most truly and wisely say: "He who begins to learn through arguing will never enter the depths of truth, for in perceiving that he trusts in his own judgment rather than that of the Fathers, the enemy easily propels him to the point where even those practices of particular utility and beauty seem superfluous and noxious in his eyes. And the wily enemy makes a playtoy of his victim's presumption so that in the subject's clinging tenaciously to his irrational interpretations, he persuades himself in his blind obstinacy that there is nothing sacred except what he himself judges to be righteous and just."

**\* Show that there is nothing new in the Society's Rules.**

It must be pointed out to him that almost all of these Rules are nowise new in the Society; that they were taken from the saintliest founders of religious Orders and from the Fathers of remote eras. To this will be added passages from the saints — Basil, Benedict, Augustine, Pacomius and Cassian. But should a few souls not share in their sentiments, let them be told that they are measuring the perfection of institutes and religious practices solely according to the doings and desires of imperfect religious, so that as by a Lesbian rule they erect an edifice that is neither graceful nor in plumb, but unsightly and shapeless, if not a complete failure.

**\* These Rules approved by General Congregations and Supreme Pontiffs.**

To this will be added that these matters have been examined not only by the whole Society in General Congregations and by many Fathers excelling in learning and religious observances, but also at the express command of Supreme Pontiffs and the Holy Apostolic See they were most diligently investigated more than once. And recently Pope Sixtus V, of happy memory, gave them to theologians and Cardinals of great authority for examination. When these persons heard, wrote down and also diligently scrutinized our answers and submitted the whole matter to the Pontiff, he made no alterations whatever. Moreover his successor, Gregory XIV of happy memory, even explained and confirmed them more amply in a rather extensive document.

**\* Let subject examine the roots.**

Let the subject in question examine the roots that sprout forth from the offensive product and he will discover that in some matters a false understanding is their source. These points are to be declared, and darkness will lift and soon disappear.

Due to an evil inclination such as pride, for example, some subjects are displeased at diversity of rank because they themselves wish to be among the professed. Or they find the manifestation of conscience unpleasant since they wish to conceal their interior state; nor do they wish it to be manifested by others since they are undesirous of having their good reputation diminished.

Lastly, let him go through each and every point and judge for himself what he perceives and whence his disorder. Let him also consider that as long as there subsist any roots of his restiveness, it matters not what precise detail comprises his grievance. For it is clearly evident in other religious Orders not having the same observance as ours that many a subject is more than discontented and even openly apostatizes. Therefore the cause does not lie in the displeasing details themselves, but in the interior



roots within the soul, and with this remedied all will be saved. It has been clearly perceived that in their perturbation some souls disapproved many of these points, but on recollecting themselves they came to accept them and persevered to the end.

**\* I promised to God and made a pact with the Society.**

Let him often remind himself in the presence of our Blessed Mother and the angels: "I promised this to God. Did I not enter upon a pact with the Society, confirming also in writing that I was content to observe all this? And can I now not abide by my promises in serious matters? Without these promises I should never have been admitted into the Society, and do I now recant after so many years and declare that I can no longer find peace?"

**\* How important these Rules are.**

Through gently presented enlightenment (that can be as clarifying as convincing) let him be made cognizant as to how important these Rules are for spiritual perfection and total self-abnegation which, if he be undesirous to prevaricate, he sought in his vocation. Let him go over each and every point so that the grace and beauty of each be brought out so as to allure his soul by their splendor. And this they can certainly do to a wonderful degree as is evident in the case of those who, being enlightened by vocational grace, perceive this clearly in the light of the Lord.

**\* Dissolving of objections against the Society.**

Perhaps he will say that what displeases him is not so much finding them written in the Institute and among the Rules of St. Ignatius as seeing them misapplied by Superiors. By such words he first of all wrongs our holy Founder. Did not this latter realize that he was giving these laws to men for men to observe, and that men would be responsible for demanding their observance? Indeed he certainly did see this, and he was not unaware that mistakes can sometimes be made; but he also knew that these Rules could be observed in sanctity. To estab-

lish laws of a nature befitting angels and not men would by no means be worthy of a discerning man filled with the spirit of God such as founders of religious Orders ought to be.

But if the subject condemns not the laws themselves as being too difficult or unsuitable in practice, but solely the practices of certain Superiors, then it is really persons and not the Institute that displease him. This, then, is another matter, for shortcomings in Superiors can be remedied while retaining the Institute intact. Secondly, how come there are so many discerning and learned men who so highly praise the integrity of these laws and thank God for them? And why do these men not see such wrongs? Would the aggrieved subject himself be so meticulous if, in this circumstance, he were not dealing with his own case? How liable we are to be deceived in our own cause and judgment!

Then he will be urged to expose his difficulties one by one and obtain satisfaction on each point — unless he prefers to be perverse. It will suffice to get him to admit the incontestable principle that to decide the degree of capacity, talent, and virtue of a person, whether he be wholly given up to God in religion or a lay person in any state of life whatever, lies nowise within the power of him whose case is in question. And following on this it will be easy to reply to any other difficulties.

**\* Spiritual exercises will help.**

He will be advised to meditate on the benefit of his vocation and on the obligation of tending to perfection so that through some spiritual exercises he prepare himself for a general confession. He is to be encouraged through kind words, telling him that he will find his difficulties lessened, that everything will not be as bad as he expects, that as is usual in things human, out of ten events that are expected only two will be encountered; that he will always find the Superior prepared to help and console him.

