

Vow of Obedience



JUNE 1975

OBEDIENCE IN THE
SOCIETY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE HEART OF MARY
ACCORDING TO THE THOUGHT OF FATHER DE CLORIVIÈRE

Dossier on Obedience in the
Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary
according to the thought of Father de Clorivière

This dossier was drawn up from most of the texts of Father de Clorivière on obedience in:

Official documents

The Circular Letters

The Rule of Conduct (1921 edition)

The Summary (New edition, Paris: Devalois, undated),

Conferences on the Vows of Religion (1872 edition)

Little Retreat of Three Days (mimeographed copy),

Correspondence.

Extracts from the writings of Mother de Cicé have also been quoted.

The whole comprises a small "Summa" of the foundation, spirit and practice of obedience in the Society.

If certain statements of Father de Clorivière are characterized by the socio-economic and cultural framework in the France of his time, the spirit motivating them is still valid for all epochs and all countries.

Abbreviations for the Documentation:

Plan for the Society of Men - First Plan for the Society of Men, August 1790.

Plan for the Society of Mary, 1790 - Brief Plan for the Society of the Heart of Mary, August 1790.

Plan of S.C.J., 1792 - Brief Plan for the Society of the Heart of Jesus, 1792.

Constitution of 1818 - Brief Constitution of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary, 1818.

Memorandum to the Bishops - Memorandum to the Bishops of France, 1798.

Memorandum to Pius VII - Memorandum to the Sovereign Pontiff Pius VII, 1800.

Letter to Cardinal Caprara - Memorandum to Cardinal Caprara, Legate, 1802.

Letter to Bishop... of Saint Malo - Letter to the Most Reverend former Bishop of Saint Malo, 1801-1802.

Statement 1808 - Statement of the Work... May, 1808.

Document 27 - Document 27: Views and Thoughts on the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary.

Conferences on the Vows - Conferences on the Vows of Religion.

Triduum - Little Retreat of Three Days to the First DHM.

D.C. = Constitutive Documents.

L.C. = Circular Letters.

L. = Letters of Father de Clorivière

Note: Quoted texts have been drawn from originals and the oldest available documents in the possession of the D.H.M.'s.

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"FOLLOWING CHRIST OUR LORD"

Conferences on the Vows. (English edition pp. 4-5)

Following Christ Our Lord.

The Vows are a means of following more closely the Lord Who....for your sake, he made himself poor, though he was rich, so that you might become rich through his poverty." (2 Cor. 8:9).

They are in imitation of His perpetual sacrifice: "Wherefore, on coming into the world, Jesus said: 'Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you have prepared for me....' (Hebrews 10:5).

Finally by the Vows a man draws more near to Him Who became obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. Our Lord himself invites us in his Gospel to leave all things, and to renounce ourselves:

".... If you seek perfection go, sell your possessions, and give to the poor....Afterward, come back and follow me." (Mat. 19:21).

".... If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross, and begin to follow in my footsteps." (Mat.16:24)."

Ibidem.

(English edition p.131)

"Let us take for our model of obedience.... our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, being Lord of all things, and equal with the Father, took upon Him the form of a servant: becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. Amen."

Plan of the Society of Mary, 1790, D.C., p. 60.

"The vow of obedience must be regarded as the most powerful means for arriving at the highest perfection. It is by this vow that man.... follows more closely after Jesus Christ."

First Circular Letter

(English edition pp. 11-12)

"Note also how as the Apostle says, Christ was always guided by obedience. If he died the cruelest and most humiliating of deaths it was in order to obey His Father's command and thereby to set us a perfect example of obedience. "...I...do as the Father commanded me." (John 14:31). And because it would have been but a small thing for Our Lord to obey the Father, and to know His will directly, He obeys men and desires that the will of God should be notified to Him by men.

The life of Christ is one act of obedience. He was born while obeying the orders of an idolatrous prince. From birth to death He followed every

command of the law of Moses. For thirty years He was subject to Mary and Joseph, and in His public life He even obeyed His disciples; "Yet I am in your midst as the one who serves you." (Luke 22:27), He submitted to the malignity of His enemies, to the tax-gatherers, and at the close of His life to the violence of the soldiers who seized Him, the judge who condemned Him, and the executioners who made Him lie down upon the cross. So were fulfilled the Apostle's words: "...obediently accepting even death, death on a cross." (Phil. 2:8).

These characteristic features of the Heart of Jesus which are also of the Heart of Mary must be seen in us."

First Circular Letter

(English edition pp. 13-15)

"Above all let us copy His obedience. That virtue should be the motive power of every act. We know in general that God desires our holiness, that as poverty, humiliation, and the cross are the best means of attaining to sanctity we should choose them. But God does not reveal our duty directly to us at every moment, or show us the road by which we should walk. He does not tell us what measures, what crosses He will use to bring us to the level of holiness that He has destined for us. Men are often, without knowing it, sometimes even against their will, the Means He uses to show us His designs. For this God chiefly uses religious obedience to which He calls those whom in mercy He has chosen to follow His Son by the way of the evangelical counsels.

We, dear Brethren and Sisters, are of that number. The Lord has deigned to call us to, Himself under the yoke of religious obedience at a time when the world openly raises the standard of licence and revolt. The evil one, that enemy of the Christian name, is striving to destroy religious life. Many who had embraced religion are unhappily led by his artifices to return to the false liberty of the children of this world. The Heart of Jesus seems to wish to put us in their place. The Societies seem to be called into existence by Him. In them He wishes to live once more, and to show to the world His virtues, and particularly His obedience.

"...Every member of the Societies should be full of this spirit. Each one as a true child of obedience should choose nothing and refuse nothing of all that is commanded him. Each one should be ready for anything; whether it be to climb the slopes of Calvary after Jesus, or to lie down upon the cross and be nailed there until death amid insult and contempt. Of us as of our Savior; it should be said: "obediently accepting even death, death on a cross": "factus obediencia, etc." Obedience is best seen in bearing things painful to nature. It should be most dear when it enjoins a sacrifice and turns our minds and hearts from anything that might give us the preference or raise us above our fellows.

Lack of obedience is not compatible with the spirit of Christ. Disobedience brings with it every defect, and to this failure we must

attribute the ruin of regular discipline in the most fervent Institutes.

Eighth Circular Letter

(English edition p.164)

"The virtues that he (the spiritual man) most admires and loves to practice are obedience and humility, love of abjection and patience in enduring every sort of abuse and ill-treatment, because these virtues are not to the taste of the world. They do not startle, but are known only to God. They are the characteristics of the great saints, and of the Holy of Holies Himself. "...and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart." (Mat. 12:29).

The spiritual man is so careful to make himself more pleasing to the divine Heart that he can never cease to contemplate it. He sees that to glorify the Father Jesus emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant and becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross."

Summary: "Reflections on Rule IV" (English edition p.24)

"Our life should be hard and laborious; we must distinguish ourselves by our perfect obedience, and it is by obedience that we must profess to follow, as closely as possible, that way of life which our Lord showed to His Apostles."

Mother de Cicé, Writings III. Conferences on the Plan for the Society.

No. 15, p.13.

"As we begin this year, let us resolve to take as the model for our obedience our Divine Savior, Jesus Christ, who came into the world to do the will of His Father and to mend the disorders in our will. Let us often recall that our Divine Model was obedient even to death, and death on a cross. Let us develop an affection for reading about the virtue of obedience."

II

THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE

NATURE AND MOTIVES

I- NATURE

Little Retreat of Three Days (English edition p.38)

"The Vow of Religious Obedience is that by which a man submits himself to another man, and chooses him for his Superior, so as to renounce his own will, and by so doing, to better assure his salvation and perfection.

He consecrates his will to God."

Memorandum to Pius VII, D.C., p. 279

"(... the obedience which we vow in these Societies.)

It is that religious obedience by which a person, for the love of God, so completely renounces the exercise of his own will that he wants to be governed in everything, as far as depends on him, through the will of his Religious Superiors. Therefore, if there is something in which he does not depend on his Superiors, this happens only because these things are absolutely out of his power."

Statement of 1808, D.C. pp. 445-446

"By conforming a person's will in all things to the will of God, obedience unites the person to God Himself; it makes of the person one same spirit as God, a living image of the God-man.

By the Vow of Obedience, we promise God to submit our own will to that of the person who holds God's place in our eyes, in order to be more certain that we are acting in a manner conformed to His good pleasure.

These promises have the same force among us, and in spirit do not demand of us less perfect dispositions than in the most fervent old religious Orders. From this, above all, they derive their excellence and their principal merit."

Memorandum to the Bishops, D.C. p.136

"By the vow of obedience, man makes to God the sacrifice of his own will, and commits himself to do everything his Superior commands him, according to the nature and the rules of his Order.

The spirit of obedience must not be less perfect in the two Societies than in any other more especially because both of them are based in, so far as their nature permits, on the Institute of the Society of Jesus. In that Institute, a person is enjoined to obey his Superior in Everything that has no manifest appearance of sin; "Ut obedient in omnibus, in quibus non cernitur manifestum peccatum."

Conferences on the Vows.

(English edition p.104; pp.105-106)

"By religious obedience, a man subjects himself to another man.... who holds the place of God for us. God does not lead men by His own immediate action. It is by means of other men that he leads them and reveals His holy will to them. Professing to obey only God Himself is not really the will to obey; it is rather ruling ourselves and exposing ourselves to great dangers."

Ibidem

(English edition p.108; pp.108-109)

"In order to renounce his own will, and thus to ensure his salvation. These words speak of the sacrifice of our own will, which is included in the Vow of Obedience, as well as of the reward which we hope to obtain. Herein is to be found the most perfect form of that renunciation which is so often recommended in the Gospel; and, undoubtedly, there is no better means of making our salvation sure, since a man can only lose his soul by an evil use of his free will.

...the Vows of Religion are the greatest and most perfect sacrifice that a man can offer to Almighty God; but, among the Vows, Obedience is the most perfect. By the Vow of Poverty, a man sacrifices his earthly possessions; by the Vow of Chastity, he sacrifices his body; by the Vow of Obedience, he sacrifices his will; and, in so doing, offers his whole self. No act whereof we are capable can bring more glory to God, or more advantage to man."

