

The Congregation of the Most Holy Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin in the Jesuit College in Lecce. Extracts from its Statutes.

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The Congregation of the Most Holy Annunciation of the Most Blessed Virgin was established in Lecce on Saint John the Baptist's day, 24 June 1582, by Jesuit Father Bernardino Realino. It was one of seven such congregations and confraternities he supposedly established in that city to serve various levels of society. The confraternity clearly had close ties with the local Jesuit college, linking young laymen, novices, and priests, though membership details remain unknown.¹

What follows are translated extracts from the Statutes that were started in 1582 and modified up to 1598, as indicated by a note (*Avvertimento*) and by the section on Candles and Palms towards the end of the text.² The discussion of the *Quarantore*, or Forty Hours devotion, that precedes it makes it clear that rules and procedures were changing over this period. A copy of the Statutes is found in a manuscript held in the Jesuit Archive in Rome. Pasquale Lopez assumed they were inspired by Fr. Realino. In publishing them, Lopez did not provide a complete transcription; his omissions are noted below. I have not checked his edition with the original, nor have I had the opportunity to undertake research in Lecce. Lopez, also, undertook no such research, so his article makes little reference to this particular organisation. As noted below, local researchers have not so far indicated any surviving sources on the confraternity's membership or operations.³

It seems appropriate to publish a translation of these statutes for a variety of reasons. First of all, although many statutes have been published in their original language, very few have been translated into English and made available to an English-reading public of scholars and students alike. Second, these particular statutes represent the new reforming spirit of the sixteenth century, coming from one of the leading orders promoting clerical-led fraternities. The statutes reflect not only spirituality and devotion,

¹ Lopez, "Le confraternite laicali in Italia e la Riforma cattolica," *passim*.

² The vernacular statutes were published by Lopez in his "Le Confraternite laicali in Italia e la Riforma cattolica," pp. 209–238, where they appear under the title *Regole comuni della Congregazione della Santissima Annunciazione della Beatissima Vergine nel collegio della Compagnia di G.I.E.S.U. nella magnifica Città di Lecce*.

³ My translation was drafted in 2006 for a collection of translated early modern statutes of Italian confraternities proposed by Konrad Eisenbichler; a project that unfortunately did not come to fruition. Konrad brought me back to this Lecce Statute in 2015 when he proposed its publication in *Confraternitas*. I am grateful for his editorial help in improving the translation!

but also the new philanthropy of sixteenth-century Catholicism. I would suggest that the Jesuits are here building on others' initiatives rather than being pioneers, whether we are dealing with frequent confession and communion, silent or mental prayer, the Forty Hour Devotion, or the philanthropy of visiting prisoners or the sick. Third, these statutes come from the very southern tip of Italy, an area that has received very little attention in English-language scholarship. Fourth, the use of a *santino*, that is, a small printed card with the image of a saint on it, to serve as "advocate" did strike me as an unusual and interesting feature when I first read the Statutes nearly thirty years ago; it seems clear now that this was a common Jesuit procedure. I do not recall statutes for non-Jesuit confraternities advocating the same, though I have not specifically looked for this. Fifth, these statutes spend quite a lot of time on spiritual matters and on the running of the confraternity's meetings, something that is quite different from most other statutes, which spend, instead, more time on office holding, elections, and so forth.

It is important to note that the original Italian of the statutes is not always very grammatical and that the punctuation (as given in Lopez' transcription) is wayward, both of which lead to a number of ambiguities. As a result, and also for the sake of clarity and some consistency, my translation at times becomes rather free, with changes in tenses, number, punctuation, and capitalisation; in so doing, it conveys the idea that the original was not a polished literary document. I have occasionally given key Italian words where they seem of interest or add clarity. In the Statutes and in this translation, the term "Congregation" may refer to the confraternity as a whole, to its formal meeting, or to the place of meeting.

Jesuits and Confraternities

The Jesuits became leading promoters of different kinds of confraternities, which they would also call congregations or sodalities. Ignatius of Loyola established, early on, links with existing confraternities and joined some. The Order subsequently developed many kinds of fraternities of its own, with a whole range of spiritual and philanthropic orientations.⁴ Many of them had a strong Marian devotion, inspired by the Congregation of the Annunciation founded by Father Jan Leunis at the Roman College in 1563. Where the Jesuits had their colleges or had a fairly stable community they established confraternities that they expected to guide strongly; as a result, their sodalities were less controlled

⁴ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, esp. 192–199 ("Confraternities and the Marian Congregations"); Lazar, *Working in the Vineyard*, esp. ch. 5 ("Working in the Vineyard: the First Jesuit Confraternities in Italy: Toward a Geographic and Chronological Survey"); Lewis, "The Development of Jesuit Confraternity Activity"; Black, *Italian Confraternities*, see Index under 'Jesuits'; Châtellier, *Europe of the Devout* deals with the European-wide spread of Jesuit Marian Congregations, but largely ignores southern Italy.

by the laity than many other. As a result, Jesuit confraternities reflected the strong tendency of Catholic reformers, whether from the orders or from the episcopacy, to provide clerical leadership. Some contrasts may be made with Jesuit itinerant missionary activity, notably in southern Italy, which some called “the Indies of Italy,” where they encouraged the local laity to establish confraternities, possibly linked to parishes, even where Jesuits were in no position to supervise them. The Congregation of the Annunciation in Lecce, founded by Bernardino Realino in 1582, was clearly intended to be under strong Jesuit leadership, as is evident from the deference to the Father (a Jesuit) clearly stipulated in the statutes. The implication in various passages is that the membership might include other Jesuit priests, or those training in the local College, as well as lay persons with families. The statutes show the continuing links with the College and the Jesuit Father there. In 1607 Lecce was home to one of the thirteen Jesuit colleges in the kingdom of Naples and fifty-eight (so the Society claimed) congregations and oratories with 4,633 members in total. Some of these groups could include children and women. Marian congregations, such as the one in Lecce, could, according to the standardised rules of 1587, admit boys from age 14.⁵

Saint Bernardino Realino of Lecce, or of Carpi⁶

Bernardino Realino was born in Carpi, near Modena, in 1530. As a young man he studied law in Bologna, receiving a doctorate in 1556, but had to flee to Milan after wounding somebody in an argument. In Milan he pursued a secular administrative career that eventually lead him to Naples (1564), where a chance encounter with Jesuit students turned him towards a religious career. He was admitted into the Jesuit Order by Father Alfonso Salmerón in 1564 and ordained priest in 1567. He preached and catechised in Naples until 1574 when a nobleman from Lecce persuaded Salmerón to send Realino to Lecce to found a college that the local Academy wanted to promote. Realino settled there, promoting the College (started 1579), congregations and other confraternities, and generally fostering the spiritual life of the city through preaching, catechising, hearing confessions, but also releasing and re-converting Christians who had been enslaved and had then, whether forcibly or with inducements, become Muslim. By 1595, when the leading Jesuit scholar and cardinal, Roberto Bellarmino, visited Lecce, Realino was already deemed to be saintly and a spiritual leader whom the *Leccesi* had already stopped from being recalled to Rome or Naples. When he was close to death after a fall in 1610, locals were ready to remove his bedding and his hairs as a “relics.” He recovered and agreed

⁵ Lazar, *Working in the Vineyard*, 135, 137.

⁶ See Sweeney, “Realino, Bernardino, St.”; Menchi, “Bernardino Realino, santo”; Bodkin, *St. Bernardino (Realini) of Lecce*.

to become the city's patron. Realino died in Lecce in 1616, was beatified in 1896, and canonised 1947.

Lecce⁷

Lecce was the leading city in Apulia, the region in the “heel” of Italy, and one of the most flourishing cities in the Kingdom of Naples. In 1600 it had a population of about 10,000 in the central city, with another 32,000 in the wider area. Thanks to a more peaceful political situation and growing prosperity, from the later sixteenth century it developed churches and noble palaces with elaborate and intriguing Baroque sculptural decorations (with animals, flowers, fruits etc., as well as figures of saints) on their façades, doors, windows, and altars. The Jesuit church of Il Gesù (later renamed Buon Consiglio) was built in 1575 and consecrated in 1576. It was designed in a restrained classical style, but was adorned with lavish interior decorations, as was its College. For some decades Realino was the leading preacher, then confessor, in the Jesuit church. The Jesuits enjoyed the support of the nobles and merchants of Lecce whose children, we can assume, filled the membership of the Congregation. The schedule set out in the Statutes for the confraternity brothers presupposes literacy and a significant degree of free time from work to dedicate to devotions, confraternal meetings, and charitable work. Italian scholars dealing with Jesuit Annunciation confraternities suggest that they are characterised by their association with the nobility and by the emphasis on frequent confession and communion.⁸ The Jesuits did establish several confraternities for other social orders, including peasants and artisans.⁹ The College was renovated in 1868 and is now the Palace of Justice. It is not clear whether an independent congregation building was ever erected. Sections below on the confraternity altars and on its celebration of the Forty Hour Devotion indicate that the Congregation's meetings took place within the College, possibly moving from a small to a larger room, while a separate building was always awaited but probably never built. The confraternity's location inside the all-male Jesuit College meant that women could not be part of groups of non-members attending the confraternity's Forty Hour Devotion in the Congregation,

⁷ Black, *Italian Confraternities*, esp. pp. 46, 56–57, 94, 99; Paone, *Chiese di Lecce*, provides some illustrations of varying quality in black and white, as well as information on the churches, with pp. 23–32 on Il Gesù.

⁸ Di Molfetta, “Confraternite parrocchiali,” esp. 371–372. Valiant efforts by Liana Bertoldi Lenoci and her associates to find documentation for confraternities in Puglia seem not to have revealed any for Lecce's Jesuit congregations; see Bertoldi Lenoci “Le confraternite pugliesi in età moderna” in which she comments on documentation and tabulates the confraternities in the diocese.