Finally, let it be pointed out to him that actually many things seem difficult to understand when viewed from afar but are not so in reality, and that he will be most sincerely given all desired explanations whenever possible.

**\* Prohibition to transmit these thoughts to others.**

He must also be absolutely forbidden to communicate these thoughts to anyone else, both in the personal interests of the subject himself and the common good. But if he does infringe this prohibition and after all continue to manifest disquietude, it will be time to warn the Superior General.

## Chapter 14

### Temptations against the Superior: Aversion and Distrust

**\* Superior is to question himself.**

Lest he think the blame for this disorder lie wholly with the subject, let the Superior first of all rid himself of such a thought as a temptation and realize that he himself may be involved herein to no small degree, if not by deed, then by omission; or if he has not erred in act, he may have erred in method. Let him therefore consider himself a debtor, examine the causes, and correct whatever lies within himself, being particularly mindful of the opinion expressed by St. Gregory to Abbot Bono (Libr. 9, Epit. 8):

"In correcting a fault, know that this order is to be observed — love the person and hate the fault." And of that maxim a bit further on: "When you wish to remove decayed flesh so as to heal a wound, take care not to ulcerate what is healthy, lest in cutting more than is necessary you harm what you tried to help."

**\* Procedure for allaying suspicion.**

When he perceives that the subject who is averse to him cannot be cured nor will accept any remedies till his suspicion be allayed, the Superior will fully carry out what the above-mentioned Father of the Church recommends — that the spiritual shepherd make his love a sort of path along which he conduces the hearts of his listeners to love the Savior (Pastor, p. 2, c.8). It is difficult indeed for an unloved preacher to reach his hearers no matter how equitable his pronouncements. So, too, whatever remedies or admonitions are employed will no-wise help our individual member: they will even do him more harm, for he will suspect all of these as arising not from love but from quite a different source.

**\* What Superior is to do concerning complaints.**

Whether the subject complain privately or aloud against his Superior, let this latter be as one who hears not, taking greatest care lest in speaking with the informing member or anyone else he show hurt feelings. Neither will he exaggerate things whereby he declare: "This is really not to be tolerated! He must be severely punished: such people do not deserve to remain in the Society!" and other such remarks. Rather, the Superior should always betoken paternal kindness in such words as: "I am really grieved that this good religious should have flared up like that, especially against me in my capacity as Superior. How I wish all those suspicions could be eliminated from his mind: only violent passion could have made him utter such words. I am really sorry for his malady which I deplore — all the more so in that it is necessary to have recourse to some remedy, for his complaint is spreading to others and causing scandal. Let us pray for him and consider what is to be done, for what I wish to do is heal rather than humiliate him."

**\* Spirit of charity to be used.**

In the spirit of charity let the Superior approach the subject, thus taking hold of that little fox, the detractor, and catching him for the Lord, meaning that through clemency he will win his confrère to Christ. Since St. Bernard (Serm. 63 in Cant. 2) speaks most admirably on this subject I should here apply his very apt words. In explaining the words of the Canticle he comments: "Seize for us the little foxes: the worst kind of fox is the detractor, but no less harmful is the unctious flatterer against whom the wise man will be on his guard. He will strive to the utmost of his power to catch those who act thus, but in seizing them for God through kind services, helps, salutary warnings, and prayers. For he will not cease to heap coals of fire on the head of the wrongdoers (Rom. 12:20) till (as far as possible) he drive out envy from the hearts of some, and dissembling from the hearts of others, thus fulfilling what the Spouse commands: Seize for us the little foxes that destroy our vineyards!

"And will the wrongdoer not seem to you to be well caught when, in his blushing crimson, he evinces his own shame and regret for having loved only in word and appearance one by whom he really experienced he was loved in deed and in truth (I John 3:18)? Yes, indeed, he is caught — caught for the Lord, according to the words wherein God designates Himself particularly: "Capture for us the wrongdoers!" Would that I, too, could capture all those who for no cause are against me, so that I might win or restore them to Christ."

**\* Warning the murmurer through the intermediary of another.**

With regard to murmuring and the like concerning the Superior personally, it is better that the subject be admonished by a third party, preferably the confessor or spiritual father who will paternally point out to him his faults and the harm he does to others. Also, from time to time the subject will be warned by the Minister, and at times he will be seriously warned by the Provincial should he be around, who must indicate the scandal and seriousness of the fault. The Superior should appear unaware of many matters pertaining to himself, for should the culprit suspect that these things have reached his Superior's ears, he will hardly be persuaded that the Superior is not thereby offended and ill-disposed towards him.

**\* Resort to help from discerning members.**

From time to time the Provincial, an admonitor from the Rector, the spiritual father or some discerning father in whom the subject confides, should indicate that this latter's opinion of the Superior is due to misconception and is of greater harm than he suspects, for unless he removes it 1) he will always be uneasy; 2) for him there will be no possibility of that obedience demanded by God's will and the Constitutions; 3) he will be in an awkward position vis-a-vis his Superior, for if this latter does not remain silent, even his most salutary warnings will become venomous in the subject's eyes: if he does remain silent,



the subject will fall into worse faults from day to day. Let him take counsel with himself and see what he has to do.