Little Retreat of Three Days,

(English edition pp. 37-38)

"It is for God that we submit in this way: That is what ennoble obedience. The sacrifice of the will must be offered to God alone. It is God, it is the Holy Spirit who draws us to that sacrifice. It is He who points out those to whom we must submit. It is for love of Him that we do it, in order better to assure our salvation and perfection."

It is the most perfect sacrifice; it is worth more than all the other sacrifices. "Obedience is better than sacrifice"(1 Samuel 15:22). God is jealous of the will. The will is the cause of the war between heaven and hell. To conquer our will, God has done all He did, that He became man, etc.

"This will marvelously raises the merit of all our acts. It makes us, as it were, impeccable; it unites us to God. Man becomes one same spirit with God by the union of his will to God's Will."

II - MOTIVES

Conferences on the Vows

(English edition pp. 116-117)

"In speaking of religious obedience, we must be most careful to bear in mind the motive for which we obey Superiors. This motive is the authority over us which has been entrusted to them. Our only reason for obedience must be that the Superior holds the place of Christ our Lord to us, because of the vow of obedience that we have made. It is not the man whom we obey, but Christ our Lord, whom the man represents to us. Such a thought makes religious obedience easier and more perfect, while it ennoble this virtue.

It is Jesus Christ Whom we obey; who then would refuse obedience? Who would complain, either of the person who commands, or of the thing commanded?

It is Jesus Christ Whom we obey; it is Christ our Lord Whom we strive to please. Were our obedience offered in order to please any man, we should be guilty of base flattery, unworthy of a religious. But, if we hope to please Christ our Lord, how perfect must be our obedience; perfect in its execution, perfect as regards our will, and perfect in the submission of our judgment; always remembering however that no human command can contravene the law of God.

It is Jesus Christ Whom we obey. Therefore we are certain of doing God's will, i.e. we are doing, as far as the obeying religious is concerned, the most holy and most perfect thing."

Ibidem p.108

"Religious superiors, who are approved by the Church, have - by virtue of the vow we make to them - a special authority to lead their subjects; and this authority must be the motive of our obedience to them. Herein lie merit, strength and perfection of obedience."

Ibidem

(English edition p. 113)

"The Superiors of religious Societies receive their authority from the Church, to whom all power was given by Christ our Lord. Such authority is given them for the spiritual profit of men, either by a tacit consent, or by a formal approbation of the various institutes. But the Church does not determine the subjects over whom this authority is to be exercised.

Such a decision is the work of the Holy Spirit, who bestows the grace of vocation. He it is Who calls men to the various religious orders, He it is Who seems to say to them, as He did to Saul, that "there it shall be told thee what thou must do." (Acts 9:7).

Little Retreat of Three Days (English edition p. 40)

"Because the Superior is invested with the authority, of Jesus Christ: this is the true motive of religious obedience.

This is what we must consider in the Superior, not her amiable qualities, prudence, or affection for us, but we must see and hear Jesus Christ in her; we must look neither at the difficulty nor at the ease of what is commanded. Jesus Christ has spoken, that is sufficient, we joyfully undertake, and accomplish everything. "An obedient man shall speak of victory."

Sixth Circular Letter p.103

"See the commands of God in Superiors' commands, unless they contain anything contrary to the divine law. Obey Superiors as you would Christ our Lord."

Plan of the Society of the-Heart of Jesus, 1792, D.C. p.81
Constitutions of 1818, D.C: p. 519
Memorandum to Pius VII, D.C.'p.260

"All must therefore have a thorough knowledge of all that relates to obedience; they must understand its excellence and different degrees; above all, they must pay attention to the motive why they obey men, namely: the authority of Him Who said: 'He who hears you, hears Me; and he who despises you, despises Me'":

Plan of the Society of Mary, 1790, D.C. 60.

.... In the person of your Superior, you will respect Jesus Christ the Lord. You will, receive her counsels, her reprimands, her commands, as coming from the mouth of the Lord Jesus."

Summary. Reflections on Rule XXXI. (English edition pp. 166-167)

"The motive for which we obey should guide us in the practice of obedience; and this motive must never be lost to view. It is expressed in the words, "Let them acknowledge the Superior (whoever he be) in the place of Christ our Lord,"

We are always bound to see Christ in the person of our neighbor. "As long as you did it to one of these, My least brethren, you did it to Me." (Mat.25:40). This consideration is a most powerful incentive to fraternal

charity. But it is not alone after this fashion that we must see Christ in our Superior. Rather we must accustom ourselves to see Him in the Superior in His character of Master and Lord; a character which requires from us reverence, submission and docility. We must look upon our Superior as being clothed with the authority of Christ to command and to lead us in His name. This authority is the foundation of religious obedience, and the Church has always taught us to acknowledge the fact; for it is founded on the words which Christ addresses to His Apostles, and in their persons, to all who are endowed with any spiritual authority: "He that hears you hears Me; and he that despises you despises Me."

Summary Reflections on Rule XXXII (English. edition pp. 180-181)

If we are full of the spirit of obedience and see Christ Himself in the person of our Superior, if we allow ourselves to be guided by her, as by Christ our Lord, we shall find no difficulty in practicing what is here laid down. We shall look upon the Superior's commands as coming from the lips of Christ; and should we feel some repugnance, should contrary thoughts suggest themselves to our minds, or should we fear the weakness of human nature, we shall be enlightened to see in that Divine Lord, Whose place the Superior holds, a wisdom which far surpasses our weak intelligence, a loving providence, and a strength which will make all that is hardest easy. This light, I say, will silence every reasoning; it will amend our tastes, and scatter our fears."

Instruction for the Feast of the Purification, 1807

The Obedience of Mary. "...in herself she sees nothing but the humblest of the Servants of the Lord. Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Everything about her responds to the sentiments with which she is imbued.

....Let us obey by entering into Mary's sentiments, seeing only God in the person who commands, seeing only God's will in what is commanded....Fruit of obedience: a greater union with God. Whoever attaches himself to God becomes one in spirit with Him."

Letters of Father de Clorivière.

To M. de Cicé (1805)

(English edition p.202)

"I have thought before God of what you ask me and here is what I feel led to tell you: that it is infinitely better to be led by obedience than by the lights and feelings one believes come from God: The former way is that of faith and is much safer than the other.

To M. de Cicé (1808)

(English edition p.393)

(speaking of Mme de Carcado recently deceased):

"Her progress in perfection has been even more evident since she submitted herself to obedience in the Society of the Heart of Mary. She then despoiled herself of whatever was too ardent in an imagination fertile in projects for the glory of God. She no longer had any other will than that of her Superiors whom she loved tenderly and for whom she had the most profound respect because she saw in them God Himself."

To Mlle de. Virel (1806) (English edition p.478)

"They make objections to you.... that

.... 3rd One does not know if one has the merit of obedience. Wherever there are real rules, some leaders to which one submits because of God and according to the spirit of the Church, there is the merit of obedience; and this obedience is religious when it is founded on the vow one makes."

To Father Lange (1796) (English edition p.564)

(Concerning a young woman desiring to enter the Society).

A person is truly a member of the Society of Mary, has its spirit, fulfills all its obligations, when she with all her power embraces evangelical perfection, lives consequently stripped of all things, at least interiorly renounces especially her own will and intends in all her actions to be guided by obedience, and faithfully does her best to fulfill what she knows to be the will of God...."

To Father Pochard (1806) (English edition p.611)

"You do not perform an action, take a step where you could not have the merit of religious obedience in consequence of your holy engagements. And this merit is very great; it is the most sublime of all, since to act through a motive of religious obedience is to act with a view of conforming oneself to the will of God, to His good pleasure. Because this will of God does not come to us directly from God, or from law, but through the medium and ministry of men, that which one does in an excellent manner, implies, in those who are constantly submissive to it through a religious spirit, sublime faith and great humility.

To have this merit, when one is bound by holy engagements, a general intention suffices, and I am well assured that this intention is at the bottom of your heart, but it is good to renew it from time to time.

Mother de Cicé, Writings III. Conferences on the Plan of the Society...
No.15, p.12.

"Let us, my very dear Sisters, examine our fidelity in what concerns obedience. Are we realizing its nature, importance, and necessity? Above all, in all the opportunities to practice it, are we striving to

consider in the person we must obey the person of Christ Himself? For us, it would be very important and very meritorious at the same time, to pay direct attention to this motive which gives obedience all its value. Let us get accustomed always to obey men as obeying God, or better, as we are expressly recommended to do, to see Jesus Christ alone in our Superiors and His will in all the commands they give."

NECESSITY AND EXTENT OF OBEDIENCE

I- NECESSITY

Plan of the Society of the Heart of Jesus, 1792, D.C. p.81.

Constitutions of 1818, D.C., p.519.

Memorandum to Pius VII, D.C., p.260

"Let all, for love of Christ the Lord, particularly cherish obedience; and with all their powers, let them apply themselves to acquiring the perfection of obedience. For it is, in fact, on this vow that the entire general good of the Society depends and from it radiates to all the individual members."

Plan of the Society of Mary, 1790, D.C. p.60 (cf. Constitutions of 1818, D.C. p.509)

"The vow of obedience must be regarded as the most powerful means of arriving at the highest perfection. It is by this vow that a person makes the most entire sacrifice of himself, that he most certainly assures himself of the ambushes of Satan; that he elevates himself above his own self; that he draws more graces on himself; that he renders his actions more meritorious; and that he follows more closely in the footsteps of Christ the Lord...."

Plan of the Society of Men, D.C., p. 45

"Let all cherish obedience with a special love, because of Christ; let them apply all their efforts to it in order finally to attain its perfection. The result of this unique virtue will be the common well-being of the entire Society. This well-being will flow out to each of the members. If anyone in the Society - and God preserve us from this! - after having made his vows, should reject obedience from his soul, let him be well aware that by this very fact, he will have renounced the Society, and in the word of the Apostle, will have drawn condemnation on himself."