⁹ Lewis, “The Development of Jesuit Confraternity Activity,” 217.

within the College, but could await the Host when finally processed into the Church.

Bibliography and References

The references provided in the Cited Works below have been confined, with rare exceptions for details on Lecce and Apulia, to works in English, usually recent and in print. The cited works by O'Malley, Lazar, and Lewis can lead the reader to the considerable, more general literature on the Jesuits.

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

SELECTIONS FROM THE STATUTES
OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY ANNUNCIATION
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN
IN THE JESUIT COLLEGE IN LECCE

THE COMMON RULES

What Each Brother Must Himself Observe

1. Since this Congregation was instituted and founded under the Protection of the most Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God, it is appropriate that its brothers seek with all possible diligence to be noted in devotion to her and in particular Her Most Holy Annunciation, which is the proper name and title of the Congregation; to which the whole observation of the following Rules will be notably aimed.
2. The aim of this Congregation is for each brother with all diligence, under the direction of the Fathers of the Company of G.I.E.S.U. to attend primarily to his own spiritual help and that of his Family, then with the same diligence exert himself for the benefit of his neighbours with Works of Mercy,¹⁰ and particularly in assisting the naked poor of the city.
3. The means by which the aforesaid aim should be acquired should normally be as follows: the use of mental as well as oral prayer, frequency of receiving the Most Holy Sacraments, seeking the acquisition of virtue, with some mortification exercise, and the direction and orders of the Father of the Congregation.¹¹
4. Every morning after rising from bed, or at the hour that would be more suitable, each Brother of the Congregation should do an hour of mental prayer, perhaps guiding himself with some spiritual book,

¹⁰ The reference is to the Seven Acts of Mercy, based on Matthew 25: 35–40: caring for the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, the imprisoned, and housing strangers. A seventh act, burying the dead, was added in the Middle Ages. These seven corporal Acts were guiding activities of Good Works for many confraternities, but the Jesuits laid major stress on them for their lay confraternity foundations. In Catholic teaching, doing such activities for neighbours, *prossimi*, known or unknown, was like doing them for Christ and might be a path to salvation. Paintings were used to illustrate the Acts, severally or in one complex advocacy, as Caravaggio was to do in his Seven Acts of Mercy for a noble Confraternity, the Pio Monte della Misericordia in Naples, where fellow artists also painted individual Acts. See Black, *Italian Confraternities*, 258–261, and *Church, Religion and Society*, 132–133, 138, 147, 207; O'Malley, *First Jesuits*, 165–168.

¹¹ Father of the Congregation; the Jesuit spiritual leader and governor of the confraternity or congregation; in subsequent references to “the Father,” this is presumed to be the person concerned, unless clear otherwise. We also have a Father of the College, as superior.

according to the advice and direction of the Father, or indeed of his own confessor.¹²

5. Every day each member will say the Office of the Madonna, or indeed the Corona, or third part of the Rosary, or the Corona of the Lord of thirty-three Our Fathers [*Pater Noster*], and thirty-three Hail Marys [*Ave Maria*]; and in honour of the seven Joys [*Allegrezze*] of the Most Blessed Virgin, seven Our Fathers, and so many Hail Marys with three other Our Fathers, and so many Hail Marys in reverence to the Holy Trinity, and another Our Father, and Hail Mary in honour of the Guardian Angel.¹³
6. Everyone should hear Mass daily with devotion; but when, with some just impediment, someone cannot hear it, he will say five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys in memory of the Five Wounds of Our Lord, and a *Salve Regina* [Hail Holy Queen] to the Most Blessed Virgin. And if he is able he should not avoid visiting daily the Most Holy Sacrament for the great help one receives.
7. Every evening, before going to bed, there should be a diligent Examination of Conscience, according to these five points, which are contained in the Formula of common examination for this end, which are these: First: to thank God for the benefits generally received and especially on this day. Second: to ask for grace and true light for knowledge, and to hate sin. Third: to ask that account be taken in regard to his Soul of all in which he has offended God that

¹² Mental or silent prayer; as opposed to ejaculatory public, or private sotto voce prayer; this was to become a concern to some church leaders through the seventeenth century, leading to inquisitorial investigation of some groups who specialised in the inner devotion, contemplation and speculation that this could encourage, and which was deemed detrimental to clerical leadership. See Black, *Church, Religion and Society*, 169–170; idem., *The Italian Inquisition*, 153–155. See also: Caravale, *L'orazione proibita*, 78–85, and now his *Forbidden Prayer*, 89–96, in which he argues that the theme of mental prayer might be perfectly inserted into making counter-reformation precepts — as seen in such works as Silvestro da Rossano's *Modo come la persona spirituale che ora, si habbia a disporre nella Oration verso Iddio e suoi Santi*, based on his preaching at San Salvatore in Venice in 1572. Fra Silvestro said that: "It consists of holy meditations, and holy contemplation with acts of cognition by which we come to know God and our own soul" and made a distinction between external worship as part of church services etc., and interior worship "because that kind of outward worship can be performed without prayer, while inward prayer can never be performed without prayer, because the intention is to elevate the mind, and we are all obliged to perform this worship." (*Forbidden Prayer*, 94). This introduces a public/private approach to devotion — the secret chamber of our heart (96), (which presumably led to the later troubles with inquisitors and Popes over Quietism and Molinism!).

¹³ The Rosary. While the invention and use of the Rosary is associated with the Dominicans, who fostered Rosary confraternities throughout Europe from the 1470s and 1480s, the Jesuits also became important promoters and commentators on the Mysteries, notably Gaspar Loarte. See Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose*; Black, *Italian Confraternities*, esp. 103–104.

day, in thoughts, words, deeds, and omissions; and especially paying attention to those defects to which he is most inclined. Fourth: to ask God humbly for pardon for every defect he will find in himself. Fifth: to make a firm proposal with Divine help to watch himself for the future. Finally: to say an Our Father and a Hail Mary with all his devotion.

8. Everyone should, when possible, spend some time in reading spiritual books, which should be of great benefit for prayer and for spiritual help in every virtuous exercise. However, it helps if each member asks for advice from the Father or his Confessor on what spiritual books would be most suitable for his need and what he should normally use for his greater profit.
9. Before entering the Congregation or after, according to the advice of the Father or Confessor, each member may be obliged to make a general confession for his whole life, if he had not already done it before, or as might seem otherwise appropriate to the above said Fathers. And then he will confess at least every fortnight to one of the Fathers of the Company of Jesus; or to others with, however, the knowledge and licence of the Father.
10. Everyone should receive communion every first Sunday of the month and on all feasts of Our Lord and of the Most Holy Mother, on the Nativity of John the Baptist, on All Saints Day, and on feasts of the Apostles, leaving to their devotion to do this more often, according to the Confessor's opinion.¹⁴
11. Each member should attend, according to the direction of the Father or the Confessor, to the mortification of his passions and in particular to those by which he is ordinarily most molested.
12. All members should be intent on acquiring true virtues with all diligence, speaking often with the Father about the means of acquiring them. They should also learn from the same Father the way they might know and overcome the temptations of our spiritual enemies, the devil, the world, and the flesh.

¹⁴ Frequent Communion. Before the early sixteenth century receiving communion was infrequent for the laity and lesser clergy. A campaign developed to encourage more frequent communion; in Italy this was led by some Oratorians, by a Neapolitan layman Buonsignore (or Bonsignore) Cacciaguerra (with some notable Dominican friends), and was then taken up by the Jesuits. Communion should be preceded by confession; in the campaigning it is difficult to know which was deemed more important, the frequency of confession, (with implications of fuller moral and social control), or the efficacy of receiving the Body of Christ. See Black, *Church, Religion and Society*, 72, 104–106; De Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul*, esp. 174–183. The issue of frequent communion and Jesuit campaigning for it were key reasons for Pasquale Lopez to append this Rule book to his article, (cf. 195, note 110); he also discussed Cacciaguerra's impact.

What the Brothers Should Observe in Relation to the Superiors.

[par. 13–16; omitted by Lopez]

What Brothers Must Observe among Themselves

17. All Brothers should seek to love one another and be united together with that bond of fraternal love (*carità*)¹⁵ that pertains to true sons of the Most Blessed Virgin and brothers of such a Congregation, fleeing from malediction every time, however little the dissention or discord; and when, however, through some fragility a similar thing is revealed in one of them, each member who knows about it should tell the Father, so he can immediately deal with it with paternal care.
18. If there should be between brothers any difference, or conflict of interest over goods, or similar, they should ensure with due fraternal *carità*, through the Father, or Prefect, that through an accord or compromise it should be settled with the greatest speed and peace possible.
19. If any of the brothers incurs some infirmity or other misfortune of importance, the Father or Prefect should be informed as soon as possible, so that he might give instructions to have him visited, helped, and consoled by other brothers, with all those acts of charity as are suitable; and there should be particular remembrance of him in the common prayers of the Congregation.
20. Should any of the brothers pass from this life, he should be given the whole Office of the Dead, if possible on the same day or else on another day soon after determined by the Superior. And at the same time the Prefect will arrange that they say five Masses for his soul at some privileged altar and the brothers who are priests will say three Masses, and the others three Corone, or all the Rosary, and everyone should remember to recommend dead brothers to God in their other prayers.
21. When the brothers have to vote to receive some new brother, or elect Superiors, or for some other matter in consultations, everyone should seek to proceed with passion and vote with all liberty and rectitude of intention; having no regard for anything but the service of Our Lord God and the Congregation's common good.
22. Everyone should make every effort to flee from bad company, rumours, swearing, oaths, and other, using words that are otiose, lascivious, impertinent, or scandalous; places of gaming, of comedies

¹⁵ *Carità*, and Latin *Caritas*. 'Charity' in its modern (as opposed to "early modern"), English usage is not necessarily the applicable translation; 'loving kindness', 'care', which may just be spiritual-emotional, or may involve physical and practical action. Various translations will be given below, as seems most suitable. 'Brotherly love' also may not convey for some readers the positive values in modern English.

and useless plays (*rappresentationi*), dissolute activities, and excesses which, in their cooling down of proper devotion, are inclined to cause further scandal and a bad example to those around; and they should seek to be very edifying in their lives and actions both in the House and outside; attending sermons, readings, Divine Offices, indulgences, and pious places, willingly participating in Works of Mercy, spiritual and corporal.