Let the person undertaking to help this tempted soul offer to personally use his influence so that the Superior receive the subject kindly, saying he is confident that this will not be difficult for he knows the Superior to be well-disposed to the subject since this has been frequently evinced by him in word and deed. After having contacted his Superior concerning the matter, let this mediator inform the subject of the interview. In so doing he will reassure him of being welcomed and will encourage him to go himself to the Superior and fully disclose his grievance with all his suspicions and complaints, that the Superior will willingly listen, and that with all umbrage eliminated, everything will be smooth and serene.

But the subject may not easily be induced to do this, alleging the Superior's aversion to him, his harshness, acrimonious words, and finally his own fears lest his interview increase rather than allay the Superior's anger. However, we must not let go our hold on the subject but must all the more often urge him to go at least when summoned, provided the Superior be really prepared to receive him mildly.

#### \* How Superior is to proceed in this interview.

When the subject arrives for the conference, let the Superior smilingly invite him to disclose everything, for otherwise he will never find peace. The Superior will promise that this will be efficacious, that he himself will willingly alter whatever shortcomings lie on his side since he is acting solely through charity. If the subject be overtaken by antagonistic imaginings, the Superior will clearly point out that he was deluded, and will even call witnesses to prove his error.

Next, the Superior will allow the subject to verbalize his distress of soul, even should he do so in displaced and acrimonious words, for the Superior should attend

not so much to the words as to the grievance. When the subject has concluded this manifestation, the Superior will most benignly speak to him, instructing him in particular points of his complaint, showing him that in this, that, and the other, the subject was entirely wrong. The Superior will relate what he has done for the subject, citing such and such persons as witnesses of particular events, and that if he refused any of the subject's requests, it was because he could not do otherwise. If he enjoined penances, they were simply the ordinary ones; if he investigated or questioned regarding the subject, he was bound in conscience because of matters reported, and though he did not easily believe them, nevertheless as Superior he was obliged to make enquiries. If in some things he showed less confidence or did not entrust him with this or that assignment, it was at the express request of outsiders asking for someone else, or because considering the subject's temperament and present attitude, this type of assignment was reckoned as being little profitable to him, or because our confrères as well as externs would be offended at his manner of acting.

But the Superior now promises unbounded charity and complete confidence, so let the subject alter his line of conduct and he will see to what depth of charity the Superior loves him. Regarding those things to be remedied, it would be better for the subject to return for another interview at his convenience since this present one has been somewhat long. In the meantime both will pray, and the subject is to return disposed to listen, for everything will be done solely through charity. For indeed charity loves no less in warning and reprimanding than in praising and encouraging, and the Superior hopes that all will go better in the future.

All this will take place most paternally, graciously, and lovingly, the Superior avoiding all dispute and altercation, for this diminishes his authority and engenders new distress for him. Should it happen that the subject have said anything hurtful against the Superior which he thinks was carried back to him and stirred up resentment,

let the Superior most especially tell the subject here and now to be firmly assured that no bitterness has taken root in his Superior's heart; that on the contrary he to whom greater tokens of charity are shown is all the more loved; that he, the Superior, seeks no return of love other than that the subject show himself a sincere religious in future and most confidently approach him as a father, for certainly his Superior's acts will concur with the subject's confidence.

**\* Then warn of more serious faults.**

When the heat of the fever has begun to cool off, the Superior will warn the subject of his more serious faults, though excusing as far as possible either his imprudence or his impatience. He will emphasize the offense given our confrères and outsiders who have often complained. He will also mention some of the good done by the subject and then ask why he has brought discredit on himself, why he hinders the great amount of good he can still do. Also, he is to be made aware of those lesser faults to which he attaches no importance, and is to be shown how easily, commendably, and meritoriously they can be avoided.

**\* Exhort subject to visit Superior frequently.**

Then let the Superior urge him to come and see him more often as this will greatly please him and such contacts will foster confidence and love. Nor should the subject doubt his being loved as a cherished son. Would indeed that hearts were wide open, for then everything begetting suspicion and diffidence would vanish! But lest he think he be loved only in words and ways of speaking, let him put this to the test so that he experience that this love is applied in action. Let him make known his desires and if the Superior can grant them without grave inconvenience, he will readily accede: should they be difficult to grant, he will inform the subject that he will discuss this with the admonitor or consultor. If they agree that the request is not unreasonable, he will grant it: if they disagree, the subject will excuse the refusal of

his Superior who must not disregard the decisions of his counsellors.

Should the subject desire to proceed through a mediator with whom he feels more free, the Superior may allow him to do so at the outset; but let the mediator know that at times when the request is one that is easily granted, the petitioner should come personally when the Superior will doubtlessly grant the permission.

**\* Believing things concerning the subject.**

Although the Superior must be circumspect especially with those needing more care, let him be most careful with regard to this particular patient, for in the case of a subject suspected of not enjoying the good graces of the Superior and there be some grievance between the two, others will easily report to the Superior many matters not carefully weighed and sometimes exaggerated.

Should the subject be admonished on such points without due caution on the part of the Superior, no words will ever describe the great harm and increase of this disorder that will ensue, and to what extent the subject will avail of occasions for no longer heeding any warnings and for accusing the Superior of too much credulity which, as the subject is persuaded and declares to his listeners, comes from his dislike to the subject.

