

religious observance. They are mentioned here because with relaxation there comes sometimes a forgetfulness of what pertains to religious life and its obligations. Colored clothing or bedding must never be used, not even something as small as a ribbon. Sheepskins should never be worn. If someone is sick, she may wear an extra garment made of the same rough wool as the habit.

14. The Sisters must keep their hair cut so as not to have to waste time in combing it. Never should a mirror be used or any adornments; there should be complete self-forgetfulness.

On the Enclosure

15. No nun should be seen with her face unveiled¹³ unless she is with her father, mother, brothers, or sisters, or has some reason which would make it seem as appropriate as in the cases mentioned. And her dealings should be with persons who are an edification and help for the life of prayer and who provide spiritual consolation rather than recreation. Another nun should always be present unless one is dealing with conscience matters. The prioress must keep the key to both the parlor and the main entrance. When the doctor, barber surgeon, confessor, or other necessary persons enter the enclosure, they should always be accompanied by two nuns. When some sick nun goes to confession, another nun must always be standing there at a distance so that she sees the confessor. She should not speak to him, unless a word or two, but only the sick nun may do so.

16. In houses that have a choir, within the enclosure, where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, and have chaplains or help for taking care of the church, there should be no door leading into the church.¹⁴ Where this help is not present, and the nuns cannot dispense from having a door, the prioress should keep the key. The door should be opened only when necessary and by two Sisters. When there is help for taking care of the church, the entrance should be closed up if there had been a door there.

17. The novices should be allowed visitors just as are the professed. For if they are in any way unhappy, this should make it

clear that they are expected to remain only if they are very willing to do so.¹⁵ And they should be given the opportunity to say so if they do not want to remain.

18. The Sisters should pay no attention to the affairs of the world, nor should they speak about them. They may do so if the matter concerns something for which they can offer a remedy or help those with whom they are speaking, assist them in finding the truth, or console them in some trial. If no effort is being made to make the conversation a fruitful one, they should bring it to a quick conclusion, as was said. It is very important that those who visit us leave with some benefit, and not after having wasted time, and that we benefit too. The companion should watch carefully whether this rule is observed. She is obliged to inform the prioress if it is not. When she does not do this, she incurs the same penalty as the one who breaks the rule. The punishment is that after having been warned twice by her companion, a nun on the third occasion should be given nine days in the prison cell and, on the third day of the nine, a discipline in the refectory. For the above rule is very important to the religious life.

19. As much as they can, the Sisters should avoid a great deal of conversation with relatives. Aside from the fact that they will become preoccupied with their relatives' affairs, they will find it difficult to avoid talking to them about worldly things.

20. Let them be very careful in speaking with outsiders, even though these may be close relatives. If these persons are not the kind who find their satisfaction in speaking about the things of God, they should be seen seldom, and the visit kept short.

On Accepting Novices

21. Let the nuns consider carefully whether those about to be received are persons of prayer desiring full perfection and contempt for the world. These aspirants should be at least seventeen. And if they are not detached from the world, they will find the way we live here hard to bear. It is better to consider these