23. Every Brother should have the booklet of Christian Doctrine,¹⁶ and attempt to know very well how to use it; and work to know it better, and involve those in his house (*sua Casa*),¹⁷ to whom he should give equal chances to satisfy their other obligations; such as hearing Mass every Sunday and on feasts of obligation; to confess and take communion often, and to observe the commandments of Holy Mother Church; and not to allow, as far as he can, the Lord God to be offended in his house, or indeed that there should be any occasion for scandal.

What the Brothers Should Observe in relation to their Neighbours¹⁸

24. Because the Congregation is dedicated to clothe as far as possible the naked poor of the city, and because there are no other ordinary incomes daily solicited except for alms, it therefore indicates that the brothers deputized for that time to seek such alms should be very diligent in this service. Similarly, in visiting the prisons, the hospital, and the *Lazari*,¹⁹ thought should be given to doing good works by providing spiritual and temporal help for those in need, as far

¹⁶ *Libretto della Dottrina Cristiana*. Various booklets about Christian Doctrine were produced in the sixteenth century and beyond; some as catechisms for use by priests and lay teachers in schools of Christian Doctrine, others simpler for more private use. The Jesuits, notably under Cardinal Roberto Bellarmine, produced several at different levels. Given that the precise date of the surviving version of these Rules is not clear, we do not know whether this is the Bellarmine booklet or not. His most notable *Dottrina Cristiana Breve*, designed for “Sunday School” schooling, did not go into distribution until 1597. (Black, *Church, Religion and Society*, 120–121; idem, *Italian Confraternities*, 226–227; Grendler, “The Schools of Christian Doctrine”; idem, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, ch. 12.

¹⁷ Should be “in their houses”; an example where the grammar shifts!

¹⁸ Neighbours has been used to translate “Prossimi”; the latter implies in this context any people one encounters, whether known or not; not just those closest emotionally, as in some other contexts.

¹⁹ *Lazari* or *Lazzaretti* etc. Originally isolation areas for lepers, then victims of “plagues” of whatever kind; sometimes for syphilitics and other afflicted by incurable, contagious or infectious diseases, according to the crises of any given period. Such “hospitals,” refuges, etc., might also be used from the later sixteenth century for undesirable beggars rounded up off the streets under government orders.

as possible in the Lord's spirit, always remembering our Lord's sentence: "What you do for one of the least of mine, you do for me."²⁰

25. On no account is it appropriate that they should give to others who are not from the Congregation, mortifications, penances, or other exercises that are ordinarily done ...²¹

What Brothers Should Observe in Relation to the Congregation

26. Every brother should come for a time on the days chosen for the Congregation, and should anyone have a just impediment, he should advise the Father or the Prefect ...
27. Modesty and silence should be observed in the Congregation; but if anyone has a just reason to speak or propose something publicly in the Congregation, he will not do it without first being given licence by the Father or the Prefect.
28. When anyone will leave Lecce, he will take care, where he will be, to observe as far as possible the rules of the Congregation and to do the exercises, particularly the mental prayer, the visitation to the Most Holy Sacraments; mortifications and the acquisition of virtues; and he will remember to pray often for the growth of the spirit of the Congregation, as the same will reciprocally be done for him. And if he needs to be absent for a long time, he must at least twice a year give news of himself to the Congregation, greeting it with some letter of his, to which the Congregation will benignly reply.
29. No person should be introduced into the place of the Congregation who is not a member, unless he is an official of the Court, or indeed of such authority and merit that he could not be denied entry without giving offence, or for a similar reason; but neither for this, nor any other reason, will he be introduced without express licence from the Father.
30. Finally everyone should have these rules, or their summary, and particularly study to observe them fully, for which reason they should be read at least every month, or at least heard read out. The officials,

²⁰ "Quod uni ex minimis meis fecistis, mihi fecistis." Vulgate version of Matthew 25:40, though slightly misquoted, and omitting *fratribus* (brothers) after *meis*.

²¹ Lopez edited out part of the rule. Given that the "poor" were often treated as dangerous or immoral in the sixteenth century (and beyond), they might be subjected to spiritual and physical controls, "punishments" for the good of their souls, in return for physical help. The Jesuits seem here to be intent that charity would come without correction. Mortification, or self-flagellation, in imitation of Christ's floggings, was a suitable exercise as a voluntary part of personal devotion and might be a communal ritual for those in a confraternity. Many confraternities classified themselves as "flagellant," or of the "discipline"; very prominent in the mid and later fourteenth century, less so in the fifteenth, and to some extent revived in the sixteenth; see Black, *Italian Confraternities*, esp. 26–27, 100–103.

however, should read the rules of their office more often. Jesus Mary. Praise God, and the most Blessed Virgin.

RULES FOR PARTICULAR OFFICIALS OF THE CONGREGATION

Rules for the Prefect

1. As he precedes other brothers in rank, the Superior should also seek to precede them in virtues and in the exact observation of all the rules, and particularly in obedience to the Congregation, without whose opinion and consent he should not do anything of importance; so that in such unity, the Congregation may be governed with greater light.
2. He should embrace the government [of the Congregation] without hesitation, and try to apply all his efforts (*studio*) to it, as in the considerable service of Our Lord God, and of the Most Blessed Virgin; and he should exercise it [the government] with all possible care [*carità*], esteeming the brothers as sons of the Most Holy Madonna; and be particularly well united with his assistants.
3. He should be careful to come to the Congregation on time; both to give a good example to others and to note what will need to be done, such as arrange in writing that week's work; also to hold back the Brothers, by having some spiritual book, or something similar, read until it is time to call the Father.
4. He will arrange for the place for the Congregation to be well accommodated, both for what concerns divine worship at the altar, and similar matters, and for the convenience of the Brothers, such as seating etc.; and for the more solemn feasts, he will ensure that the place is more solemnly adorned.
5. He will keep a booklet in which he will clearly note for his memory all that he will need to consult about, arrange, and execute.
6. At least once a month he will organise the Congregation of Advisors [*Consultori*] for shedding better light on government, as well as for the universal benefit of the Congregation, as the particulars for the brothers; so that everything may proceed with more fervour and edification in the Lord. With the warning, that the consultations are not held without the presence of the Father or his substitute.
7. He should keep a list of all brothers, and ensure that they confess and receive communion at the agreed times, notifying them of the time at the Congregations; also in the works that are allocated every Sunday, and in the other Spiritual Exercises prescribed by the rules, he should urge that they be done with diligence and benefit.

8. Because it is of the greatest importance that the twenty second Common Rule [about moral behaviour] be observed for the good impression [*odore*] that the brothers should give in their behaviour and actions, the Prefect should therefore keep his eyes open about this, using help from the more mature brothers, but with great prudence so that it does not result in some damage to due administration (*Raione*).
9. He will consider keeping a record of those brothers who fail to come to the Congregation on prescribed days, as well as of those who seek licence or make excuses; and every Sunday and feast for the Congregation he will have the secretary read in public the list of those who, at the preceding Congregation, were absent without licence or excuse, and will give them some charitable penance; and these lists will be preserved for good governance.
10. If any brother should refrain more than three successive times from coming to the Congregation without licence or excuse, the Prefect will notify the Father ...
11. At least once during his office he will read in Congregation the summary of indulgences that the Holy Apostolic Faith grants to Brothers who carry out diverse works so that they should not omit to gain such spiritual treasure. And a well written copy of this summary will always be affixed in the Congregation.
12. The duty of the Prefect is to remind the Brothers about the Congregation's feasts occurring during the week. The day for obligatory communion. When they have to note the Saints. To read the rules, and say the Office for the Dead; and similar Congregation functions.
13. When he knows that one of the brothers is sick, he must have him visited by those deputized to do this, and by others, and he also should visit him some time, ensuring a particular prayer is said for him; and if he finds the sick in need, he should see that he is provided with all charity both for his body and his soul.
14. If any brother dies, he should quickly have the proper suffrages [special prayers for the departed] said, according to the twentieth common rule. And should there be children remaining in need, he should consult with the Advisors [*Consultori*] on how they could be helped according to their need and with the Congregation for the possibility [of help].
15. Early every month he should entrust a suitable member of the brothers to arrange for the cards (*cartoline*) of the saints, so that they might be distributed at the first Congregation nearest to the beginning of the month; and with any missing Brothers, have the name written on the card drawn for it then to be given to him by some brother.

16. When the College's sermon recommends alms for the naked poor,²² he will assign some of the more mature brothers to stand edifyingly at the church doors at the end of the sermon with purse-bags ready in place to receive alms. And he will also see about procuring other alms for this purpose, always in consultation so as to promote help for such needs, since this is the principal work of the Congregation. And he should beware that such alms for the naked poor are not in anyway spent on another need; since they are sought for this end and given for it.
17. He will himself be present, with one of his Assistants, when the secretary and the Sacristan at the end of their terms in office transfer to their successors what they have received according to the inventory, with what they received at the start.
18. Not make it easy to lend out books, cloths, ornaments, or other things of the Congregation on account of the damage that ensues from their deterioration or loss.
19. With the general licence of the Father, he will give penances to the brothers who speak sinfully, either because they request them for the exercise of virtue, or deserve them for other defects. Warning that the penances should be those prescribed by the communal customs and approved by the use of the Congregation, and always he will sooner seek to show himself benign to the Brothers rather than severe.
20. For the patents and letters, it will be enough for the Prefect alone to sign them with his hand with the seal of the Congregation, which he will keep, either under key in the cabinet in the Desk or in the Prefect's keeping.²³
21. He will look at the particular rules of all officials to understand whether they do their duty and anticipate where they are needed.
22. Because more eyes see more, when the deputies for dressing the naked poor propose some person, he [the Prefect] will himself, or through another suitable brother, visit that person. And for the quantity of alms for the clothes, he will determine with the Assistants what will be suitable in the Lord. Jesus Maria.