**\* Procedure concerning things reported.**

During an interview the Superior must tell the subject that certain matters were reported to him but that he personally did not readily believe what was said, wishing to learn from the subject himself, for without this he might think he had been condemned through prejudice — and of which suspicion the Superior must be thoroughly cleared at all costs.

Although the matter reported be evident, the Superior will hear out his subject before blaming him, and will clearly make him aware and persuade him that although by reason of his office and for the good of the subject and the Community he necessarily gave an ear and investigated, it would nevertheless please him far more

to find the subject innocent than guilty. Indeed, what father hearing of his son's guilt or offence does not more easily find reason for praise than for punishment?

**\* Give some ministry to be carried out.**

The Superior will give him certain assignments that entail no great inconvenience. Where possible he will from time to time send the subject to give sermons or exhortations, deal in matters with some prelate or perform something else, lest he think that all doors be closed to him. However, this should not usually or frequently occur lest drawbacks be incurred either through his familiarity with prominent men or, as it were, through too much self-esteem which may later do harm to the Society should matters not turn out well, for men of this kind can sometimes turn to fighting us with our weapons and pronouncements. But such assignments must be done prudently and only at intervals so that the subject may not think he is a complete outcast.

**\* Superior must resort to all means.**

Finally, let the Superior overlook nothing that can be done by himself or another suitable person in uprooting distrust and implanting love for Superiors, for certainly unless this be done no remedy will be effective. Let him recall that passage from St. Gregory wherein this saintly Father speaks from long experience and which is confirmed in Scripture and the example of the Apostle Paul who, wishing to severely reprimand the Corinthians (I Cor. 1:7), started off by praising them much, and only after such did he begin: "That you lack no kind of grace..." But as St. Gregory adds here: "He strives first of all to bind the arms of these proud people with the chain of flattery so as to be then able to incise the wound of pride with the knife of correction." And certainly among the Corinthians there existed things praiseworthy as well as blameworthy. So the discerning healer touches and praises the sound flesh around the wound and then runs his lance through the putrid ulcer." And thus speaks St. Gregory (Libr. 24 Moral c.9).

**The Spirit of Secularity and Ingratiating Oneself  
into the Favors and Friendship of Outsiders**

**\* Under what appearances this spirit is concealed.**

Regarding members of the Society working within or away from the house, the above disorder is always dangerous and furtively infiltrates its victims, seizing them almost unawares under the appearance of gaining, in the interests of the Society, the service of God and the welfare of fellowmen, etc., the good graces of prelates, princes and magnates. But at times we are actually doing some self-seeking and gradually turn to worldly matters: therefore this evil must be hindered and curbed right from the very start.

**\* Signs betokening ingratiating.**

The symptoms by which this disorder may be recognized must therefore be attended to. Among others, the following will be clearly indicative: if the subject frequently visits such personages; if in not doing so, he feels a desire for their presence and conversation; if he takes to heart their business and affairs as much as his own; if he willingly undertakes secular transactions; if he acts without the Superior's knowledge; if he conciliates the good graces of prelates, magnates, etc. to his own personal advantage and not to the Society; if the regular observance and obedience begin to suffer; if those works proper to the Society — and especially the least ostentatious — are thought little of; if he considers himself called to things more consequential; if he begins to weary of religious poverty and to require conveniences and comforts for himself; if he spurns the conversation of his confrères, especially the more guileless; if he most irritably accepts the Superior's warnings as if he were doing this malevolently and resentfully. If these and similar symptoms



be present, his soul is certainly infected with this malady no matter how deluding and deceiving be the motives he proffers.

**\* Indicate the dangers of this spirit.**

So these dangers must be pointed out to him, for obedience, fraternal union, religious simplicity, devotion, union with God, love for the Society, zeal for souls, and many other virtues are manifestly imperilled. One can hardly believe how such a man can change; and suddenly, he himself while least experiencing this will find to his sorrow that he is quite another man. Thus at the Fifth General Congregation this matter was very seriously dealt with, as appears from Canons 12 and 13, and which must be most carefully heeded.

**\* Such men are to be removed at once.**

Men of this stamp must be removed in good time on some convenient pretext, lest due to deepened and extended roots they cannot be removed without great offence to the prelates. Therefore local Superiors should promptly warn the Provincial, and if he perceives difficulties arise he should consult the General. Finally, let these Superiors be nowise negligent in such matters if they really have at heart the good of the Society.

**\* When excuses are proffered.**

Should subjects proffer as excuse the urgings of prominent men in this respect, they must be seriously exhorted to sever the bonds themselves, for if they wish they can do so unobtrusively. But should this go counter to their feelings and desires, they must be most careful not to make it evident that they are doing this solely because the Superiors wish it and for fear of getting themselves a bad name among confrères in the Society. If they act thus, it will harm the cause and the Society rather than further them, and will embitter the mind of these prominent persons. Hence if this manner of acting is clearly perceptible, it will betoken men that are neither obedient nor loving sons of the Society.

**\* Subjects to be occupied in ministerial works.**

Therefore subjects are to be occupied in ministerial works, for they will be more fruitful to fellow-men, provide a greater safeguard for themselves and more edification for the Society, so that their time will not be given to such visits and useless conversations. Visits must also be formally denied them at times, as set down in the Constitutions.

**\* Public culpas.**

Public reprimands in the refectory will remind them of religious humility whereby they break off that friendship by some means or other. Such practices, however, must be carried out most circumspectly and opportunely.