Conferences on the Vows, (English edition pp. 129-130)

....in spite of every good quality and the possession of great holiness, failure to obey would be plain proof that no vocation existed, or else that the call was not responded to.

....When obedience flourishes among us in all its perfection, every other virtue will flourish in the same degree; but if obedience does not flourish, we ought not to wish that our Society be established, nor that

it continues to exist after its establishment."

Little Retreat of Three Days (English edition p. 40)

"Obedience is all the more necessary in this Society because of our contacts with the world. Destroy this one bond of obedience, and the Society could no longer exist. Therefore, we must excel in obedience."

Memorandum to the Bishops, D.C., p. 157

"The vow of obedience and the closest possible union of hearts will be the basis and character of the two Societies."

Summary. Reflections on Rule XXXI (English edition pp. 164-5-6)

"The advantages to be gained from obedience are innumerable. By following our own will we wander away from God and plunge into infinite misery. By renouncing our own will through obedience we save ourselves from all these evils, and gain those immense benefits which flow from union with God as from a never-failing source.

These words are enough to show the necessity of obedience. It is necessary for everyone, but still more necessary for religious; for they are bound to the Lord by their vow of obedience. In consequence of this vow, the religious who departs from obedience, to follow once more the dictates of his own will which he has consecrated to God, is guilty of a "rapine in the holocaust."

But among all religious there are none to whom obedience is as necessary as to the religious of the Society of Jesus, and to us who glory in following in their footsteps. And this for two reasons: first, our duties are so multifarious and so difficult that we cannot fulfil them unless we are directed, supported, and encouraged by obedience. Second, our holy Father, according to the abundant lights bestowed upon him by God, declares in his letter on obedience, "That we must not be troubled should other Religious Orders surpass us in fasts and watching and macerations and other exercises of virtue which they practice devoutly according to the spirit of their Institute, but that we must endeavor to excel in the practice of obedience."

Ibidem, Reflections on Rule XXXVII. (English edition p.195)

"...but the soul which is possessed of obedience will be made capable of any effort. 'An obedient man shall speak of victory.' Would to God that obedience might be the soul of this little Society."

Mother de Cicé, Writings III. Conferences on the Plan of the Society
no.15 p.12

"Number 15 of the Plan of the Society treats the vow of obedience, this vow so necessary to the religious that without it all the good works he could possibly do would be counted as nothing, and would only contribute to his downfall by blinding him to proper conduct.

In some Religious Orders it has been believed that this vow, when strictly and faithfully kept can replace the other vows. This same vow, my dear Sisters, has been most particularly recommended to us for arriving at the perfection of our state. Fulfilling this vow has been presented to us as the means for making up for the austerities, difficult and penitential life in the rule of most Religious Orders, must make us understand how much we must take to heart perfecting ourselves in the practice of obedience."

II - EXTENT

Little Retreat of Three Days. (English edition pp.38-39)

"In what? (must we obey)

In all that is not contrary to the law of God, of the Church, or our particular duties.

We gave all, when we gave our will. We can no longer act as if we could dispose of our will, and we make it entirely dependent on the will of the Superior, to whom we owe obedience, unless we see, that it is not conformed to the will of God.

In this, there is no difference between the obedience practiced in the Society and that of other religious Societies."

Conferences on the Vows. (English edition pp.125-126; p.127)

"If you wish then to know and appreciate the wonderful graces attached to this virtue, be always faithful to obedience, look out for opportunities, and be quick to use any means which may occur. Far from wishing to enlarge your liberty, try to restrict it more and more when possible. Do not be content with a general permission, and be glad when the Superior has an exact knowledge of all your proceedings; so that every action and good work of yours may receive his special approbation. For we know that, by so doing, our works will be more pleasing to God, and will receive a more abundant blessing from on high.

....Such conduct is all the more necessary to us in this Society, because we live apart from one another; and it is only by the most perfect obedience that we can be united in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for the greater glory of God, and can form a religious Institute which will be useful to the Church...."

Little Retreat of Three Days, (English edition p.39)

"We must give our Superiors, as far as we can, full knowledge of our conduct, be exact to the rule of time approved, or prescribed for us, give an account of, and submit proceedings of any importance, such as choice of employment, change of residence, and such like things, hiding nothing, and having frequent recourse to them, etc."

Memorandum to the Bishops, D.C. p.160

"What means could they take, since they are deprived of those provided by enclosure and community life?

....Every moment of the day will be regulated; nobody will be abandoned to caprice and negligence; always there will be some useful and religious occupation; and the sanction of obedience given to the day's schedule, which each one will have drawn up, will substitute for the sound of the bell to make that schedule observed with exactitude."

Rule of Conduct. Chapter I, 12th Means (English edition pp.15-16)

"A rule of life. This is not equally easy for all, nor can it be uniform for all the Daughters of the Heart of Mary. Those who live in their families, and generally those who are not mistresses of their actions, cannot have a special rule of life. It is enough if they are faithful in what is enjoined them, or is necessary, and in purifying their intention, referring all they do to God. But for those who are free, it is very important that each should receive from the Superior a rule of life, or make one herself, and submit it to her judgment. By this means obedience is practiced in all things, nothing is done by caprice, and no time lost. As the same rule cannot be given to all, we may say in general, that the morning should be spent in prayer, hearing Mass, reading a spiritual book, and in work suited to our state; in the afternoon the Rosary should be recited, visits of duty or of custom made, works of mercy exercised, a visit made to the Blessed Sacrament, and the rest of the time occupied in study or work. On Sundays and festivals more time should be given to exercises of piety. Each should observe her rule with fidelity, not that she should never or rarely break it, but that she should never do so without a good reason.

Plan of the Society of the Heart of Jesus, D.C. pp. 81-82.

Constitutions of 1818, D.C., pp. 519-520.

Memorandum to Pius VII, D.C., pp. 260-261.

"3. In order to practice the virtue of obedience in everything, and that the merit of the vow may extend to all the actions of the day, those who do not live in the House, where they are subjected to a common rule, will draw up a rule of life for the use of their time and submit it to the Superior. The Superior may change it as she thinks more suitable to the

spiritual good of each. They will then consider it a duty to observe it carefully, not that they should never or rarely break it but only for good reasons.

4. When there is something of importance to decide, such as to undertake an employment, change an abode, take a journey, begin a considerable work, etc., if the choice of these things be free, the members cannot make any decision without the express permission of the Superior when she is present or without having presumed that permission in case she is absent. If it does not depend on them to act or not to act, it would, however, be proper to acquaint the Superior of it and consult her on the manner of acting.

5. When several members will live together, as before our Lord many reasons seem to render desirable, let there be one chosen by the Superior, whom the others obey in ordinary things, and of whom they should ask permission, when anything occurs not quite in the ordinary routine, such as for example, if someone wished to visit persons outside the house or to walk in the country or to do any other thing of a like nature."

Fr. de Clorivière, Letter of Farewell (written on leaving for the Diocesan Missions in Provence. (Circular Letters, pp.229-30)

"This spirit, as you know, is the spirit which animated these two Hearts.

– a spirit of humility....

– a spirit of, detachment....

– a spirit of obedience, which subjects our will and judgment in everything to the judgment and will of our Superiors.

Memorandum to Pius VII, D.C. p. 271L.

"Since obedience will regulate all they do...."

Sixth Circular Letter

(English edition p.103)

"The vow of obedience requires that you should die to your own will in all things in order to follow the impulsion of the will of God. Aim at the most perfect obedience. It should not only be the rule and motive of your acts but should govern your affections, your thoughts, your wishes, your judgments. See the orders of God in Superiors' orders, unless they contain anything contrary to the divine law. Obey Superiors joyfully and perseveringly, as you would obey Christ our Lord, whether the command is painful or easy, agreeable or disagreeable to nature; so that you can say with our divine Master; "ego quae placita sunt ei facio semper."
"....I always do what pleases him." (John 8:29)

Summary, Reflections on Rule XXXVIII (Subordination)

(English edition pp.196 -197-198)

"This rule, contains a very important lesson on obedience, by showing us those whom we are bound to obey. It is not enough to obey the Superior of a House; we must be no less obedient to any who hold authority under her, in those places and things that belong to their office. Thus in the kitchen we must obey the cook, in the infirmary the infirmarian, and so on with regard to all other offices; and our obedience must have the same qualities as that which we pay to the Superior herself, because it is founded upon the same motive. For indeed in our obedience we do not stop to think of the persons whom we obey, but we consider only Christ our Lord, Who is present in them, and for Whose sake we obey.

This kind of obedience is very necessary. It gives us the opportunity of practicing this virtue at every moment. It is calculated to maintain peace and order in a house; and if we are faithful here, we can hope with some degree of confidence, that we have made progress in this virtue.

There will not always be the same opportunity for practicing this subordination in the Society of the Heart of Mary, for the members of our Society are not as a rule united to form a community. Nevertheless, even though the members are dispersed, different groups will be formed; and in each group different occupations will be carried on under the heads who are themselves subordinated to the Superior of each House. Hence we can practice towards these heads that obedience which is commanded by the rule.

Summary, Reflections on Rule XXXIX (English edition pp.200-201) (Letters)

"This rule cannot be generally practiced in the Society of the Heart of Mary, because Superiors and subjects are far apart from one another. Further, it would not be advisable for the Superior to require her inferiors to practice it, because the latter may be subject to another authority, and in consequence, letters may treat of things which are outside the Superior's province. That is why it is enough for us to preserve the spirit of the rule, which consists in wishing to be perfectly dependent upon our Superiors, in keeping nothing hidden from them, and in never carrying on any correspondence which is not according to their will. When opportunity offers, and we may presume that such action would be pleasing, we must show the letters which we have written or received, in order to make the Superior better acquainted with ourselves and our own concerns, without however betraying the secrets that other people have confided to us; for these we must keep hidden from our Superiors.

Many cases must have occurred in the Society of Jesus where this rule was left unpracticed. Such cases will be the general rule among us,

owing to the nature of our Society.