²² Naked poor. The text here and in more specific passages uses the word "nudo." "Naked" would probably mean ragged or inadequately dressed poor, not necessarily totally nude. Complete nakedness or nudity might in the period be described as "nudo nudo"; a boy giving evidence in mid-seventeenth-century Bologna against a priest accused of sodomising him when taking him off to an inn after he had asked for alms, claimed the priest had him, the boy, "nudo nudo" in bed with him, "mi teneva seco in ditto letto nudo nudo, et haveva che far meco"; see Niccoli, *Storie di ogni giorno*, 31.

²³ *Banca* (bench or table) is used here, and refers to the desk where the confraternity's most senior officials, such as the Father or the Prefect, sat during meetings and ceremonies. By extension, these statutes use the term *Banca* to refer to the executive officers who sat at this desk.

Rules for Assistants. [par. 1–6; omitted by Lopez]

Rules for Advisors [Consultori]. [par. 1–4; omitted by Lopez]

Rules for the Instructors of Novices

1. When the Prefect will consign to one of these the memorial that they give to those who seek to enter the Congregation, the Instructor must with all diligence inform himself of their quality and habits, and refer to the Prefect, to see with the Father whether it is suitable to propose such a person to the Congregation of Advisors for them to discuss whether he should be admitted to the Novitiate; and about eight or ten days will be sufficient for collecting such information.
2. Once approved by the Congregation of Advisors, the Prefect will assign him to the Instructor who will give thought to testing him about his vocation, but with much gentleness and charity. The tests will be to exercise himself in some of the works that the Congregation embraces, such as looking after the sick in hospital, visiting the imprisoned and the *lazari*, seeking alms in the piazza, and similar. If possible, he should be accompanied by one of the brothers deputized for that week; or that Instructor should accompany him, or avail himself of another of the brothers; but this with the licence of the Prefect so as to have it done with more maturity.
3. He will advise him particularly to make a general confession for all his life, and for better teaching, he will have him speak with the Father of the Congregation many times.
4. The tests will last according to the decision of the Father, but normally not less than a month, and they may be continued.
5. It is good for the Instructor to warn the novice not to importune to be received quickly, but to allow his devout behaviour to do it.
6. He will be given the common Rules to read, or the summary of them, so he can study them, to see if he has the spirit to observe them with the grace of the Lord.
7. When the Father or the Prefect will advise the instructors that the novice can be brought to the Congregation to be received among the brothers, they should instruct him in the usual ceremonies, and they will accompany him to the place of the Congregation.

Rules for the Secretary and Companion. [par. 1–10; omitted by Lopez]

Rules for the Depositor. [par. 1–5; omitted by Lopez]

Rules for the Sacristan and Companion. [par. 1–4; omitted by Lopez]

Rules for the Visitors to the Sick

1. When any brother of the Congregation is sick, the Visitors to the Sick should visit him with all diligence in the name of the Congregation, recommending him to the Brother's prayers; and also send others to visit him; as they judge convenient.
2. If the brother's infirmity continues or worsens, the visitors must ensure that the sick receives the Most Holy Sacrament of Confession, quickly, and that of Extreme Unction should it be needed, advising the Father or the Prefect of progress, so that one of our brothers, or the Father of the College, can be sent to comfort him and help him to die well.²⁴
3. When they visit any of the sick brothers, they will readily see if there are any temporal needs and advise the Prefect so it can be considered and he can be helped according to necessity and the resources of the Congregation.
4. If any Brother should die, the visitors should arrange to have his body accompanied honourably to Burial, with those of our brothers of the Company who can come; and they should immediately advise the Prefect so that as soon as possible the due suffrages can be made for that soul, as the common rules lay down.
5. Similarly they should inform themselves if the dead brother has left male or female children in need of temporal help and advise the Prefect of all so they can be helped and supported according to their need and their quality, as far as the Congregation can.

Advice for Those who Intone. [par. 1–4; omitted by Lopez]

Rules for the Deputies for Clothing the Naked Poor

1. For their edification, the brothers are obliged to give; they should take great care that in this very charitable office a good atmosphere of piety and edification is always sensed.
2. So that the dispensing of these alms (*limosina*) may take place ordinarily each Deputy should learn from the Prefect the *pettaggio*

²⁴ From the fifteenth century a literature "on the art of dying well" was increasingly developed, whether in forms of self-instruction or as manuals for priests to help others. The emphases could be on living a good Christian life in preparation for a good death and early release from Purgatory, and on a good mood of contrition on the eve of death. The Jesuits contributed to this literature and campaigning. [See below note 37]. This paragraph is clearly emphasising their orientation and teaching. That a normal brother might be involved in the final stage of life with "preparation" was probably unusual, though many confraternities expected to send members to escort a priest with the Holy Sacrament and Holy Oil.

[district] or quarter of the city in which he will think to dress one naked person each month.

3. It is suitable for the benefit to be given to many; so the same person should not be dressed more than once a year, unless urgent need persuades to the contrary, with the judgement of the Superiors of the Desk [i.e. the treasurers].
4. In choosing someone, it should first be determined whether that person²⁵ is honest and of good reputation in the neighbourhood; secondly that he should be worthy of such help through nakedness (*nudità*); the deputy will visit him personally; though it will also be possible in some case to credit a person of authority and spirit who could give information from a visit.
5. The Prefect can and should personally visit the person proposed by the deputy, or at least secure other information, as will offered to him for the love of God,²⁶ before approving him/her.
6. Since this office operates solely to dress the naked, care should be taken not to give money for anything else, even equivalently, but only for clothing; if the person finds the clothing himself and asks to be refunded for it, the deputy should be wary of being deceived.
7. The amount of the expense and quantity of the alms concerning the clothing for the person pertains to the Prefect with his Assistants; having first heard information from the deputy about the quality and need of the person.
8. If there are not enough alms to dress four persons each month [one person per quarter or district], the Executive (*Banca*) with prudent charity may provide, as will seem best to it, just as in every other case that might occur in this work; and each Deputy will humbly follow what the Executive determines.²⁷
9. Given the uncertainty of donations, the deputy should never promise the person that he will certainly be dressed; but it will be enough to say it will be proposed. And if that month there are not enough alms, there will be no obligation to propose it further, and another will be elected without scruple, if thus it will be offered for the love of God. But in any case it is better that the Prefect propose the issue and his opinion be followed.

²⁵ Person/*Persona*. It is not made clear whether the *Persona* [feminine in Italian] is to be male or female, or either. I am inclined to think that this all-male Congregation would only help male poor if ragged. Other confraternities, especially parish-based ones, helping such poor might have female members of the fraternity, or use wives of officials to assist needy women and children.

²⁶ The opaque phrase “in Domino” was used here, and below; Konrad Eisenbichler kindly suggested this suitable translation.

²⁷ It's not clear whether the executive was to add from other funds to ensure four recipients, or decide which and how many should be helped from the limited sum available.

10. If there are any tailors who are brothers in the Congregation they might serve the deputies in their work by making or seeking the clothes, and should get their due recompense. And should there be more tailors, the Prefect will divide the work as he will please for the love of God.
11. When the deputy learns from the Prefect that there is not enough money to dress a person, it is possible, if he proposes it, that at least some little help can be given to this poor and begging person: such as a pair of shoes, of socks, of sleeves (*maniche*), a shirt, or similar necessity, according to the money the depositor has, seeing that the Most Blessed Virgin, in whose honour and that of her most gentle Son Jesus this work is done by the Congregation, does not have so much regard for the size of the charity with which the work is done.²⁸

Rules for Visiting the Prisons

To renew the initial spirit of the Congregation concerning the work of each week visiting the poor prisoners, the following rules will serve.

1. The two brothers deputized each week to visit the prisoners should encourage themselves by saying Our Lord Jesus Christ: I was in prison and you came to me,²⁹ so that they should value very much this office of charity
2. They should go jointly at day break, at a time suitable for doing the work fruitfully and not wait for Saturday evening. And it is suitable that this spiritual charity (*limosina*) should be exercised at one or the other prison, but according to the decision for the love of God.
3. The charity which they can exercise will be of the following kinds, or something similar, according to the opportunity at the time:
 - a. With pious words exhort holy patience.
 - b. To confess and communicate the first or third Sunday of each month, or on the principal feasts of the Lord and of the Madonna, provided by the College's confessors, or others.
 - c. They should reconcile discords and enmities.

²⁸ From this paragraph it might seem that the ideal is to give a selected person a full outfit of clothes, rather than just cover bare nakedness.

²⁹ Matthew 25:36, "In carceram eram, et venisti ad me." Prison-visiting became a major interest of Jesuits and their confraternities. In Rome and Bologna they came to be largely in charge of the prisons for some years, providing physical and spiritual care. In the early seventeenth century Jesuit fathers helped in the Naples prisons; in 1611 they organised a confraternity for prisoners based on the prison chapel in the central Vicaria prison and in 1616 started an Annunciation confraternity to add to this work, with a SS. Trinità confraternity created in 1618 for outsiders to assist especially women and young prisoners. Lewis, 'The Development', p. 218; see also more generally, Black, *Italian Confraternities*, pp. 217–233.