**\* Subjects to be warned of pernicious effects.**

Next, subjects must be warned that this matter evokes utmost invidiousness among outsiders: it gets the Society a bad name, stirs up many souls with hatred for it, and we ourselves realize how hurtful can be any inequality among our own members. So our subjects must be urged to cautiously desist and suggest to the persons involved some other men to take their place — either our own or outsiders as the case may be, lest it seem that ours are running everything.

**\* Refusing requests from outsiders.**

When of their own accord or sent by ours, outsiders come urging the Superior to entrust the subject with this or that undertaking, the Superior must modestly decline, alleging offence to the prelate himself, the Rules of the Society, the worldliness of the matter, arousing the enmity of others, and many other such reasons that prevent the Superior from approving their request that the subject do this, much less that he order him to do it.

**\* General to be informed.**

Finally, since this malady is combined with effusion to external activities and love of excelling — as treated in Chapters 6 and 7 — the Superior should apply the many remedies indicated therein and warn the General.

**Pertinacity and Obstinacy of Judgment with Contention**

**\* In speculative matters, refer to learned men.**

Should this exist in speculative matters, the Superior will refer to the decisions of some learned men. When the subject has been fully heard, the Superior will then impose silence on him, as demanded by the Constitutions, and will forbid him to speak any further of it, otherwise there will ensue neither few nor pleasant consequences (Exam. c.3 No. 10-11).

**\* Warning regarding practical matters.**

If obstinacy appears in practical matters, the Superior must warn the subject that this stems from pride whereby he wishes to appear more learned than others and cannot bear to yield; or it comes from lack of judgment which does not grasp the fact that at least in matters moral no matter how evident an opinion may appear, it is not sufficiently so, however, as to deprive an opposing opinion of all value, and that even prudent men relying on their own judgment have been greatly deceived.

**\* Occasional appraisal concerning trifles.**

It will be pointed out to the subject that disputes arise over mere trifles and rumors in circulation and, as anyone can understand, how unworthy it is of a religious to argue over such and thereby offend charity.

**\* Recommend the reading of Cassian.**

He will be reminded of what Cassian says: that in as much as it is sad to see men of the world quarrel violently over a piece of land, it is likewise so to see discord arise among spiritual men of differing opinions. Let the subject carefully read the excellent teaching given therein, especially from Chap. 6 to 12. Should he be a Coadjutor

Brother, the Superior or spiritual father will transmit to him these lovely writings.

**\* Recommend the use of ordinary remedies.**

He will be recommended to make use of those ordinary remedies — prayer and the particular examen, imposing some light penance on himself each time he falls into a minor fault.

**\* Impunity not acceptable.**

Contentions of this kind should not be allowed to go with impunity: public reprimands should be given in the refectory and be accompanied by admonitions that will be profitable to others. And should the Minister or one of the senior Fathers be present when such contentions break out, he should adroitly switch the conversation to other topics and take the first opportunity to give the subject a fraternal warning.

**\* When the warned subject does not amend.**

If the warned member does not amend, some maturer and serious religious will be assigned him as recreation-companions lest he contend thereat.

**\* When obstinacy involves the Superior.**

Should his obstinacy involve his Superior, then this comes under defective obedience; hence the remedies indicated in Chapter 5 should be applied.

## Chapter 17

### Disturbing the Peace. Sowing Discord and Creating Quarrels

#### \* Consider the seriousness of this disorder.

In this disorder which many deal with just cursorily, it will first of all be most helpful if it be considered assiduously by the subject, and not just once or superficially. Let him therefore consider how frequently, how seriously, how emphatically sacred Scripture speaks about sins of the tongue, for in addition to what St. James sets down in Chapter 3 of his Epistle (wherein he calls the tongue a world of iniquity and asserts that it infects the whole body and that in its being inflamed by hell, it in turn sets aflame the whole course of our life), we are frequently warned of this sin in the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and anyone can come across many texts by which he can stimulate and prick his zeal. Chapter 28 of Ecclesiastes in particular enumerates so many evils that it would be surprising for anyone to read them and not tremble.

#### \* This seriousness can be judged from the examples of the saints.

The seriousness of this disorder can be judged from the examples and maxims of the saints. It causes no small wonder to know how much they feared faults of the tongue and caused others to fear likewise! Surprising indeed were the privations they imposed, carried out, and endured so as to master their tongue. But this is not the place to narrate these.

For the rest, it should be carefully considered how, in dealing with remedies for spiritual disorders, St. Basil teaches how contraries must be cured by contraries (Reg. fus. disput. interrog. 51), how murmuring is to be severely punished, when the murmurer is to be separated from others and none be permitted to work with him. In

detestation of such evil he even adds that the fruit of any labor done by such a person must not be mingled with that of others and, what is more surprising, when the murmurer has humbly performed his penance and made good his fault, the fruit of his work can re-appear, but even then is not allowed to be used by the brethren, but is to be put to some other use for those reasons already given by St. Basil (Interrog. 29), for in having his work accepted he would not be aware of the great evil in which he was living. St. Basil points out, therefore, that this man must be rendered so terrified, so humiliated, so ashamed of this fault that from the fact that not even his labors are wanted he will end up by understanding how low he has fallen. One cannot read this passage without experiencing strong emotion indeed.

