

virtue they merit making profession sooner. They should be treated with complete sisterly charity, and food and clothing should be provided for them just as they are for all.

On the Humble Offices

22. The Mother prioress should be the first on the list for sweeping so that she might give good example to all. She should pay careful attention to whether those in charge of the clothes and the food provide charitably for the Sisters in what is needed for subsistence and in everything else. Those having these offices should do no more for the prioress and the older nuns than they do for all the rest, as the rule prescribes,¹⁶ but be attentive to needs and age, and more so to needs, for sometimes those who are older have fewer needs. Since this is a general rule, it merits careful consideration, for it applies in many things. Let no Sister comment on whether the food given to eat is much or little, well or poorly seasoned. Let the prioress and the provider take care so that what is given (depending on what the Lord has given) is well prepared and the nuns will be able to get along with it, for they have nothing else. The Sisters should be obliged to tell the Mother prioress of their needs, and the novices to tell the novice mistress; this with regard to both clothing and food. And if they need something more than the usual things, they should, even though this may not be great, commend the matter to our Lord first. Our human nature often asks for more than what it needs, and sometimes the devil helps so as to cause fear about the practice of penance and fasting.

On the Sick

23. The sick should be cared for with fullness of love, concern for their comfort, and compassion in accordance with the poverty we practice. And they should praise God, our Lord, when they are well provided for. If they lack the things the wealthy possess for bringing relief in their illnesses, let them not

become sad. In joining us one must be very resolved about such matters. This is what it means to be poor: to be in want, perhaps, at times of greater need. The Mother prioress should be very careful that the healthy nuns be deprived of something necessary rather than have the sick ones go without some deeds of kindness. The sick ought to be visited and comforted by the Sisters. Let an infirmarian be appointed who has the ability and charity for this office. The sick nuns should strive, then, to show the perfection they acquired when healthy, being patient and as little a bother as possible if the illness is not serious. They should be obedient to the infirmarian, for her benefit and for the edification of the Sisters, that they themselves might gain through their illness. They should have linens and good beds (I mean, with mattresses) and should be treated with much charity and cleanliness.

24. Work with a time limit should never be given to the Sisters. Each one should strive to work so that the others might have food to eat. They should take into careful account what the rule ordains (that whoever wants to eat must work) and what St. Paul did.¹⁷ If someone should volunteer to take on a fixed daily amount of work, she may do so but ought not be given a penance if she fails to finish it.

25. Each day after supper, or collation, when the Sisters are gathered together, the turnkeeper should announce what was given that day in alms, naming the donors so that all may take care to pray that God will repay them.

26. The time for dinner cannot be fixed since this depends on how the Lord gives. When possible, during the winter, on Church fast days, the bell for dinner should be rung at eleven-thirty and on fast days of the order, at eleven; during the summer, at ten. Should the Lord give a Sister the desire to perform a mortification, she should ask permission. This good, devotional practice should not be lost, for some benefits are drawn from it. Let it be done quickly so as not to interfere with the reading. Outside the time of dinner and supper, no Sister should eat or drink without permission. When they are through with the meal, the Mother prioress may dispense from the silence so that all

may converse together on whatever topic pleases them most as long as it is not one that is inappropriate for a good religious. And they should all have their distaffs with them there.

27. Games should in no way be permitted, for the Lord will give to one the grace to entertain the others. In this way, the time will be well spent. They should strive not to be offensive to one another, but their words and jests must be discreet. When this hour of being together is over, they may in summer sleep for an hour; and whoever might not wish to sleep should observe silence.

28. After Compline and prayer, as was mentioned above,¹⁸ in both winter and summer, the Mother may allow the Sisters to talk together, each one having her work, as was mentioned. The amount of time should be determined by the Mother prioress. Let no Sister embrace another or touch her on the face or hands. The Sisters should not have particular friendships but should include all in their love for one another, as Christ often commanded His disciples.¹⁹ Since they are so few, this will be easy to do. They should strive to imitate their Spouse who gave His life for us. This love for one another that includes all and singles out no one in particular is very important.

29. No nun should reprove another for the faults she sees her commit. If they are serious, she should admonish her privately in a charitable way. And if the nun after being told three times does not amend, the Mother prioress should be told but no other Sister. Since there are Sisters appointed as monitors to attend to the faults, the rest of the Sisters need not bother and may pass over those seen in others and pay attention to their own. Nor should they meddle with faults committed in the fulfillment of offices, unless it's a serious matter which they are obliged to make known, as was mentioned. They should be very careful not to excuse themselves unless in matters where it is necessary to do so, for they will find much benefit in this practice.

30. The monitors should take great care to notice the faults and, when ordered by the prioress, should at times reprimand the Sisters in public, even though this may mean that a younger

Sister is reprimanding an older one. One is thereby exercised in humility. Thus the Sisters should not answer back even if they are without fault. No Sister may give or receive or ask for anything, even from her parents, without permission from the prioress. Everything that is offered as alms, should be shown to the prioress. Never should the prioress or any of the Sisters use the title Doña.²⁰

31. The punishment for the faults and failings committed in matters that were mentioned should be those penalties designated at the end of these constitutions, according to the seriousness of the fault, since almost everything is set up in conformity with our rule. In all of the above, the Mother prioress may with discretion and charity dispense in accordance with what may be just, and its observance does not oblige under pain of sin but of corporal punishment.

32. The house, with the exception of the church, should never be adorned, nor should there be anything finely wrought, but the wood should be rough. Let the house be small and the rooms humble: something that fulfills rather than exceeds the need. It should be as strong as possible. The wall should be high, and there should be a field where hermitages can be constructed so that the Sisters may be able to withdraw for prayer as our holy Fathers did.²¹

On the Deceased

33. The sacraments should be administered as ordained in the ordinal.²² The funeral and burial of a deceased nun should include a vigil and sung Mass; and also on the first anniversary, an office of the dead and a sung Mass. If it is possible the Gregorian Masses should be said for them; and if not, whatever is possible. The whole community should recite an Office of the dead for the nuns of their own monastery; and for other nuns (those of the primitive rule), an Office of the dead should be recited and, if possible, a Mass sung. For nuns of the mitigated observance, an Office of the dead should be recited.