Ibidem, Reflections on Rule XLIV (Idleness) Summary

(English edition pp210-11)

....The nature of the Society of the Heart of Mary makes it impossible for the Superior to know for herself when its members are in need of suitable and useful occupation; therefore each individual is bound to inform her in time. It is most necessary that all should acquit themselves very faithfully of this duty. If the members of this Society have no work fixed for them by their occupation and their position in life, it will be advisable before deciding to undertake such or such work to consult either the Superior herself, or whoever the Superior has appointed for this object, and to follow her advice. This is one of the chief duties of obedience, and only by this means can obedience extend to every action and sanctify them all.

In determining each one's work the Superiors will consider her strength, her talents, her station in life, her spiritual and temporal benefit, and the general advantage.

Ibidem, Reflections on Rule XLIX (The Sick) Summary

(English edition pp.224-5)

"This rule is an application of the 38th which belongs to obedience, and which bids us obey subordinate officers as we obey the Superior himself; because in them, as in the Superior, we see Christ Jesus our Lord, Who gives them some portion of His authority.

The rule explains that the sick and infirm are, like the rest, subject to this law, as far as it concerns doctors and infirmarians. The aim of this rule is to make the sick obey with greater perfection and merit; to teach them to be always obedient down to the smallest details; and finally, to preserve them from that over-carefulness which often leads them to be constantly on the lookout for new remedies. With this object, the rule accustoms the sick to abandon such anxieties to those persons whom the Superior has chosen to relieve their bodily infirmities.

APPENDIX: PERMISSIONS

Sixth Circular Letter

Circular Letters (English edition pp.103-4)

"Permissions are given either by the Rule or by the voice of Superiors. The former extend far, owing to the very nature of our Societies. They cover all that is suited to each one's position and to the intercourse of civil life. The second class of permissions concerns matters which are doubtful or more important. By doubtful cases I imply something that is not clearly expressed by the Rule or evidently suitable and necessary. For such things we must have recourse to the Superior's permission. The difference is noted in the article "de Paupertate" No.6 Chap. II of the "Specimen." In the latter case, when we are away from a Superior, and can reasonably persuade ourselves that he would grant what is asked, we can presume his permission. Thus we shall always act with permission, and a general intention is enough. That intention need not be renewed every time.

This is essential. When we act thus in a religious spirit, as is said in the article from the "Specimen" just quoted, we are sure of not doing anything against the vow of Poverty."

Memorandum to the Bishops, D.C., pp. 140-141

"Another element differentiating the obedience members would be observing in the Societies and the obedience of the ancient Orders is that the permissions granted in the Societies, even habitually, are both more common and more extended. In most of the more regular communities, it was necessary to have recourse to the Superior in the most minor things, while in the two Societies there are general permissions for an infinity of things which would have been considerable transgressions against the vows if they had been done without permission.

This difference, which concerns more or less of the permissions, can never affect the essence of the vow. Permissions are more or less great, more or less extended in the various religious orders. According to the diversity of their uses and no matter what they may be, they belong to obedience, and using such permissions constitutes obeying.

It is true that permissions which are too frequent, too extended, too easily granted, indicate in most religious orders some relaxation in the regular discipline; but it would not be so in the two Societies, because the permissions in question are an outgrowth of the nature of the Societies, they are foreseen by the Rules, and they are only conformable to the spirit of these Societies and to the will of the Superiors. In whatever Order and in whatever Community, the religious who is far

from his Superiors, whether for business of the Order or the house, whether for an assignment in the Missions, is supplied with much more extended permissions than those customarily granted in the two Societies. They are not granted in more considerable or less ordinary things which can take some waiting and in which recourse may be had to Superiors. Such permissions granted are without inconvenience and bring no prejudice to obedience. Even so, in many of those permissions, when a subject is not far from his Superior or someone officially in the Superior's steady he is advised to have recourse to the Superior as frequently as possible in order to practice obedience in a more perfect manner.

What was seen above seems to show that obedience in the Societies has everything which constitutes religious obedience and that whatever is found in that obedience which is specific and particular in no way alters either its essence or its perfection."

Little Retreat of Three Days, (English edition p.39)

"This obedience differs again, in that the form of the Society requires permissions to be much larger than in other Societies, where the presence of Superiors allows easy recourse to be had to them at all times."

Letter to Cardinal Caprara, D.C., p.369.

"This difference consists also in the fact that in these Societies there are rather broad permissions for everything regarding the ordinary dealings of life."

Letters of Fr. de Clorivière:

To M. de Cicé (1788), (English edition p.11)

"Do all that you can; but let it always be with the sanction of obedience. I shall say no more; obedience includes everything."

To M. de Cicé (1789) (English edition p.15)

"I approve of your confidence in the Lord as regards almsgiving, but you lose nothing by submitting it to obedience. One of the greatest advantages of this virtue is to free us from the fear in which we would be without it, of doing more or of doing less than the Lord is asking of us."

To M. de Cicé (1791) (English edition p.55)

"If for other reasons, due to circumstances which would turn you from this trip, I should not insist upon it. If I do, and if what I say to you is

more than a simple request, it is in order that in an action of such importance, you may have the strength and the merit which obedience gives."

To M. de Cicé (1791) (English edition p.58)

"You have taken Obedience for your guide. It is for the Lord that you have done this. Have a sweet and firm confidence that Our Divine Master will regulate all your steps by this means, and that He will not permit you to lose your way as you are going forward to follow Him."

To M. de Cicé (1791) (English edition p.60)

"You will take his advice, and do what he says. This should be a subject of consolation to you to think that all your steps are regulated by obedience."

To M. de Cicé (1802) (English edition p.112)

"But aside from this, I believe that I must order you not to refuse the care they judge necessary for your health, and in order that you may not have any scruple on this point, and that you may have at the same time the merit of obedience, I am telling your friend Pauline, to whom I am writing on the subject, to watch over the care of your health and, on this point, to take the place of a Superior in your regard."

To M. de Cicé (1805) (English edition p. 238)

"It is true that since in this he could have no certainty, he ought to have had recourse to obedience.... "

To M. de Cicé (1807) (English edition p.379)

"He (Father Vielle) should be informed that religious obedience has two duties: one is that we accomplish through the motive of obedience all to which we are bound by our rules and our state of life; the other is that we agree with our Superiors as far as is possible. Without the accomplishment of this last duty, the other cannot be well fulfilled; one is like a dislocated member; one does not receive the influence from the head; the very body is paralyzed. He cannot be ignorant of these things; I have reminded him of them, but I beg you to touch on this paragraph when you write either to Amable or Fr. Amy."

To Mlle d'Esternois (1802) (English edition p.455)

"...but do nothing outside the common order without the sanction of obedience; I say the same regarding mortification."

To Mme de Clermont (1805) (English edition p.524)

"For whatever is necessary for family affairs, you do not need permissions; you have them, by the very nature of the Society; it is good however to discuss them, especially in doubtful and extraordinary cases, with the superiors, in order to have the sanction of obedience in everything, and because, holding the place of God, they can make known His good pleasure to us and give us useful advice for our conduct."

To Mme de Clermont (1805) (English edition p.526)

"Thank you for your excellent letter; it seemed to me to be written in a very good spirit, and you enter into interesting details which show the true desire you have to be guided in everything by obedience."

To Mme de Clermont (1807) (English edition p.536)

"I do not doubt that Mademoiselle Adélaïde is giving you the permissions which you ask for your niece's wedding and for the present to be given to her."

To Fr. Lange (1800) (English edition p.570)

"As to the journey which you are invited to take, if, on consulting the Lord, you believe it could be for the glory of God and of some use to you and to others, I should not be opposed to it, and I would not have much difficulty in bringing myself to your idea, because am well persuaded that you would not take a step of this nature uselessly. I even believe that if you determine to take it, God will make it serve for His glory; I require of you then only that you examine the matter well in the Lord's presence.

To Fr. Lange (1806) (English edition p.576)

....A perfect obedience, of action, will, judgment, according to the doctrine of Holy Church. For this, Religious Superiors must watch over religious discipline, and, under the direction of the Bishop, must regulate everything."

To Fr. Pochard (1799) (English edition p.590)

"Vile in our own eyes, dead to ourselves and to all the pleasures of the senses, children of obedience, no longer living for ourselves but for Jesus Christ, we should have no other interests than His; we should dare everything, believe everything possible, under the direction of obedience, as long as it has to do with spreading His Kingdom and procuring His glory; only too happy to suffer and to consume ourselves for such a noble and just end.

To Fr. Pochard (1799)

(English edition p.595)

"God will bless the resolution you take of acting in everything with our presumed consent. By that, all your actions will have the merit of religious obedience, and you can hope that the Spirit of the Lord will direct you to do what is most conformed to His good pleasure. I give you in advance all the permissions of which you will have need, in cases where it will not be possible for you to apply to us because of distance.

To Fr. Beule (1807-1808)

(English edition p.647)

"I know that the evil spirit, who turns his efforts chiefly against those whom he has most reason to fear, has used all his efforts to hinder you from following the light of God, which communicates itself to humble souls by means of obedience. He has led you to prefer your own judgment, your reflections, the talents which God has given you, the good that you have already done and which you will do, to His. You know better than I the flattering illusions he has caused to glow in your imagination.You should already have been able to recognize him by these traits and to defy him the more, under the appearance of a greater good and the interests of God's glory, and thus to have recourse to the voice of obedience, the only voice which could surely make known to you God's will.

....the spirit of obedience which you flatter yourself that you have. In what does it consist? You cannot be ignorant of it. It is to see the will of God in that of your Superiors, to despoil yourself of your own will in order to take theirs, not to act freely by your own impulse but by theirs.

....You know that, among us, one should not take, of his own free choice and in what regards us personally, any step, at least not any important step, save with the approbation of Superiors. You have no Superior except me, and nevertheless, without consulting me, without having my approbation, or rather, having every reason to believe I would not give it, you have sought to free yourself from this parish and substitute someone in your place. Was this not, to act through choice in an important matter? Was it not to wish to guide yourself, and take back entirely, a will of which you had made, not so long ago, the entire sacrifice to God?