- d. They should assist the expedition of whatever case with the officials and advocates.
 - e. They should accommodate creditors and debtors.³⁰
 - f. They will seek out alms to liberate any poor soul (*poverello*) who cannot pay the jailer.
 - g. They will introduce carefully the saying together of litanies for the Madonna and Saints.³¹
 - h. They will see if they can have Masses [said] at least on feast days.
 - i. They will donate some booklet on Christian doctrine. But they will not intervene in the work that the Venerable Confraternity of the Gonfalone does for the prisoners, since they, thanks to God, do their work so well.³²
4. If two brothers fail to finish some work begun to help some poor person, they should advise the two following brothers so that they can finish it.
 5. Every Sunday morning, when the Prefect asks for an account of the work, they will rise in their place and one will briefly say something edifying that will be to the glory of Our Lord and the Most Blessed Virgin. And the Prefect will be left with the booklet of these rules to be handed to the deputies who will follow.

³⁰ In this period the majority of people in prison would be there for debt, not for what we today would consider serious offences. Because of the cost of holding prisoners, it was in the interests of authorities to provide quick summary justice for theft and violence, for which also imprisonment was not deemed to be a desirable punishment. In the case of debtors the creditors might be expected to contribute to the cost of feeding the debtor.

³¹ Most prisoners, notably the debtors, would probably be housed together in large rooms or halls, not in small separate cells (which would be reserved, instead, for more dangerous criminals or suspects), so communal activity would be easy.

³² This confraternity was presumably linked to the famous Archconfraternity of the Gonfalone in Rome, and followed its rules and principles. The Gonfalone was more focused on those facing serious punishment, and in particular those condemned to death; providing comforters to prepare the condemned for the grim penalty, trying to persuade them to repent and acknowledge their sins and crimes, thereby avoiding Hell and reducing time in Purgatory. See Black, *Italian Confraternities*, pp. 217–223; Terpstra, “Piety and Punishment” provides a good guide to the roles of Comforters, as revealed in the well documented cases of such activity in Bologna, though by a different kind of confraternity. See now Gravestock, “Comforting the Condemned” and Prosperi, *Misericordie*, which has many helpful articles and documents. On the multiple contributions of Rome’s Gonfalone archconfraternity see the splendidly researched and illustrated volume by Barbara Wisch and Nerida Newbigin, *Acting on Faith*.

Rules for Visiting the Hospital, and the Lazari

1. "I was sick, and you visited me,"³³ said Our Lord Jesus Christ; therefore it is suitable that this work of visiting the hospital and *lazari* should be done with holy intention and spirit.
2. The two brothers deputized for the time being each week should go together early for the morning to usefully carry something to eat to the sick in hospital, to sort out the beds, and render other services, as needed.
3. Under no circumstance should they hinder or interrupt in any way, however small, what concerns the administration of the superiors of the hospital, but they should offer themselves to them in all simplicity and humility for the needs of those poor; and let it be understood that they come to do this work sent by the superiors of the Congregation, for the love of Our Lord God, and for the most Blessed Virgin.
4. With the sick, they should use pious and consoling words; recounting some example from the saints, of a miracle of the Most Holy Madonna, to whose devotion they should particularly encourage them, and to the continual memory of our Lord's Passion, whose merits are the salvation of our soul.
5. They should discuss the benefits to be gained from infirmity and tribulations which, when they are borne patiently, serve like the strokes that lift good grain from straw or dust from garments. About the pains of Purgatory and according to the quality of the sick, recall the pains of Hell and the glory of Paradise, and principally the great benefit of confessing and receiving communion often, and making a general confession for all of one's life.³⁴
6. It will be very edifying if sometimes they take some sweetmeats (*confetti*), or other desirable cooked goods. They might give them some blessed beads, a Rosary, images, or similar devotional things to console and help the soul with the benefit of indulgences, and saintly stories.
7. For those for whom it is possible, they can teach something about Christian doctrine, or give them a booklet on it. Exhort them in devotion to their name saint and the guardian angel, outlining some benefits [to be gained] from such protection. Also, it is possible to teach them some benefit from such protection. Also, it is possible to teach them some brief oral prayer, such as the one Giovanni

³³ Again quoting the Vulgate: "Infirmus eram, et visitastis me." Matthew 25:36.

³⁴ General confession. This might be interpreted in different ways. It can mean, as I take it does here, a full review of one's life, in some detail, as opposed to just confessing sins and faults since the last absolution.

Cassiano writes as being useful: *Deus in adjutor[i]um meum intende*: or even *Maria mater gratiae, mater misericordiae*, and similar.³⁵

8. For the poor beggars [*lazari*] who need greater temporal help, see that they are treated with charity and love (*Carità*), and talk about them to the procurator provided for them by the city.
9. They should be careful that, through the zeal of charity, they should not give something to eat or drink that the infirm might desire, but is against the wishes of the doctor, because this might damage their health, or worse; but they will leave this to the one who governs them.
10. If any sick person asks to be confessed, the brothers can summon some Father from the College, or others.

COMMON CUSTOMS OF THE CONGREGATION

Regarding the Days When the Congregation Meets

The Congregation meets every Saturday evening, except for Holy Saturday. Every Sunday morning. The principal feasts of our Lord. The principal feasts of the Madonna. of the Apostles. All Saints, the first of November. The Nativity of John the Baptist. By Feasts of the Lord only the following are meant: Circumcision, Epiphany, second and third day of Easter. Second and third day of Pentecost. Most Holy Trinity. Christmas Day is not included, because on those days the Forty Hours are held in the Congregation.³⁶ And it is omitted for Ascension Day and Corpus Christi,

³⁵ They are being recommended to teach Latin prayers to the destitute who are presumably illiterate with no knowledge of Latin. *Deus in adjutorium* comes from Psalm 69 (Psalm 70 in the King James Version). *Maria mater gratiae, mater misericordiae* is a common antiphon. Giovanni Cassiano (c.360–c.432/5) a writer on early monasticism and founder of monasteries; he was born in Rumania, but settled and died in Marseilles. Though judged a semi-Pelagian, his writings remained influential through the Middle Ages and affected Ignatius Loyola; see *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (2003), 3:205–207.

³⁶ Forty Hours, or Quarantore, celebration. This devotion was becoming increasingly popular as a spiritual and educational event, focusing on the adoration of the Host, which would be on display in a monstrance on a highly decorated altar for forty hours, ending with a High Mass. These hours might be continuous through the night; or there might be pauses so as to extend it into a three-day event. Sermons, homilies and prayers would be involved. Individuals might attend as they liked, but confraternities increasingly organised group visits, both for their members and for non-members from parish and neighbourhood. The Jesuits followed the Oratorians and Capuchins in promoting this devotion and in the seventeenth century, especially in Rome, led the way in putting on the most splendid display for the Host — with theatrical scenery, great light effects, music, and preaching oratory. Some were designed by key artists such as Gian Lorenzo Bernini and Pietro da Cortona. Christmas was not a normal time for this devotion; rather from Carnival to Easter. See Black, *Church, Religion and Society*, pp. 216–217; Black, “Exceeding Every Expression of Words,” and “The Public Face of

because of the public procession. Nor on that Sunday when the procession of Corpus Domini passes the church of the *Collegio*.

The feasts of the Madonna are: 1. The Conception. 2. The Nativity. 3. The Purification. 4. The Annunciation. 5. The Visitation, 6. The Assumption.

Should there be any legitimate reason for not holding the Congregation on any of the above mentioned Feasts, the Prefect will warn of it in the preceding Congregation.

It begins at the hour judged suitable according to the diversity of the seasons. It finishes in the morning in time so that brothers do not miss the sermon in the College. And the Saturday evening meeting lasts about half an hour.

Regarding Vespers

Vespers is said on the following days, with a simple tone, without music and the two choirs: Circumcision, Epiphany, first day of Easter. Ascension. First day of Pentecost. The Most Holy Trinity. Corpus Domini. The commemoration of All Saints. The Nativity of John the Baptist. All the previously mentioned feasts of the Madonna.

The same Vespers is said, that is, the ordinary of the Little Office of the Madonna; unless it is doubled with the single oration of the current feast, to which is added the oration of the feast of the Lord, or of the saint with its antiphon.

But it should be arranged to have enough books from the Naples Congregation, printed for its use, so we can also say the proper office for the day.

The Father always assists wearing the surplice (*cotta*) and stole.

The Vespers for the dead is also said when there is the commemoration of all the Dead, after the Vespers of the Madonna, All Saints Day.

On the Office of the Dead. [Omitted by Lopez]

Ways of Entering and Attending the Congregation

On entering the place of the Congregation, [a brother] first takes the Holy Water, which is placed at the door, [then] signs his name on the board (*ta-voletta*) at the door, each [brother] signing in turn.

Having signed on the board, he kneels on both knees and recites some small prayer, and rises and, facing the Superiors at the Desk, reverences them by modestly bowing his head, to which the Father or the

Post-Tridentine Italian Confraternities," esp. pp. 94–96 on the *Quarantore* celebrations, citing recent Italian studies; see below for details on how the Lecce Jesuits organised the devotion for the Congregation.

Prefect responds by raising his berretta, and the brother seats himself wherever he pleases; [...]

While waiting for the Father, who comes as soon as he is called to be in the church to hear confessions, the brothers in the Congregation remain devoutly silent, praying mentally or orally, but silently to themselves, or reading some spiritual book, some of which [books] are kept in the Desk for this purpose; or indeed the Prefect reads in a loud voice from some saint's life, or a similar book so as to usefully engage the brothers.

When the Father comes and takes the Holy Water, he goes straight to the steps of the altar, where he kneels. And he says some very short prayer, beginning in an understandable voice: "Come Holy Spirit" (*Veni Sancte Spiritus*), according to the manuscript booklet of the Congregation, with all the brothers kneeling in their place responding and, when the Prefect hears that the Father has said: "May Divine help always remain with us" (*Divinum auxilium maneat semper nobiscum*) and the brothers reply: "Amen" he gives the sign with the little bell that all may rise. Then the Father goes to the Desk and all the others sit.