It is truly touching to perceive with what deep feelings St. John Chrysostom condemns and deplores this vice for which he desires that endless fountains of tears gush from his eyes; nor does he think any grief commensurate with this great tragedy.

#### \* Nature of such evil.

With what admirable penetration he describes the nature of such evil, its causes, malice, indications, unworthiness, disastrous consequences, remedies — all indeed is given in detail. If we examine its very essence we find nothing other than mutual instigation, biting and tearing at one another, devouring our fellow-men, spewing out volleys of words against brethren so as to inflict wounds more piercing than any arrow; in fine, honing their tongues to sword-like sharpness against one another's soul.

#### \* Causes and malice.

The causes are ambition and envy, whose basis are always lies and deceit. Its malice? He compares it to fratricide and sacrilege: to fratricide, for it is injurious to fraternal unity to the point of devastating charity — similar to and much worse than the slaying committed by Cain, for the relationship is more sublime: to sacrilege,



since in a way it strikes at the very body of Christ. "Be fully aware," he says, "that whenever you speak contumeliously against a brother you injure a member of Christ."

**\* Signs.**

"If we seek signs of its presence, these can be recognized when subjects speaking to one another become silent at anyone's approach and change the topic of their conversation." A little further on he says: "Hence you will find many who give credence to heathens rather than to Christians."

**\* Unworthiness.**

"The unworthiness of this defect? I bemoan the more that discords and contentions exist while you exist under the same roof, have the same chapel, the same Pastor, with so many motives exciting you to concord."

**\* Consequences.**

Would you desire to know the dire consequences? First it devastates charity; second and consequently, God withdraws from our midst, for inasmuch as when two or three are gathered in His name He is there amid them, so also when two or three band together to destroy peace, Christ refuses to be in their midst; third, this very name of "brother" — which can have nothing more dear and cherished — becomes insipid, decrepit and meaningless. And lastly, we ourselves bring about our Community's ruin for, he says, if we are always armed against one another, the devil will have no need to work at our destruction.

**\* Remedies.**

In fine, if we seek remedies, he recommends that we reverence the holy Eucharistic Table whereon is laid Christ, Victim of Peace, so that when assailed by injuries we may bear them and bewail not our injury, but the undoing of the doer.

It was fitting to present here in few words the thoughts of this Father, since there was little need to

quote his long sermon in full; but it would be most beneficial, however, to read it all through and to especially remember to whom he was speaking. And indeed if a saintly man was so averse to such things among those united through the simple designation of Christian, what more would he have said of those more closely united by the strongest bonds of religious charity and unity?

We cannot omit what St. Bernard says to this effect (Serm. 29 in Cant.): "Dearest brethren, may peace be among you, and harm you not one another in word or deed" etc. All of this exhortation should be read. And Sermon 24 on the Canticle text "Righteous hearts love you" contains a passage beginning with "Religious are seen walking apart..." etc., wherein he so graphically describes their convenings and backbitings. But in his sermon regarding the triple custody of the hands, tongue, and heart, he enlarges thus on the subject: "Be not afraid to proclaim that an unkind tongue is more cruel than the spear that pierced Christ's side, and proclaim this in all boldness. For when this tongue stabs a member of the Lord it also stabs Christ Himself: nor does it stab a lifeless limb, but stabs a living body to death. It causes more sorrow than the very thorns that the enraged soldiers pressed into His sacred head, or the iron nails driven into the sacred hands and feet to culminate the malice of the Jews. For had not Christ given predilection to this same body that is now being pierced and stabbed and sort of preferred to His Own, He would never have yielded His life to the horrors of death and the shame of the cross."

St. Augustine (Libr. 9, Confess. 9) greatly praises his own mother in that she never related anything of one person to another unless it was useful in reconciling them, and he says that having learned from experience what miseries and strife the tongue can stir up, he deemed this no small blessing indeed, and adds: "It is not enough that man merely avoid stirring up quarrels or fomenting them through evil words, but he must also strive to extinguish them by speaking kindly." And therefore how must a religious act?

\* **Seriousness to be comprehended from harm caused to household.**

The seriousness of this malady can be comprehended from the harm and distress caused to those dwelling with the subject: it wrecks peace of soul, tranquility, obedience, and also impedes the ministry and the helping of others when the reputation of our members falls short in any way. For at the actual time of speaking, a religious harms not only those persons he contacts, but also many others who are absent, and this for many years, because rumors and suspicions keep circulating from one person to another.

The esteem and reputation of a defamed religious are diminished not only within the house where he lives, but this discredit spreads through the province and even the provinces where even after long years he will find estranged from him men whom he had never wronged or even lived with. Should obedience make him Superior, the displeased subjects through being prejudiced by his unfavorable reputation will both bewail and complain about the Superior, so that neither confidence, respect, nor love can find place among them.

Deservedly is this sentence from holy Scripture pronounced against men of this kind who spread poison so widely: "Woe to him that giveth drink to his friend, who presenteth him with gall and maketh him drunk so as to behold his nakedness" (Hab. 2:15). St. Ephrem explains this well. (Serm. de vita spirit. n.39. tom. I).