....Distrust your imagination; reflect that there is no true obedience and submission to the will of God without a continual renunciation of ourselves, and that our greatest care, as our Rule says, should be to apply ourselves without relaxation to the practice of this renunciation.

To a priest of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (1807). (English edition p.668)

"We embrace the most angelic in chastity, the most humble in

obedience. It only serves to give the merit of religious obedience to each of our actions, as it did to St. Francis Xavier during the course of his missions, when he was two thousand leagues from his Superior. It is a mistake to imagine sometimes that the necessary means are lacking; it is rather we who are lacking to the means.

Letters of M. de Cicé, Writings II. p.126

To Mlle V. Puesch 21816)

"You are quite right, my dear friend. Obedience has great power in aiding us to conquer all difficulties.

To Mlle M.A. Bourguignon p.141

"The happiness you experience in doing everything by obedience renders precious the smallest of your actions. When this Motive is perfect, it ennobles those actions, as you know, and somehow makes them divine."

CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE AND RELIGIOUS OBEDIENCE

I - DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO OBEDIENCES

Conferences on the Vows

(English edition pp.103-106)

"Religious Obedience rests upon the special vow or promise which has been made to God, and this it is which distinguishes religious obedience from any type of natural or civil obedience. Natural obedience rests upon the dependence which nature has established between men. Civil obedience rests upon the relations of social order. Both may be termed Christian when these duties are fulfilled as in the sight of God, and such virtue is very pleasing to the Lord. It is not merely very meritorious, and of great value, but it is necessary to each man individually, and to society in general. The contrary vice of disobedience, or insubordination, is wholly incompatible with salvation, and is destructive to good order, both in domestic and social life. Both types of obedience have their origin in the dependent relation wherein man necessarily stands towards his Creator and Sovereign Lord, from Whom all authority of every sort proceeds. "There is no power but from God; and those that are ordained of God. Therefore, he that resists the power resists the ordinance of God." (Rm.13:1-2)

By religious obedience a man subjects himself to another man, that is to say, of his own free will, he places himself in dependence upon another, so that he may do what his Superior bids him, and not follow his own will. This dependence is the result of his own choice; it is not forced upon him, as is always the case with dependence upon a natural authority, and generally the case with dependence upon a civil authority. Even when this latter type of obedience is chosen by ourselves, it is still very different to religious obedience. Our motive is different, for we desire some sort of worldly advantage; and the extent of the obedience is different, for it is limited to certain actions, and is circumscribed by the nature of the bond itself. The end and aim of religious dependence never changes; in many cases it is the wish to ensure our salvation. The scope of religious obedience is also far wider than any other, and the obligation is imposed by vow,"

"...religious obedience is a holy practice which the Church has always observed, and which is based upon the words of God Himself. Its object is to show us the will of God, and to lead us more surely in the way of perfection and holiness. If we bind ourselves by vow, as members of one of the societies which God raises up from time to time in His Church, and which the Church approves by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we shall-choose the safer and more perfect way; and it is in such action that true religious obedience consists."

Conferences on the Vows.

(English edition pp.109-110)

"The vow of obedience gives a new merit to every action that is done with the perfection required by our vow. But Obedience, does more than shelter us from the illusions of self-love, and the ambushes of the evil one; it saves us from the dangers of ignorance, and the temptations of sin. Further, obedience makes us certain that we are doing the will of God, even in the smallest trifles; and we know that we act thus from the most sublime of motives, which is none other than to do God's holy will. The religious who acts under obedience always does what is most holy, and most perfect for him; for all his actions are according to the will of God, which is made known by his Superior."

Little Retreat of. Three Days

(English edition p.38)

"The religious Superior has as subjects, only those whom the Holy Spirit has deigned to send him, by the attraction of religious vocation. They must submit themselves willingly and this submission is much more entire, than any other submission, which by its very nature is restricted to certain things; religious submission embrace all; whoever submits his will, submits everything which depends on it. It is perfect and irrevocable. After the vow, we cannot, as we please, will or not will, dependence on the will of another. We are bound for ever when the vow is perpetual."

Sixth Circular Letter

(English edition-p-.106)

"For to act from religious obedience is to act according to the will of God, which is surely pointed out to us by that obedience. There can be no higher motive; none more free from illusion."

Letters of Fr. de Clorivière

To Mme de Goesbriand, (1798) (English edition p.493)

"But it is pertinent for you to note that there is a great difference between doing these things by a personal movement of piety and by one's own choice, and doing them through duty, as belonging to your state of life, by obedience; between doing them alone, and doing them in a Society as members of a religious Body; that the second way is much more excellent and meritorious, and that the value of the smallest actions is enhanced by adding to them the merit of obedience and religion."

II - RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE OBEDIENCE DUE TO RELIGIOUS SUPERIORS AND OBEDIENCE DUE TO OUTSIDE AUTHORITIES

Plan of the Society of the Heart of Jesus, D.C. pp.81, 82, 83.

Constitutions of 1818, D.C. pp.519, 520.

Memorandum to Pius VII, D.C. pp.260, 261, 262.

"All members will obey with greatest exactitude all those persons who are above them on any level whatsoever, be it the natural level, the civil level or the ecclesiastical level, in matters in which the members depend on them. Nothing contrary to the orders of such Superiors or to the members' special occupations can be commanded by the Superiors of the Society, or prescribed by the rules; unless, of course, in those orders or occupations there be something not in conformity with the divine law. In all other things, members will be bound to obey the Superiors of the Society.

Although the Vow of Obedience made in the Society should induce the persons composing it to obey with greater promptitude and perfection their Superiors outside the Society, it is nevertheless necessary that they should know that their dependence in regard to these Superiors is not increased nor is the nature of the faults committed against the obedience due to them affected by their vow. As to the faults of disobedience of which they may be guilty towards the Superiors of the Society, they must be judged as they would be in all other religious Societies."

Memorandum to the Bishops. D.C. pp.129-130

"The spirit of poverty and obedience must not be less perfect in the members of the two Societies than in any other religious Body. The difference concerns only the exterior practice of these vows. It derives from the very nature of these Societies. To exist in the midst of a world inimical to Jesus Christ and to all that bespeaks piety, they must keep themselves from the world. They would not be able to do this if they possessed goods that would arouse the world's greed or if the form of uniform dress or common residence separated from the world would cause its members to be recognized and to be distinguished from other persons.

The members of these Societies live in the midst of the world, sometimes in their own family; consequently they submit, as they previously did, to natural, civil and ecclesiastical superiors. Also, they are not supported, as other religious are, by a community. Therefore, it has been necessary in their case carefully to regulate the practice of the vows of obedience and poverty so that regular obedience might be

reconciled with the other types of obedience, and so that their poverty might allow some convenient means of subsisting, especially since resort to begging, in the present circumstances, appears prohibited to the great number, even out of Christian prudence."

Ibidem, D.C. pp. 136-140.

"The spirit of obedience must not be less perfect in the two Societies than in any other....

Concerning the external practice of the Vow, it must be extended to include all matter in which the religious is master of his own action and will.

The difference in regard to this practice involves the following:

1 - It can happen, in these two Societies, that there might be many areas in which the person is not his own master (*sui juris*) as when he is in submission to fatherly control as a child of the family, to civil control as citizen, to episcopal control as a diocesan priest. In the other Orders, however, the religious on entering withdraws, with regard to most of these external effects, from those types of control in order to submit himself entirely to the obedience of his respective Order.

2 - The permissions in these Societies would be both more extensive and more frequent, - and I do not mean more habitual.

The first difference cited above does not jeopardize the perfection of religious obedience in the two Societies:

1 - because the sacrifice involved is neither less real nor less complete (than in the other Orders);

2 - because if there be some limitation, it does not derive from the will of the person who obeys;

3 - because the other kinds of obedience contribute to religious obedience;

4 - because there can never be conflict of jurisdiction between these obediences and those due to the two Societies.

The sacrifice a person would be making of his own free volition in the Societies would be real, even though he remained in submission to the other sorts of obedience. For there would always be many areas in which the will would be free and master over itself. In fact, each one of these other obediences has limits and does not have the same end as religious obedience.

....The sacrifice would be complete. Evangelical perfection extends to

everything. There is no time, no situation, no act - even a natural one, which would not be involved in evangelical perfection, as the Apostle, St. Paul, makes it understood. There is, therefore, nothing which religious obedience aiming at evangelical perfection does not embrace. Freedom of will had already been partially bound by the precept attached to the other obediences. By its Vow of obedience, the will binds itself with respect to all other areas in which it was free. Thus, its sacrifice is as complete and as universal as it can be.

Undoubtedly, it could happen that the Superior would regulate the conduct of his subject in another way if the subject were entirely under his dependence. It could also happen that the subject would employ to a greater degree the means of perfection prescribed for him if he were not under another dependence. But then it is sufficient that the subject's interior disposition be conformed to the aims of perfection which his Superior sets for him; that the subject come as close as possible to those aims; and that he be resolved that as soon as the obstacle of the other will is removed, he will conform entirely to those aims. This exterior lack, in the fulfillment of what is asked of him, a lack which is contrary to the true desire of his heart and which it is not in his power to prevent, does not in any way diminish the perfection of his obedience. And the Lord will lavish on him, by another road, the graces which he needs and which would have been granted him through the means of perfection and spiritual exercises that he would wish to use, but cannot, in his situation.

The acts and duties which the subject will be performing as a result of his dependence on other Superiors also enter into regular obedience, because it is clear that in fulfilling all his duties, whatever their nature be, he is also thereby accomplishing what his Superior demands of him. Let him not lose sight of this will of his Superior. Let him act accordingly. Let, him fulfill his duties always bearing in mind the religious obedience he has vowed. Let this recollection lead him to fulfilling them with greater perfection. It is clear that by this intention, those types of acts will have the merit of religious obedience, although originally commanded by reason of other virtues. Therefore, far from being prejudicial to religious obedience, these acts will be an ongoing practice of it, and in turn, this obedience will serve to elevate the merit and perfection of such acts.