At the Desk, the Father invites the brothers with some spiritual — but brief — words to undertake mental prayer and proposes three points for that purpose as he pleases, or taken from some booklet, such as those by Father [Gaspar] Loarte, Father [Luca] Pinelli, Father [Vincenzo] Bruno, or similar;³⁷ or he himself draws on the Gospel for the day, or from the life of a saint being celebrated, as he deems appropriate for the love of God.

After these specific points, there is a quarter hour of prayer, with the Prefect holding up the hour glass [*l'Horologio a polve*], all kneeling in their places with much devotion.

After the quarter hour, the Prefect rings the little bell and if there are any spiritual documents in the booklet of points, the Father reads them or has them read, and brings texts on meditation and reads them.

But if he needs to confer [with the brothers], as he sometimes does, the texts are not read, so as to allow more time for discussion and for the opinion (*spirito*) of the brothers whom he consults.

Once the texts have been said or not said, as the Father pleases, he says with a clear voice these words:

"May Jesus and Mary grant us perseverance in good works and the correct way to salvation" (*Perseverantiam in bonis operibus et recta salutis*

³⁷ All leading Jesuit writers. Gaspar Loarte (1498–1578), was from Spain and died in Valencia, but spent much of his life in Italy. One of his major works, *Istruzione e avvertimenti per meditar i misterii del Rosario* (Rome, 1573, with many later editions) concerns meditations on the Rosary. He also contributed to the literature on the "art of dying well". Luca Pinelli from Melfi (1542–1607) taught philosophy and theology at various colleges and universities (Ingolstadt, Pont-à-Mousson, Florence, Perugia). He was a prolific author on the perfections of Christian life and the art of dying well. Vincenzo Bruno from Rimini (1532–94) wrote extensively on confession and communion, and stressed the value of an ascetic life.

via tribulant nobis Jesus, et Maria). And all the brothers respond “Amen.” The Prefect gives the sign with the bell, that all may rise and they do.

Then the Father delivers some brief spiritual discourse, or consultation, or if there is no time, the Prefect gives him the *tavoletta*. The absentees are noted. The faults are declared. Penances are given. Works for the week are divided up. The account of past affairs is requested. However this issue of works is for Sundays only.

The ending is always with the *Ave Maris Stella* and the prayer that follows as written in the booklet.

After these [prayers], the Father or the Prefect usually has an *Ave Maria*, or *Salve Regina* said, or something similar for any needs of the brothers who are recommended for a prayer from the Congregation, which is said secretly. The Prefect gives the sign for closure and all, making reverence to the altar, leave with modesty.

If, while the Congregation is being held and the Father is present, any brother arrives, he remains kneeling until the Prefect alerts him with the bell that he should rise, unless it should be at the time for the recitation of the prayer, because then all should be on their knees.³⁸

In the Congregation everyone is called brother, without any other title of dignity or rank (*Signoria*), but outside each person is given his title.³⁹

Concerning Faults [*Colpe*] and Penances

At every morning Congregation, the Prefect, if shortage of time so as not to miss the sermon does not impede him, invites brothers to declare their faults [...]

Each brother who finds himself to have erred goes promptly to the middle of the Congregation and, facing the superiors on his knees, clearly states his fault and asks for the penance or proposes some legitimate impediment.

The Prefect with gentleness gives him the penance; and if it is a prayer the brother immediately recites it facing the altar kneeling.

The ordinary penances are: to say the Our Father, Hail Mary, *Salve Regina*, the Magnificat, or similar. To kiss the feet of somebody; to kiss the ground; to sit on the steps of the altar or on the ground. To remain on his knees at the altar, and similar exercises in virtue.

It is true that a greater penance may be given, either in the Congregation or outside it, if the excess merits it, as the Desk may judge

³⁸ The original punctuation does not help the understanding of this paragraph, but it seems to be outlining the position of a late arrival at the meeting.

³⁹ It is not clear whether such titles would have concerned rank of nobility, doctoral status etc. in the secular world, or ecclesiastical position, such as professed member of the Order versus novice or lay confraternity brother. If membership of the Congregation was drawn significantly from noble families, this equality of status within the Congregation would have been a humbling requirement for some in this period.

or decide. Some brothers request graver penances, but the Father or the Prefect moderates them, though praising the fervent spirit [of the brother].

The use of hair-shirts, or belts, or disciplines [flails]⁴⁰ is allowed with prudence for those who ask for it; so also are fasts and other austerities.

Concerning Omissions. [Omitted by Lopez]

Concerning Excuses. [Omitted by Lopez]

Concerning Conferings. [Omitted by Lopez]

Concerning Works the Congregation Embraces for its Neighbours
[*Prossimi*]

The principal work is the care of the naked poor of the city; and because there is no income other than from alms, every week two suitable brothers should be deputed to search through the piazza with a little box (*Cassetino*) once on the day that seems most suitable to them. The Congregation has a general licence for this from Monsignor the most Illustrious Bishop, since without such an order no alms can be sought.⁴¹

Also, twice a year, at Christmas and Easter, or for other solemnities, two or three of the more important brothers are deputed to solicit for this purpose through the city, possibly benefiting from the favour of some Royal Official for more efficacious support.

Also, this charity is recommended in the College's sermons, when they occur through the week, since the Sunday sermons seek agents for the

⁴⁰ *Discipline*. The *disciplina*, or "discipline" normally means the use of flails to beat one's bared back, in imitation of the scourging of Christ before the Crucifixion. Many medieval confraternities, especially in the later thirteenth century, took up the use of such scourges as a regular part of their devotions — practiced individually or communally, often in a night ceremony or in procession in the streets. Some flails had nails embedded in the ropes and soon drew blood; others were more symbolic and were made of silk. While the practice of flagellation declined in the later fifteenth century (even if some of the "discipline" confraternities maintained the classification), there was a revival from the mid sixteenth century, with Capuchins as its key promoters. The Jesuits had varied policies on this; they could promote harsh "discipline," but tended to foster devotion through philanthropy rather than self-punishment. Spanish Catholics, and their colonial worlds, were — and remain — keener on flagellation than Italian or French counterparts.

⁴¹ Through the sixteenth century public begging in the street or within churches came under increasing attack from both civil and ecclesiastical authorities under various arguments, including that it encouraged idle able-bodied beggars, discouraged work, distracted from organised giving to "deserving" poor, interfered with religious services. As a result, where begging was allowed it was to be licensed.

poor sick, for which the Confraternity of the Holy Sacrament rather than the Congregation is concerned.⁴²

These alms are given to the Depositor, who keeps a separate account.

Then, in order to dress the naked poor, every six months four brothers are deputized, who have their own particular rules and fulfil them with diligent care.

Also, each week the Prefect deputizes two or three brothers to stand at the doors of the church to receive the above-mentioned alms at the end of the sermon, on Sundays for the sick poor and on other feasts for the naked poor.

Two brothers to visit the prisons; two to visit the hospital; two to visit the *lazari*. All have their own rules.

The alms that the brothers of the Congregation receive on Sundays are not put into the hands of the Congregation, but are given to the deputies of the most Holy Sacrament for the benefit of the poor sick, for which normally some Congregation brother is deputized, as was said a little above.

The brothers who are not present at the Congregation [when these decisions are made] should come by later to see on the affixed *tavoletta* if they have been deputized for some work, otherwise they are at fault, and it is customary that they give some alms when they fail to seek alms for the naked poor.

On the Rules

Every first Sunday of the month, or on a more suitable Congregation day, on the Prefect's order the Secretary reads the Common Rules in public Congregation, the observance of which the Father always most warmly, but with brevity, encourages, and from time to time he offers some advice for putting them into practice [...]

⁴² Confraternities of the Holy Sacrament had become, by the late sixteenth century, one of the most widespread types in Italy and the Spanish Empire. They were encouraged by bishops as small, parish-based confraternities that helped to run or finance the parish, with mixed relationships with parish clergy; they might also assist the poor and sick of the parish. Some Holy Sacrament confraternities, on the other hand, were rich, elite organizations with their own oratories or churches. In Lecce there seems to have been only one Holy Sacrament confraternity, based in the Cathedral; this explains its unusual role in helping the poor and ill in the entire city. In 1590 Father Bernardo Ottaviano started another Jesuit confraternity, named after St John the Baptist, for the poor, opposite the College; he organised the existing artisan Congregation to help collect alms for these poor; and later got the artisan brothers to help teach Christian Doctrine to the poor brothers, who then, in turn, taught their fellows. See Black, *Italian Confraternities*, pp. 30, 55–57, 77–78, 96–98, 261–264; idem, *Church, Religion and Society*, pp. 134–135, 139–141, 207; idem, “Confraternities and the Parish”; Lewis, “The Development of Jesuit Confraternity Activity,” p. 217, quoting a contemporary account of the 1590 development.

On Saint Cards⁴³

Every first Sunday of the month, or at another feast of the Congregation most closely preceding it or following it, a saint card [that serves] as Advocate is distributed to each brother. The method is as follows.

The Father places himself with the Prefect at a little table decently prepared with a crucifix above it in the middle of the Congregation and two bags or little boxes — in one of which are the names of the brothers and in the other the printed saint cards, as the Fathers of the College use them, arranged by the brother who has care of them.

With everyone kneeling, the Father privately says an Our Father and Hail Mary, then all rise and sit. And immediately the Prefect draws by lot the name of a brother who, when he hears his name, comes and with his berretta hat in hand kneels at the table, names the saint he had the past month, the virtue he was to have exercised, and for whom he was to pray, accusing himself of negligence or any other omission, and asks for penance.

Some ask on their own to kiss the feet of many brothers, or to sit on the steps, or to stay kneeling, or something similar; but the Father is then the one to give the arbitrary penance, showing how to derive benefit from their devotion; and takes at random a saint card and, reading it, gives it to the brother, again lifting the berretta. The brother takes it, kisses it, and offers the saint some good works for that month. Each brother does this according to his devotion, and when it seems to the Father there is some excess of fervour, he gently moderates it according to the person's circumstances [...]