It will also greatly help if we consider the facility with which we fall into this sin through volubility of speech, for the more easily sin is committed, the more assiduously should it be guarded against." And certainly were one to incur a serious corporal malady from a slip of the tongue, how vigilant and cautious would he be! And yet we are somnolent to the dangers of our soul! Nevertheless, even in minimal matters, if from a speech defect one is apt to err in pronouncing a certain word since he is unable to vocalize it correctly, how cautiously he avoids this word if he is to speak in public, lest he

have to betray a speech defect! How much more, therefore, should be avoided those words whereby the tongue sins seriously and betrays a defect not of body but of soul, although the former lacks all moral guilt while the latter can lack neither grave guilt nor punishment.

\* **Good intention does not suffice.**

Let them understand that it does not suffice as excuse that it was not done intentionally or with the formal aim to detract from the Society or others, for the same evil effects ensue from the very nature of the matter. Nor on that account does less harm emerge for the Society and others, no matter with what intention the statement was uttered. Since they know how easy it is for them to fall, they ought the more attentively set a guard upon their mouth just as one having experienced the strength of wine and drink, and in getting drunk once more is not free of fault, for he ought and could have avoided the cause.

\* **When one feels ill-disposed towards another.**

Therefore, if anyone feel ill-disposed towards another, he must not speak of him or his concerns until he has prepared by prayer and recollection, for the mouth easily speaks from the abundance of the heart and good things cannot come forth from an evil treasure (Matth. 12:34-35).

\* **Let Superior know of fault.**

When the subject does fall, he should of his own accord immediately lay the matter before his Superior or confessor, and not retire to his room that night before having confessed: then if by chance he has committed a mortal sin he will not sleep with its guilt on his soul; and if there be no grave sin, he the more easily obtains pardon and remedy. If he does this, he will indubitably find this most helpful.

\* **Avoid causes of uncharitableness.**

Let him avoid, as he would in the case of poison, the talk and conversation of those with whom he is wont



to fall, nor let him speak of matters pertaining to Community government, unless very circumspectly and after preparation, even though what he says appears to him to be trifling and no harm is intended.

**\* Grave reproof.**

When the subject has erred in this matter, let the Superior receive him with grave reproof and remind him of some of the points indicated here. For more than one can believe, this malady above all others will increase through indulgence and lack of correction. The subject must be punished in proportion to the fault. Solomon says (Prov. 21:11): "When a pestilent man is punished, the little one will be wiser." However, if his murmurings are against Superiors, everything should be observed as in # 5 and 6, Chapter 14 on "Temptations against the Superior."

**\* It fault has not been public.**

If the fault has not been very public and can be concealed without scandal, he should not be punished publicly or at the penance table excepting, perhaps, in the case of inordinate and unrestrained speech and murmuring. But he should be clearly warned that this fault was not being publicly punished on account of the great scandal that would result were it known that he said such and such; thus he will think more seriously of his fault. It will be well, however, if he humbles himself in the presence of those to whom he spoke, retracts what he said, and asks pardon for the scandal caused.

**\* Pernicious tale-bearing about others.**

Telling someone things about another that offend charity is not only pernicious, but should be considered diabolical. We should recall what the Constitutions call these men, namely, pests, and what they decree against such — that they must be expelled either from their house or from the Society. Nor does St. Basil (Reg. brev. reg. 26) express any contrary opinion when he says: "He who defames a companion or listens to and tolerates a

detractor, what punishment does he not deserve?" And he replies: "They should both be banished from the company of others, for this will I drive out this secret detractor of his brother." And elsewhere he says: "Be unwilling to hearken to a detractor or endure him." And he continues with the following question: "If he has defamed even authority, what line of action do we observe concerning him?" He replies: "This verdict is clear from the wrath of God against Miriam for speaking against Moses, for even at the entreaty of the latter, God did not allow her sin to go unpunished" (Num. 22). And Solomon would seem to be speaking of this kind of sin: "Cast out the scoffer (or the pestilent one, for the word is the same) and dissention shall go out with him" (Prov. 22:10). For unless such men seriously amend, doubtlessly strife and dissention cannot be wanting.

**\* Investigate causes of malady.**

The subject himself should diligently investigate the causes of his malady, for there are some who defame from aversion conceived against another of whom they know not how to speak kindly. Some from a certain vanity defame and criticize others and arbitrate everything, approving and disapproving as if they alone were sagacious: others defame through jealousy of the deeds of others and, as St. Jerome says, they consider another's gain as their own loss: some defame by reason of mentally censuring the Superior because he has chosen this or that person. This stems from the same roots of envy and pride. As to this disease which is the bite of the deadly asp, Cassian (in last chapter of the 18th Coll.) teaches how dangerous it is and how difficult to cure. This passage should be read most painstakingly. Since the vice of detraction arises from these and other sources, the remedy should be applied to the precise point where the deadly but very fertile root of this vice appears.

**\* Peril to which subject exposes himself.**

Let the subject see how wretched a thing it is when, in bearing the burden of religion, he frequently exposes



himself to the very possible danger of losing all should he fall into mortal sin — easily committed in this case. But if seriously offending God or even harking to the promptings of Satan be unworthy not only of a religious but also of any Christian, what is to be thought if we do not avoid by every possible means those occasions whence this temptation easily comes? Should this concern become less prickly and goading for anyone, he should remember to at least consider the loss of labor and merit, the difficulty of repentance, the toil of amending.