From this mutual accord which always can and must be found between the obligations due to other duties and those due to religious obedience, it quite naturally follows that there really cannot be a conflict of jurisdiction between the obedience rendered to a religious Superior in the Society and other kinds of obedience. When other kinds of obedience prescribe a duty, such duty will always be in conformity with religious obedience. When they prescribe what is not a real duty or something contrary to a duty, the subject will not be bound to do it;

rather he will be bound not to do it. Besides, he has sufficiently been instructed on the reconciliation of the various sorts of obedience that can take place in one and the other Society, because it says in the Specimen, p.2, n.2, de Obedentia:

1-That all obey with greatest exactitude those who are above them on the natural, civil or ecclesiastical levels, in matters for which they depend on such superior

2-That nothing contrary to the orders of these Superiors or contrary to the subjects' particular employment could be enjoined on him by the Superiors of the Society or prescribed by the Rules, unless those orders or employments contained something not conformed to God's law.

3-That for all other matters in which subjects are not under dependence of anyone, they are bound to obey the Superiors of the Society."

Letter to Cardinal Caprara, D.C. p.369.

"Concerning the exterior practice of the Vow of obedience, the difference consists in the fact that in submitting one's will in matter in which the will is its own master, a subject remains nevertheless bound as before to all other kinds of obedience: children to their father and mother; servants; to their masters; citizens, to civil authorities; clerics, to their ecclesiastical Superiors.

Religious obedience can prescribe nothing contrary to what these other kinds of obedience prescribe. It only communicates greater force and perfection to those other obediences."

Statement of 1808, D.C. pp.447 -448

"The obedience which we owe to our Superiors allows all natural, civil, ecclesiastical obedience to remain as far as we are concerned; it even supports these other obediences, and obliges us to a great exactitude towards them without, however, giving them more force and extent than each of them has the right to demand. From that derives the difference in this exterior practice of obedience. Nothing can be ordered to us contrary to what these other obediences can legitimately command. Particular Superiors cannot deprive us of the custom and rights given to us by the nature of our work. On the other hand, all who compose this Body (of religious) must propose to themselves to excel in the virtue of obedience, and never to conceal from their Superiors anything that concerns either their interior or exterior, even to desire being known by their Superiors, if it were possible, as they are known to God Himself, and never to act against their Superior's will. (The members of these Societies) are not always before the Superior's eyes, but they know that

obeying them means fulfilling precisely all their obligations observing all the points in the Rule. They know that they cannot deliberately omit those things without in some way departing from the Superior's will. Thus, there is no place, no circumstances, no instant in which the members cannot have the merit of obedience; and if with the assistance of grace they are faithful to this one point alone, they have the assurance that all their actions will be conformed to God's will.

Letters of Fr. De Clorivière:

To a Lady, Letters

(English edition p. 559)

“For what concerns obedience, one despoils oneself of one's own will, one submits it, for love of God, to a Superior, in everything in which the will is free and does not depend on the will of another; but in such a way that the Superior can command nothing contrary to the obedience that one owes to one's superiors, natural, civil, or ecclesiastical, nor that which the nature and spirit of the Society generally exacts or permits.

This reconciles religious obedience with every other obedience, and does not hinder the duties from being even more extended. Let each one be faithful to the regulation submitted to the Superiors, let each one conform in everything to the Rules of the Society; let each one make known any rather important undertakings to the Superior, and submit to the Superior's orders and advice; then all their actions will have the merit of obedience...”

Conferences on the Vows

(English edition p.118)

“All that I have said in this conference refers to our Society, as much as to any other religious Institute. There is no difference except such as may result from the action of an external superior. But in these cases, the Superiors of the Society are well aware that their commands must not clash with the orders of an external superior, unless these orders are opposed to the law of God.”

Little Retreat of Three Days (English edition p.40)

“That, in which it differs, is, that in other religious Societies, subjects have not generally to practice any other obedience than that which they owe to their religious Superiors, whereas in our Society, we may have other superiors on whom we depend, and other duties to fulfill.

The rule to follow is for the religious Superior to command nothing contrary to the ordinary duties to which we were, or are still obliged, and in case of doubt, to give the preference to these duties.”

Summary, Reflections on Rule XXXII (English edition p.179)

"...it must happen that the Superior's power is limited by the nature of the Society and its rules, and so she must bend her authority, and accommodate it to the authority of these external superiors to whom her inferior may be subject."

Sixth Circular Letter

(English edition pp.105 -106)

"After what has already been said on the subject, it is easy to imagine the perfection of the exterior practice of obedience among us. It is enough to remark that this outward obedience is a matter of every moment. It goes further and is more constant than in any other religious order. This is why.

In other religious Societies where the members lived in community apart from other men, they were by this very fact exempted in great part from the duty of practicing natural, civil, or ecclesiastical obedience. As a rule they had only to receive orders from the Superiors of the Community and, when they had fulfilled the duties of religious obedience, they had no others to do.

It is not so in our Societies. The obedience that we profess does not exclude any other kind of obedience. It includes them all and sanctifies them, and gives them greater strength. Children are no less obliged than heretofore to obey their parents. Citizens must obey the civil authority in all matters over which they have jurisdiction. Priests must be submissive to their ecclesiastical Superiors. They are even obliged to act thus for a new motive, by their profession of aiming at perfection, by the Rule, and by the will of Superiors who make that obedience a duty. They have no reason to complain. Our Divine Master has set us the example of all these sorts of obedience. For the members of the Societies they have become a part of religious obedience; and if they will only direct their intention aright they will by so doing enhance the merit of their actions, and practice religious obedience in all things at every moment. That being so, how many will be their acts of virtue; how much merit will they acquire. How great will be the spiritual treasures amassed in a single day. For to act from religious obedience is to act according to the will of God, which is surely pointed out to us by that obedience. There can be no higher motive, none freer from illusion."

Ninth Circular Letter

(English edition pp. 189-190)

"It answers in this way possible difficulties as to how to conciliate religious obedience in our Societies with other obedience to which our members may be subject. Religious obedience it says will only give greater strength to any other obedience, and the two will never clash.

1. Because the object of these different obediences is not the same.

Religious obedience concerns the practice of the evangelical counsels. No other obedience has the same object; none has of itself an absolute right to exact its practice.

2. Because the first care of religious Superiors will be that other types of obedience shall be faithfully fulfilled. The immediate aim that we put before us is that our members should fulfill the duties of their state with all the perfection of which they are capable. This is our intention in binding ourselves to practice the counsels. Now a Religious Superior holds his position in order to help his subjects to reach this goal. This is impossible unless he does all he can to lead them to obey their different superiors.

3. Because the obligation of the vow would cease as soon as there was any conflict on the subject (of obedience), or any reasonable doubt. By the obligation of the vow we must understand religious obedience. This obedience would cease as soon as there was just reason to doubt if some lawful obedience could not exact something else. This reason is founded on the fact that, as we have said, obedience to other authorities remains the same after our promises have been made. Therefore these promises can only hold in so far as we dispose of our own will; not for those things where our will depends on someone else. Since other obediences precede religious obedience, they must have the priority in case of reasonable doubt."

Ninth Circular Letter

(English edition Pp.206-247)

"Each one of us must know all the opportunities that his state of life and profession afford of practicing perfection, and the helps which it offers. He must be careful to omit none of them. Any other kind of perfection is not what God asks of us. Superiors must teach this duty incessantly; they must show its excellence and necessity for the good of the individual member, and the common good of all. Let them do all they can to maintain and strengthen among the members of the Societies this perfect subordination and dependence on Superiors, whether ecclesiastical or civil; and the care that they must take to obey them as in the sight of God in all that may be under their jurisdiction. If by accident the Superiors of the Society were to prescribe anything contrary to the orders of other lawful authorities, they would hasten to rectify a mistake which might have unfortunate consequences."

Rule of Conduct

(English edition p.18)

"In all those whom Divine Providence has placed above them and on whom they are dependent, they will behold and reverence the authority of God, and they will manifest towards their parents the respect, love and obedience, expressly commanded by the Divine and natural law: they will honor those invested with civil authority, and will obey them in what regards their office, as the payment of taxes, and the laws and

regulations, etc. Towards the ministers of the Church and their lawful pastors, they will show the deepest respect, and will obey them with docility, knowing that they must render an account of their souls. But let **all** remember that no Superior whatever can command anything contrary to religion and morality, and if it were done, they ought not to obey, as it would be sinful to do so."

Letters of Fr. de Clorivière

To Mlle d'Esterno (1803), L. p. 660

"...the spirit of this Society being to lend itself to all kinds of good works, and to consolidate and perfect all legitimate obedience, rather than to exact anything, even under the pretext of something better, which would be contrary to obedience."

To Mme de Saisseval (1805) L. p.660

"The spirit of obedience should be very perfect. One must see God Himself and obey Him in Superiors. The practice of it is so regulated that it can be reconciled with all that is due to legitimate authority, whatever it may be. "

To Father Bacoffe (1809) L., p.906 (English edition p.631)

"This assembly which--however secret and well constituted it may be--will not fail sooner or later to be known, for all know, will feel, it seems to me, the party spirit and opposition to our legitimate Superiors, which is altogether contrary to the spirit of our Societies, the members of which should distinguish themselves by the most entire and most perfect obedience."

RESPECTIVE DUTIES OF SUPERIORS
AND OF MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY

Sixth Circular Letter

(English edition p.109)

"I recommend to you....

1. Great union with Superiors; great openness of heart to them. Communication between Superiors and inferiors is always essential for us. Only thus can we form one body and practice religious virtues, above all obedience. This necessity is even greater for those who by an act of oblation have lately begun their first trials. How otherwise could they be sufficiently well-known, or learn a thousand things that come only by practice and long use?

This is why, as soon as circumstances permit, there will be for the newly-admitted (above all for such as are no longer very young) houses where the novices may live for a time with one who is chosen to form them to religious life. While such community houses are still lacking we must have as frequent communications as possible, and should it be impossible to meet, letters must supply the difficulty.

Conferences on the

(English edition pp.119-122)

"Helps to the practice of obedience.