On Confession and Communion

Rule 9 of the Common Rules prescribes that everyone should confess every fortnight. And Rule 10 prescribes that every first Sunday of the month, and on certain other feast days there noted, everyone should take communion; (see above, p. 10, n. 10). As to the use of these two rules, it is not customary for the Congregation to ask for a tally of those confessing, but it is to ask for it for those taking communion, and to give penance to those who miss it [...]

Concerning the Altar

The altar is solemnly prepared according to the season with cloths and ornaments from the College, because the Congregation still does not have

⁴³ On the Jesuit practice of using cards of saint cards, see Lazar, *Working in the Vineyard*, p. 135, though he provides no details.

a set place and does not have enough for its needs, as it will when the building is finished, may it please Jesus and Mary.

The little altar (*altarino*) is maintained here and there like the High Altar in the College.

On feast days the steps of the altar are covered with carpets. There is a gilded chandelier (*lampadario*) and many other glass lamps (*lampade*) that are lit on all the more solemn days.

There are gilded candle sticks with lit candles.

For the principal feasts the walls are vested with green and red taffeta cloths, which come from the Congregation, and they are left there for eight days, along with other ornaments of devout images lent by the brothers. Some incense is used at certain times.

Concerning Mass and Communion

At present Mass is said in the Congregation every first Sunday of the month and for a few other solemn festivals, and it is customary for the Prefect to advise on this at the preceding Congregation.

Before he says Mass, it is customary for the Father to hear the confessions of those brothers who want to receive communion, sitting in a corner on a wooden chair prepared for this. If this is not arranged early enough to allow time to hear confessions, the brothers are not obliged to confess to the Father, but as they are good, and find it convenient, they reconcile themselves.

When confessions are finished, each is vested, with the help of either the sacristan or a brother arranged by the Prefect.

When the Priest reads the Gospel, two brothers place themselves at the side of the altar with large lit candles in their hands.

The same is done when the Most Holy Sacrament is raised, besides the two that hold the large candle-sticks.

The same happens when the brothers take communion and they begin lighting them when the Father recites the *memento*,⁴⁴ and they keep them lit until communion is finished.

When the Father wants to make the offertory he asks the brother who is serving to see how many are to take communion and to conserve enough particles [of the communion bread]. And the brother does this by going to each brother asking if he wishes to take communion.

But for the future it is thought it would be better to use a *tavoletta* on which those wishing to take communion should indicate this with wooden tokens made for this purpose and kept under the *tavoletta*, which then the brother who is serving [Mass], or the sacristan, will count in due time, and notify the Father.

⁴⁴ This echoes Christ's call "do this in remembrance of me," which is part of the communion service.

The brothers take communion as soon as the priest has done so himself, at a bench prepared with a cloth on it, and the brother who serves Mass places the jar of water for whoever wishes it. Some incense is kept lit [behind the altar] during communion.⁴⁵ This is in the care of the Sacristan, unless he leaves this out at his will as is convenient.

When the Mass is ended and the Father disvested, he descends the Altar steps and says in a clear voice those few prayers from the booklet for after the Mass and then goes to the Desk for the Congregation's exercises.

On Catalogues. [Omitted by Lopez]

On the Election of Superior Officials

There are two elections every six months, one by the whole Congregation, the other by the Superiors alone from the Desk. The Congregation elects by scrutiny the Prefect and an Assistant; by electing two, when the first finishes, the second can take his place ...

The Desk then elects at its pleasure and outside the Congregation the other officials, who are then published at the next Congregation, and they are understood to be confirmed without any other ceremony.

The first election is made on the day of the Most Holy Annunciation [25 March], title of the Congregation. The second on the Most Holy Nativity of the Blessed Virgin [8 September] [...]

Concerning the Election Made for the Desk and the Books

As said above at page ... the Desk appoints other Officials, either on the same day, after Vespers, or in a day soon after and publishes them at the first Congregation.

No-one may reply with whatsoever force that the Superiors imposed [an office] on him, unless there should be some reasonable excuse, and whatever the proposal that the brother may have, he should submit and obey.

Everyone should be given a hand-written booklet of rules, but when more than one brother is deputized to fill the same office, it is enough for only the one who holds the office to have it as leader and the other has it as a companion; for example, the Secretary, the Sacristan, the Porter.

Every Assistant has his [booklet]. Every instructor of novices his.

Each of the four deputies for dressing the naked poor has his. One alone of the deputies for the prisons. Both of the brothers questing for alms, both of [those helping] the hospitals and the *lazari*; and these [booklets] are taken each week from the Prefect and returned to him.

⁴⁵ The text reads "di die"; Konrad Eisenbichler suggests this might be short for "di dietro", implying the incense burner is kept burning behind the altar.

Concerning the Congregation of Advisors. [Omitted by Lopez]**Concerning Impediments for Officials.** [Omitted by Lopez]**Concerning Books**

The Congregation has various spiritual books, all approved by the Father, and they are kept locked in the cabinet [*stippo*] and are under the care of the secretary, who keeps the inventories.

The name of the Congregation is written on the first inside cover, and on the outside cover the title of the book and author, or one or the other.

Whenever the Congregation meeting is held, some of them are put on the Desk for the benefit of whoever wants to read, before the Father comes, or the Prefect has something read for the fruitful occupation of the brothers.

They cannot be borrowed and taken away without permission from the Father or the Prefect; and a written record is kept, so that they are not lost by lending them to the brothers.

Concerning Monthly Dues [*Mesate*] and Taxes. [Omitted by Lopez]**Concerning Spiritual Offerings on the Octave of a Feast⁴⁶**

On the Congregation's feast days when there is the octave, it is a praise-worthy custom for the Father to remind the brothers to make some spiritual offering in honour of the feast of that octave. So it is fitting that each brother come to the centre of the Congregation and, kneeling towards the Superiors at the Desk, offer whatever the Holy Spirit suggests to him. [For example] Some more prayers, some mortification, some alms and similar good works, as said above when discussing the taking of a saint card.

In this devotional act, it is not customary for the Father to lessen anything because there are only a few days, but rather to look to the quality of the persons for the love of God.

On the Quarter Hour of Mental Prayer

The fourth of the Common Rules prescribes that every morning each brother does a quarter hour of mental prayer. But the Father, when the Rules are read, dispenses through the authority given to him by the rules, that when a brother for just cause cannot easily fulfil this, he may satisfy

⁴⁶ *Ottava*/Octave. In ecclesiastical terms a "week" is eight days, starting on a Sunday and finishing on the next. This emphasises, among other things, the celebrations or vigils that might take place on the evening before a major feast day.

the rule by doing this while he is at Mass, and he indicates how to do this fruitfully.

If it happens that there is no possibility of hearing Mass, he is shown how to earn the merit by other spiritual means, the hand of the Lord never being used against somebody who, with simple heart, bows to Divine Goodness, especially for devout servants of the Most Blessed Mother Mary. The other quarter hour of mental prayer, made in the Congregation, is omitted on the Saturday when the Office for the dead is said; also on the morning when the saint cards are allocated, the rules read and Mass is said, because of lack of time.

On the Seal, Patents, and Letters

The Congregation has its great Seal, with the image of the Most Holy Annunciation. [...]

Concerning the Father of the Congregation

For this Congregation the Father has always been a priest,⁴⁷ and he is assigned by the Reverend Father Rector of the College at his pleasure, and is similarly removed. And the brothers always conform to the wish of the Father Rector.

The Father is given supreme authority by the rules, in the directing and governing of the Congregation and of individual brothers for the glory of Jesus and Mary. No Congregation should meet without him, and if he has some impediment, the Father Rector sends another Father. [...]

On Receiving New Brothers. [Omitted by Lopez]

Concerning Votes when Given. [Omitted by Lopez]

Concerning the Forty Hour Devotion in the Congregation⁴⁸

Ever since it was instituted, the Congregation celebrated the Forty Hour Devotion at Christmas. It is true that previously this was done over four days because in this magnificent city Holy Innocents day is a feast of

⁴⁷ A spiritual Father could in some confraternities be a deacon; and there may be a separation between a Father as spiritual leader and a priest who is in charge of the liturgical life of the society. Alternatively Masses or services for the deceased might be conducted by a priest hired for the specific task, and not a member of the confraternity/congregation. In other confraternities a spiritual Father might be an outsider from another religious order, playing a more restricted role than the one here, while the real control is by lay member officials. See Eisenbichler, *The Boys of the Archangel Raphael*, ch. 12 on Guardian Fathers, Father Correctors, and lay officials.

⁴⁸ See note 36 above.

obligation, nevertheless now it should be reduced to three days only, because they are more solemn, and so it is done.

Eight days beforehand, the place in the Congregation is most solemnly prepared, with [the construction of a] heaven suspended, and other suitable decorations.

The windows are kept closed, to make it more welcoming, but the altar abounds with lit candles.

It does not take place at night. Whoever wishes to come for prayer comes, but males only, not women, because the place is within the Fathers' College.

Lists are made of those who want to appear at a fixed hour and they are affixed outside so that they can be read. And the only persons notified are the Fathers of the College, brothers of other congregations, as well as reverend priests, both secular and of the Oratory. Foreigners are not invited, but they come of their own accord.

On Christmas morning at the fourteenth hour the College Father who will have said the first Mass carries the Most Holy Sacrament, well housed in a rich container, from the church to the place for the Congregation meeting. He carries in under a baldachin carried by four fathers from the College, and with two fathers at the side, supporting his arms, and a brother from the College goes ahead incensing the Most Holy Sacrament.

The fathers wear a surplice and stole, the brother only a surplice.

Many men who attend Mass accompany it, with two brothers from the Congregation supervising them, carrying lit torches, they then take it back, joining the procession to the Congregation, and the Most Holy Sacrament is placed back on the Altar with the usual ceremonies.