**\* Particular Examen and other such remedies.**

Besides the particular examen and some penance he should have recourse to prayer and repentance as often as he falls, realizing that concerning the danger of succumbing and the perdition of others involved, it is more dangerous to be tempted regarding this sin than regarding chastity, for notwithstanding how humiliated he may be, he tries every remedy, omits no penance, prayers, or reception of the sacraments. But concerning the tongue, we go our way unconcerned as if there were no danger of any downfall. This error must be thoroughly uprooted from the mind and the danger carefully avoided.

**\* How odious he becomes to all.**

The subject should attentively consider how odious he becomes to all who live in the same Community, and perhaps to the very person to whom he speaks. But this is little indeed. What if the words of the Apostle are to be considered: "Detractors are hateful to God" (Rom. 1:30)? What can be more wretched than being odious to God and men? "And afterwards these wretched men of this breed shall delight in their own words" (Ps. 48:14).

**\* Let Superior observe answer laid down by Provincial Congregation.**

Finally, let the Superior observe what is laid down in answer to a Provincial Congregation of the year 1590 which says: First, the Superior should take the opportunity, in those exhortations customarily had in our houses,

to seriously inculcate to what extent this vice harms conscience, piety, and peace.

Second: Independently of the common syndics, some others should be secretly appointed to report in particular on this vice, and let public penances or private admonitions — whichever be expedient — be given to those failing in this matter.

Third: Confessors should warn their penitents that they are liable to sin grievously in this matter. Should this misfortune befall a subject, the confessor will send him to the Superior as prescribed. Should the fault be only venial, he will simply give him a warning, impose a penance and exhort him to have recourse to remedies such as the particular examen and others as well. Outside of confession confessors can also warn them to carefully avoid the company of those they know to be a source of their falling.

Fourth: Since it none too rarely happens that knowledge of what has been said or determined in consultation presents occasions of quarrels and complaints, greatest care should be taken that the consultors keep the secret to which they are bound by their office.

Fifth: Much harm will result if, in the hope of affording help or consolation, admonitors or consultors so deal with those approaching them with grievances that they seem to approve the complaints and share their resentment with regard to the Superior. Hereby and even despite their personal intention, quarrels and complaints are fomented and all the more upheld. Let them kindly receive and hear out the subject so as to preserve the authority of and love for the Superior. For means of consoling those who are in bitter grief will not fail them in that they can even promise their own service in their rapport with the Superior: but just let there be no lack of charity, prudence, and necessary caution of speech.

Sixth: Let several selected religious among ours be warned that if they perceive such evils erupting in our

college, they must strive to hinder them and switch the conversation either by intervening with safer topics, or saying in a kind and friendly way that it is unsafe to utter similar remarks.

Seventh: Let ours understand and be seriously instructed both in exhortations and by confessors that in matters of complaint and detraction, mortal sin is easy indeed. And even though in particular cases — and due to circumstances — it does not go that far, nevertheless from the nature of the disorder the sin, if not always mortal, is usually serious. For instance, when through such words we implant an unfavorable opinion of prelates, or root out a good one from the minds of subjects; or when in some way we alienate subjects from Superiors; when we weaken vigor of obedience and simplicity; when we sow discord, hate, and aversion among the brethren; when we disturb the communal peace, tranquility, and observance of the Rule.

This is why in speaking of the religious life, St. Bernard expresses these lovely words (Serm. 3 de Dedic. Eccles.): "Those who attempt to bring enemies of this kind into the camp of the Lord are traitors indeed, such as are detractors, men hateful to God, who sow discord and foster scandals among brethren. As the house of the Lord was made in peace, so it is clear that through discord a home is made for the devil. Do not wonder, brethren, if I seem to speak harshly, for the truth flatters no one. He will know himself to be wholly a traitor who attempts (God forbid!) to introduce any vice into this house and make the temple of the Lord a den of demons. Not many of this breed are found, thank God, but perhaps at times we find some conversant with our enemies and sealing a pact with death, that is they strive to their utmost to enervate the discipline of the Order, to tepefy fervor, trouble peace and offend charity."

## Chapter 18

### Melancholy and Scruples

So many useful treatises concerning this disorder have been written by many masters of the spiritual life that it is unnecessary to say more.

#### \* **Some books to be read.**

Gerson should be read on "Pusillanimity" (Part 3) and on "Preparation for Mass".

#### \* **How we can help.**

Usually, such religious who are thus fomented are to be loved, warmly welcomed and encouraged. Nor when speaking to them should Superiors show doubt or hesitation, but decisiveness: "This is nothing; pass over that; do not repeat; do this; I will answer to God," etc.

#### \* **Scruples concerning certain peculiarities.**

We must not overlook the fact that there are some who from no delicacy of conscience incline to scruples. For some peculiar reason they fret and scruple about one thing or another, but in everything else they are found to be entirely lacking in delicacy and restraint. Indeed we have known some religious — otherwise very negligent in spiritual perfection and religious observance, and unscrupulous in allowing themselves many imperfections (for which they were finally ousted from the Society) — yet acting too apprehensively and scrupulously, having no end to their general confessions, seeking dispensations, etc.

We have made this comment lest such men be forever spared and have their conscience set at ease, as should be done with the really scrupulous. In such matters where they need assistance they should be helped with discretion, leniency, and indulgence. In others they should be warned of laxity, that they are inconsistent with themselves: it may even be that these scruples have arisen from too much negligence and sloth. Therefore they must be fervently vigilant and yet be adroitly and reasonably encouraged.

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