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over you as men who must render an account. So act that they may fulfill their task with joy, not with sorrow, for that would be harmful to you." (Hebrews 13:17)

These words of the Apostle concerning the watchfulness of Superiors, and the account which they must give to God of our souls, can only apply to those who govern us in spiritual things. They refer to all ecclesiastical Superiors; but with even greater force to Superiors in religion. The latter are bound to greater detail in their vigilance, and their charge concerns not only the salvation but the perfection of their inferiors.

St. Paul puts forward this vigilance of Superiors, and the account which they will have to render of our souls, as a motive for our Obedience; so that Superiors may not be overwhelmed by the burden laid upon them, but may even carry it joyfully. For, he says, it would not be expedient for us to add to a burden that is already so heavy.

This motive should appeal to us; for how can we fail to recognize the

obligations we are under to the Superiors who watch so carefully over our salvation, and our progress in perfection.

....The members of a religious Institute will find in zealous and vigilant Superiors a most powerful means whereby to attain to salvation and perfection.

By the use of this means, subjects will attain to high sanctity, and the designs of Almighty God will be fulfilled. If such Superiors as these are lacking, or if no recourse is had to them, subjects will soon grow careless; they will be at the mercy of the devil and of their own passions; or, at best, they will drag on an imperfect life, and will fall far short of the designs which Almighty God had upon their souls.

A good Superior will not find his office easy; for the weakness, misery, and sorrows of his children become his own.

He can say with the Apostle: "Who is weak that I am not affected by it? Who is scandalized that I am not aflame with indignation?" (2 Cor.11:29)

He must have some part in the charity of Christ, and that charity must spur him on, and keep him always active. His eyes must be always open to the needs of his inferiors; his ears must listen to their words; his heart must be ready to receive them; his mouth must bring them words of consolation and salvation. He must constantly encourage his children by his example, he must support them when they totter, and raise them when they fall. He must dress their wounds, and arm them for the battle; he must enlighten their doubts; and, like the Divine Shepherd of our souls, he must pray day and night for them, while he endures suffering, and sacrifices himself continually on their behalf."

Conferences on the Vows (English edition pp.128-129)

"Superiors, on the other hand, must try in every way to make Obedience easy to their subjects; not by a weak condescension to the baser instincts of human nature, but by never repelling anyone. They must always be ready to listen kindly, even to complaints that seem to be unreasonable, or to unpleasant reproaches. They must bear with faults and console the afflicted. They must never be haughty or ill-tempered. They must proportion the trial to the strength or weakness of their different subjects; and, when reproof is needed, they must in some way soften the bitterness of their words.

....When the Superior is careful to seek in the Heart of our Divine Lord the feelings which he should have for his subjects, none of these things will seem too hard.

Superiors must be most careful to see that, from the beginning, every

member of the Society acquires this spirit of Obedience, and is ready to endure the hardships inseparable from the practice of this virtue in its early stages. This is absolutely necessary for all, and especially for any who may be distinguished by their talent, position, high birth, etc. No one will be allowed to make his vows who has not been faithful to obedience during the time of probation, or who has shown little love for obedience by his behavior and conversation. Later on such a fault might prevent the renewal of annual vows; and with even greater reason, permission to make perpetual vows might be refused, in spite of every other good quality, and the possession of great holiness. Failure to obey would be plain proof that no vocation existed, or else that the call was not responded to."

Conferences on the Vows

(English edition pp.127-128)

"Obedience will be much easier in practice if we have an inward respect for Superiors. All therefore should strive to cultivate this respect by disregarding the weaknesses and failings of the man, to see only Christ our Lord, Whose place the Superior holds to us, and in Whose name we obey the man."

Ibidem

(English edition p.112)

"St. Bernard speaks very plainly of our duty towards religious Superiors in the following words: "Whether it be God Himself Who gives us a command" he says, "or the man who takes the place of God, we must obey with the same respect, provided however, that the man commands nothing contrary to the law of God."

Ninth Circular Letter

(English edition pp.204 -205)

"It is now time to speak of the duties peculiar to Superiors, inferiors and equals. We all have these, either in the Society or outside it, whatever be our profession or avocation. I will only speak generally.

Beyond the principal Superiors who hold the highest authority whether in ecclesiastical or civil life, there are subordinate authorities with whom we have to deal more often and more directly. We must, in proportion, have for them the same love, respect and obedience as for major Superiors, according to the degree of authority which has been given them. It is not enough to show these feelings outwardly; we must be inwardly full of them. Love will lead us to obey joyfully, respect will make us do so punctually. We should speak of them with deference, and not allow them to be evilly spoken of in our presence. We should give them the credit for success, even at our own expense, unless truth or some other important reason forbids it. We must listen to their advice with docility, and to their reproofs with true humility, even if we do not think they are deserved. In none of this can we fail without wounding perfect

obedience. To disobey these authorities is to disobey those whom they represent, to disobey God Himself whose place they hold towards us. We could not act thus without going against our holy promises at least indirectly, and more or, less gravely.

If we ourselves are Superiors, let us strive to merit the feelings which, in consequence, are due from those who are beneath us. Let us deserve their affection by the tender and lively interest that we take in each one; their respect by our vigilance and virtuous example; their obedience by the gentle charity with which we give our orders. Nevertheless, every time that an essential duty is in question or good order is concerned, we must be firm. We must lose sight of ourselves, but never give way as to the rights of God, or as to anything that concerns the salvation of souls.

Memorandum to Pius VII, D.C. p.275

"If on the one hand, the Superiors' authority and on the other, the subject's obedience are in force, if among them there is that great love of Our Lord and that strong resolve to imitate Him without which these Societies could not even continue, then unfailingly will be found all the means for eradication of sin, for protection from error, and for advancement in giant steps toward perfection. And what must above all be valued is that thereby we are assured of God's very special protection."

Fifth Circular Letter

(English edition pp.83-84)

"For when we enter these Societies it is no passing occupation, no confraternity which we join for a time to leave when we like. It is a stable and permanent state that we embrace.

That is how these Societies were represented to you. You would not have been admitted to the consecration, and far less to the vows, if you had not been thought to be called by God--and if you had not proposed to live and die in them, practicing the evangelical counsels, and observing the rules under obedience to Superiors.

Letter to DHM's Living with the Carmelites. (English edition p.214)

"So do not look upon yourselves as being isolated from the body of the Society. Obedience has, placed you where you are; it is obedience that keeps you there. How then can it fail continually to watch over you as very particularly dear members?"

Memorandum to the Bishops, D.C. p.164

"...to preserve the Body of the Society in all its vigor, even to increase it more and more, it would be very especially enjoined on Superiors to use all the authority given them by the vow of Obedience in order to see

that the vows are kept with all possible perfection according to the nature and spirit of each of these Societies."

Summary, Reflections on Rule XXXI. (English edition pp.167-170)

....we must see Christ our Lord in our Superior.

....It is plain that this consideration must not only move us to obedience, but it must also awaken in us feelings of reverence and love for our Superior; of reverence, because nothing can be more worthy of respect than the authority wherewith she is clothed; of love, because all that brings before us the person of our Divine Savior must seem infinitely lovable; and also because this authority is wholly to our advantage, and breathes forth nothing but beneficence and love. These feelings will strengthen our obedience and make it easier. They are due to every Superior, no matter who she may be. We are equally bound to obey the Superior, and to love and reverence her, whether she be endowed with many natural and supernatural gifts, whether she be very prudent and skillful, or very learned or amiable, whether she have great moral virtues and eminent holiness, or whether she be wanting in these good qualities, and appear to us full of the contrary defects. True obedience considers none of these things, but only the authority of Christ our Lord.

And because the authority of Christ our Lord is present in every Superior, the religious will practice equal obedience toward all her Superiors; she sees in them none other than Christ our Lord, Whose plate they hold towards her, and this quality covers in some sort all their failings from her eyes. Obedience works in her something approaching to that which faith works in the mind. Enlightened by faith, she does not stop to consider in the mystery of the Holy Eucharist the sacred species under which our Lord is hidden; she passes on to the person of that Divine Lord Himself. In like manner the obedient Religious is convinced of the truth that her Superior holds the place of Christ, and must be obeyed as though she were Christ our Lord. She therefore pays no attention to the faults which she sees in her Superior, and wills to see only the Lord Whom that Superior represents.

Further, the obedient Religious will not stop to consider the things commanded her, whether they are pleasant or unpleasant, easy or difficult. As long as she sees no evil in these commands she will fulfill them as the commands of Christ our Lord."

First Circular Letter

(English edition p.14)

"The Societies seem to be called into existence by Him. In them He wishes to live once more, and to show to the world His virtues, and particularly His obedience.

We should not by our own fault bring these loving designs to naught. Let our obedience as far as possible be like the obedience of Christ; prompt, strong, generous, sublime and persevering. We must not think of the good or bad qualities which the Superior may have, but only of Christ whose place he holds. Then all that might weaken or degrade or hinder our obedience will be dissipated. The excuses of self-love will be stifled. We shall be strong; our minds will have a holy blindness and this recollection will light and keep alive in our hearts a sacred fire. We shall be raised above ourselves to see only the divine will.

We shall be convinced that obedience cannot deceive us. Every virtue has its own merit, but obedience has in addition the merits of the rest. An indifferent act, if done by obedience, acquires such a degree of perfection that the Lord Himself, were He in our place, would not do otherwise, for this act is stamped with the seal of the will of God."

Plan of the Society of the Heart of Jesus, 1792, D.C. p.81

"All must therefore have a thorough knowledge of all that relates to obedience; they must understand its excellence and different degrees; above all they must pay attention to the motive why they obey men, namely, the authority of Him Who said, 'He who hears you, hears Me; and he who despises you, despises Me.'"

Summary. Reflections on Rule XIV (Temptations) (English edition pp.62-6L)

"The preceding rule prescribes for all inferiors the dispositions they need in order to overcome themselves more and more. The present rule imposes on Superiors the duty of helping their subjects in this important and necessary work. The means which Superiors are bound to use in order to attain to this end, is to employ their inferiors in such work as is most contrary to any evil inclinations which the inferior may harbor.