This escort and procession passes into the College.

Once the Host is in place, the Father leaves, but those Jesuits who have to give the first hour of prayer remain with those who accompanied the Most Holy Sacrament.

While everyone remains silent on his knees, a Father, or a brother from the College, immediately begins in a simple tone the Litanies of the Glorious Name of Jesus, with the others responding with devotion.

When the litanies are finished he reads three points of the meditation arranged for that hour, according to the feast, as already prepared. Then he indicates any needs for which there should be prayers, as ordered by the Reverend Father of the College, and at once he attends to the prayer.

Once the hour is complete, for which the Father uses the hour-glass, he intones the *Te Deum laudamus*, with the others devoutly responding. However if in the [set] meditation there is a discourse [*colloquio*], as in those of Father Loarte, this *colloquio* is read before singing the *Te Deum*.

When the bell announces the end, those who have participated in this oration leave and others enter as arranged.

Two brothers from the Congregation are deputized to take care of the door, and two other to follow the order of the above mentioned lists.

In the following hours the same order is used, except for changing the topics for prayer (*punti*). The litanies are equally at the discretion of the person saying them, provided the variations are written in the Congregation's *Libretto* for this purpose. If the Most Illustrious Monsignor Bishop or Most Illustrious Signor Viceroy is coming, the kneeling stool is prepared for each with carpeting and a cushion in front of the altar; the others kneel where they please.

From time to time the incense is renewed and a brother is asked to pick up the lights and replace them.

While prayer is being said nobody is allowed to enter so as to avoid interruption or distracting the devout gathering, unless some circumstance persuades the gate-keeper otherwise.

For the last hour, the twenty third, the end is anticipated so as to carry the Most Holy Sacrament back into church and to finish before nine.

This carrying back is done with a solemn procession, exiting from the ordinary door of the College into the public street and turning at the great door of the church, accompanying it with lighted torches, overseen by the Congregation, the Royal Lords Official, the brothers of the Congregation going two by two, first the Prefect and his assistants, then many nobles and other devout people.

It is carried by the Most Illustrious Monsignor if he is present, or his Vicar, or the Superior of the Congregation of Reverend Priests, under the baldachin — which is carried by four Reverends from the same Congregation of priests, each with his surplice and stole, preceded by many other priests, with soft and devout songs (*canti*), and some music from lute, lyre (*cetra*), and viol (*viola*), which does not impede the songs.⁴⁹

In church the Host is received with solemn music from two choirs, with lutes, bass viols (*violoni*) and portable organ (*organetto*), with a notable gathering of men and women waiting there with devout attention and reverence, and sometimes also pipes (*pifferi*). Once the music, which might be a *Te Deum* or some spiritual motet, is finished, Monsignor Bishop, or whoever carried the Most Holy Sacrament, with it facing the people, says the usual prayer from the Missal, gives the solemn benediction; and that is the end.

⁴⁹ The Songs, *Canti*, would probably have been the *Laude*, spiritual songs with a long history, especially among lay confraternities, then modernised by the Oratorians; they would not have been the Psalms. *Viola* in this period means an instrument from the viol family of stringed instruments, and not what we know as the viola, belonging to the violin family, which did not become common until the end of the sixteenth century. The common viols (treble rather than bass), would be more manageable in procession than a violin or modern viola held at the neck. The *violoni* would probably be the bass viols, played statically. "Choirs" can be composed of singers, but also of musical instruments, or both.

The same process is followed for all three days, and for the last evening there is always some increase in solemnity; on which the Congregation does not spare expense, thank God, with the favour of the Most Holy Virgin, and one sees in this special consolation and spiritual help for the entire city.

Concerning Other Forty Hour Devotions in the Church

For the past four years, it has been the custom in the Congregation to celebrate the prayer of the Forty Hours with much solemnity in the College church, to draw from this spiritual food and delight the people to devotion, which in the last three days of Carnival the Devil, the World, and the Flesh are much inclined to impede; not to say to increase the devotion and spread it, thanks to God, with abundant fruit, and for the common edification of the city. Glory to Jesus and Mary.⁵⁰

For these Forty Hours at Carnival, as conducted in the church, care is left to the Reverend Father Rector of the College, to whom the Congregation submits with great promptness the expenses for its devotion and other necessary assistances.

In the first years of the Congregation, as at Christmas, the three days of Pentecost; then because that room was small, and the warmth was harmful, the devotion was omitted.

So, for some years during the three days of Carnival, it was celebrated in the Congregation, but as it was seen over time that few people came, it seemed it should not be continued there, but transferred to the church, but with the solemnity of the apparatus and its music, which at present is used for various reasons, which the diversity of the times are accustomed to produce — guided by Divine Providence and always to its glory.

Warning

A note about this: above, at pages [...], it is written about similarly celebrating the three days of Christmas. I remember that last Christmas, 1597, the procession for bringing back the Most Holy Sacrament to the church on the third evening did not take place because the Reverend Father Rector of the College along with the other Fathers thought this was enough.

However, the same Fathers of the College, on their own or with a few brothers from the Congregation, brought the Most Holy Sacrament back to the church on the first two evenings, after the public had left, for greater safety, hesitating to leave it in the Congregation; then in the morning, having said the first Mass, they returned it as usual.

⁵⁰ Some Jesuits later seemed to emphasise that this Devotion should be during Carnival as a priority, to distract from popular, possibly unseemly, celebrations. See Black, "The Public Face," p. 94 n. 22.

On the Office of Holy Week

On the Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of Holy Week the brothers say the entire Office, as is noted in the order of the first book printed for Holy Week.

This is said on the Wednesday and Friday after lunch, before the fathers of the College start saying theirs; but on the Thursday it is said in the morning, as soon as the Office of the College church is finished, with the brothers leaving there at its end for the Congregation; where first they perform the Mandatum with the washing of the feet of the twelve poor, appropriately dressed. When this devout ceremony is finished, the Office follows without interruption. [...] ⁵¹

On the Mandatum and Washing of the Feet. [Omitted by Lopez]

On Indulgences

The Congregation has many indulgences granted by Pope Gregory XIII [r. 1572–85], and confirmed by Sixtus V [r. 1585–90], both of happy memory, then communicated to the Congregations of the Company by the most Reverend Father Claudio Acquaviva, Provost General of the Company.

A *tavoletta* concerning these is affixed in the Congregation, so all can know and value them.

And sometimes the Father, or the Prefect, has them read by the secretary in a public Congregation to revive the memory of such a spiritual treasure. And there is a particular decree about this in the Red Book, at pages ... [...]

On the Renewal of the First Aims

On the day of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist, 24 June, it is customary for the brothers of the Congregation to renew those holy aims (*propositi*) that Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin communicated to them when they

⁵¹ The Washing of the Feet ceremony on Holy (or Maundy) Thursday, commemorating Christ's washing of the disciples' feet at the Last Supper, has had a chequered history in the early modern and modern period. It has been suggested that in post-Tridentine Italy it was often replaced by the Forty Hour Devotion; though in Venice it remained a popular celebration, with public processions accompanied by music. See my "Confraternities Under Suspicion," esp. pp.176, 178–179, which deal with a Venetian confraternity that allegedly had this Washing of the Feet ceremony (also involving eating and drinking), without clergy present, and was frowned upon by church leaders, along with their reading and discussing the vernacular Gospel; see also my "The Public Face," esp. p. 95; Eisenbichler, *The Boys of the Archangel Raphael*, pp. 163–166; Glixon, *Honoring God and the City*, pp. 61–62, 108–109, 169–171, 197. In modern England it is an annual Anglican celebration presided over by the Queen.

entered the Congregation. They do it on this day because the Congregation started on this day, although by another decree, three times a year this holy renewal should be made. But this is not a new thing, that civil and canon laws are altered on diverse occasions always for a good motive.

The process of this renewal is that, having said the usual prayers from the book, to begin the Congregation, the Father goes to the Desk and, with a brief exposition, shows how useful for the preservation and increase of the spirit, and how welcome to the Most Blessed Virgin, is the work of renewing the first aims of serving her well, and with the perfect observing of the Rules.

Then all are invited to make this renewal with all promptness and devotion, each coming in order and without confusion.

So the Prefect starts.

Each comes down from the Desk, goes to the middle of the Congregation, having made reverence to the altar he kneels, turns his face to the Father, and says in a clear and modest voice these, or substantially similar words:

“I declare my sin for many omissions made this year, and always in the observance of the Rules of the Congregation, recognising my obligation, that I owe to the Most Blessed Virgin, and I propose with her grace to walk in the future with more fervour and spirit.” Having said this, he kisses the ground and, having turned to the altar, says a private *Ave Maria* or something similar, according to his devotion, and returns to his place.

Then the first Assistant follows, then the second, and they do the same.

With the other brothers the Father invites them to come in that order that is used when electing the Prefect, as said above at pages ...; that is, beginning with the section of those who sit on the side where the Epistle is read.

When all are finished, for the rendering of thanks, with all kneeling in their places, the Father says in a simple tone *Te Deum laudamus*, with the brothers respond alternately as usual. Then the Congregation ends with the ordinary *Ave Maris Stella*, as in the booklet.

Concerning Candles and Palms

Up to 1585 each brother had a blessed candle used in the Congregation on the day of the Purification of the Most Blessed Virgin [2 February].

[Now] It is the custom for the Fathers of the College to provide them in their charity, as theirs are decorated with GIESUS on the base.

Likewise the Father of the College blesses them as he blesses theirs, so that the Father of the Congregation can say his Mass more speedily.

The candles are decently thick according to the Sacristan's judgement, and they are bought from alms money.

After Mass, the Sacristan distributes them, beginning with the Superiors of the Desk, the others following indifferently.

The same applies to the Palms on its day [Palm Sunday].

On Removing the Names of Absentees from the Tavoletta.

[Omitted by Lopez]



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