The end and aim of this rule is, first of all, to guard against an abuse that is almost universal in those Religious Orders which have declined from their first fervor, and that will infallibly bring about such relaxation even among the most fervent. This abuse consists in paying too much heed to natural tastes, or even to evil inclinations in the distribution of work, and in the orders given. No doubt it would be contrary to the rules of Christian prudence to require imperiously from inferiors things which are altogether opposed to their inclinations; they must be brought gently to realize that these things are to their advantage, that they would be unreasonable and act against their spiritual interests by placing any obstacles in the way. At times it may be necessary to condescend in some degree to human weakness; but this should be done in such a way as to show the inferior that the Superior acts thus only out of kindness and would gladly do otherwise.

To act differently is to upset the end and aim of religious life, which is to bring all its members to perfection. Such conduct would perpetuate abuses, and make the Superiors responsible for the faults and failings of their subjects.

Another advantage of this rule is to prevent the murmuring in which inferiors might indulge when they are not governed according to their liking, or when their inclinations are thwarted. They will learn that it is the Superiors' duty to act thus.

What is here said of Superiors applies equally well to each individual with reference to herself. Temptations must be resisted by the acts most opposed to them, for "contraries are cured by their contraries."

Ibidem, Reflections on Rule XX (Degrees in the Society)
(English edition pp.89-90)

"How could such men desire any other rank than that in which obedience has placed them; since they know very well that every employment in the religious life is equally fitted for the service of God and their own sanctification? These objects will be best attained in that position where obedience has placed them. All depends upon the more or less perfect manner in which they do their work, so as to obey the will of God and to bring Him glory.

Although there cannot be the same distinctions and differences of degree in our Society as in the Society of Jesus, yet this rule may be applied to the different employments that are entrusted to us. We shall find here an excellent means of always doing our work perfectly, and of avoiding that inconstancy which is too natural to man, or that ambition which may be suggested by the enemy."

Fifth Circular Letter, (English edition p.88)

"To have recourse to Superiors.

This is a special means but an essential one. It is useful against every temptation, and necessary against such as attack our vocation.

The man who is not under obedience may perhaps follow his own lights with impunity. He may hope for God's own guidance as regards his conduct. But the religious is placed differently. He must be ruled by his Superiors. It is to them that God gives directly the light by which he must walk, and he receives this light from them. He must not see by his own eyes but by the Superior's or those who have the duty of guiding him. God has willed it thus because He will not disturb the order that He has established. So it is necessary, it is one of the chief duties of obedience to discover to the Superior any thoughts or feelings against

our own state of life, to know the will of God through him, and to follow his advice. God will never allow you to be deceived if you do this, but you will certainly be deceived if you go by your own judgment."

Rule of Conduct

(English edition pp.37-38)

"Let them show towards their Superior the same openness as the novices for their Mistress, and consult her in all doubtful cases. The more they are advanced in age the more should religious persons feel obliged to give an example of prudence and submission to Superiors."

Letters of Fr. de Clorivière

(English edition p.172)

To M. de Cicé (1805),

"We imagine...that they (the Superiors) judge of others by themselves.

One does not see that in reasoning thus one reverses the order of obedience, and that under a pretext of humility one prefers his own judgment to that of his superior, one keeps the disposal of himself and makes himself the arbiter of his own conduct."

To M. de Cicé (1805)

(English edition pp.203-4)

"It seems to me our two daughters have shown some discontent over the nomination of Mlle Bourguignon for Superior; Louise has come around, but Augustine has not yet done so. They will doubtless write to you, and I am sure that you will take the opportunity of teaching them to practice obedience, and to realize how necessary it is for them to have the religious spirit."

To M. de Cicé (1806) L. p.413.

"As to her, I am strongly inclined to believe that the lack of simplicity and humility in obedience has been the principal cause of her instability in her vocation."

To M. de Cicé (1807) L., P.478.

"Be guided also by all that I have told you of the state of your soul; and believe that the word of obedience is much more certain than all the sentiments and impressions that you find in yourself."

To M. de Cicé (1807) L., p.499.

"I am sending you my answer to Mademoiselle Gaillard; it is your duty to decide this, according to the reasons that you tell me and which I find very sound. Otherwise you will reverse the order of obedience."

To M, de Cicé (1807)

(English edition pp.383-38L)

"...under the appearance of good and even of the most perfect, you lost sight of the great principles of obedience and thought you were doing God's will in following a way that appeared to you the best because it was more in conformity with your own ideas of your perfection and the necessary means to attain it.

....let us avoid the snares into which the devil wishes to make us fall: dejection, lack of confidence, sentiments and conduct contrary to obedience when it exacts something opposed to our way of looking at things."

To Father Pochard (1806) L., p.881.

"Recommend to all the greatest communication possible with their immediate Superior and with you, and the practice of obedience, doing everything in a spirit of dependence and submission. We must avoid doing anything by the movement of our own will. This self will spoil the best things."

To Father Beule (1807-1808)

(English edition p.646)

....that, if Divine Providence intended you elsewhere, it would have known well how to make His Will known in an efficacious manner to your Superiors, but that you should wait until it manifested itself by the voice of your Superiors, and not usurp their authority, or rather the authority of God Himself, by interfering in your own guidance. I do not believe that you have any other principles than these on obedience. There are no others; and even if one were not bound by the vow of obedience, one would not be less obliged to follow them, under penalty of leaving the path of God and withdrawing oneself from His guidance in order to guide oneself."

AVAILABILITY AND OBEDIENCE¹

I - AVAILABILITY OF THE RELIGIOUS BODY, NECESSARY TO THE ATTAINMENT OF THE ENDS OF THE SOCIETY.

Plan of the Society of Mary, 1790, D.C., p.55

"It is necessary that this Society, in every place in which it is established, supply as much as possible, for all other religious ordersThis Society must reproduce their various virtues, and must by herself alone embrace all the different kinds of works of mercy and religion which they formerly embraced together."

Memorandum to the Bishops, D.C., p.170-171.

"The body of the Society of the Heart of Jesus will have no other spirit and no other interest than that of the Church, and will employ itself completely at the service of the Church, considering itself as being chosen by God to supply for the religious Orders which the impiety of recent times will succeed in destroying. And in order somehow to reproduce all these Orders in itself, it must eminently contain the spirit of each one of them, so that there will be no good works that it will not be ready to embrace by means of some of its members according to its possibilities....This Society will somehow take to itself for the service of the Church all the types of good works to which the others could not extend their help."

Ibidem, D.C., p.174.

"The Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary, being entirely devoted to the good of the Faith, like the other Society, must consequently give all its attention to the spiritual good of its members and to the common good of the faithful."

Little Retreat of Three Days (English edition p.12)

"Let the Daughters of Mary profit eagerly of all the opportunities they may have of obtaining the salvation of their neighbor: the education of young girls being one of the most efficacious means, is especially deserving of their attention. Let them not be disheartened, by their work, it will often seem to them to be in vain, and that they are taking much trouble to draw the water and fill the vessels; but let them take courage, when they have done all they can, Jesus will come to their

¹ Since there are such close ties between availability and obedience, some texts previously quoted will be found in this section.

help, and change the water into wine. Let them also help as much as they possibly can, the bodily needs of their neighbor."

Plan of the Society of Mary, D.C., pp. 58 & 61

"...Others will be dedicated to teaching youngsters; others, to care of the sick; others, to relief of the poor. There also will be some who will be more dedicated to retirement, prayer and exercises of religion. In this, every effort will be made to follow the particular attraction of each of the sisters, her age, her talents, and other circumstances, such as condition of life and the needs of those around them.

Their charity must lead them to relieve with prudence all the needs of their neighbor; but their special aim must be the care of the soul and the salvation of those they care for."

Ninth Circular Letter L.C., p.305

"In all that they (the two Societies) do, in the good works that they undertake, in the services they render, their aim is the general good of the Church....No special interest distracts their minds from the general good."

Letter to Bishop... of Saint-Malo, D.C. p.390

"These Societies will not exist, for themselves. They received existence and want to conserve it only for the good of the Church, for the sake of God and Jesus Christ, His Son. All that they will ever have of strengths, talents, spiritual and bodily faculties, all the temporal goods that may be given into their hands: they will consider none of all this as belonging to themselves but as belonging to Jesus Christ for the needs of his members and the service of His Body which is the Church."

Statement of 1808 D.C. PP.466-467.

"This Body (of religious)...has no limits. Its ends permit it to admit an almost infinite number of persons of all conditions, and all classes of society.... All sorts of good works are not demanded of all members. It will be enough only if each one be ready to do what depends on him. It is the responsibility of the Superiors, by the authority of the first Pastors, to direct the subjects' good will towards what is more useful for each Church in particular."

M. de Cicé, Project of a Pious Society.

"...they will be completely dedicated to prayer and to the good works which present themselves, and they will offer themselves to God by means of obedience to carry out all projects with which the Lord will entrust them. For that reason they might call themselves the Daughters

of the Presentation of the Most Blessed Virgin, since through her they will offer themselves to Our Lord to fulfill all His desires without wishing for themselves nothing in particular except the spiritual and temporal good of the neighbor.

Plan of the Society of the Heart of Jesus, 1792, D.C. p.83.

Constitution of 1818, D.C., pp.520-521.

Memorandum to Pius VII, D.C., p.262.

"Each one should understand that not alone must she despoil herself of all selfish and exclusively natural affection and regard only the glory of God in everything, but she should also consider attentively that the Society has no particular spirit and has no ambition for anything as its own; but it wishes to be governed in all things by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and aims solely at the general good of the Church. Therefore, each time the greatest service of God might require it, each one will not hesitate to prefer the interest of persons not belonging to the Society to what she would believe more advantageous to herself or to the Society in general."

II - AVAILABILITY OF THE MEMBERS, CONDITION OF THE AVAILABILITY OF THE RELIGIOUS BODY BY MEANS OF OBEDIENCE.

Memorandum to the Bishops, D.C. p. 168.

"No personal interest must motivate them; their only interests are the glory of God, of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and of His Church. To procure this glory, they must at every moment be ready for everything.

....In order to do so with the greatest success, it is necessary that they act as one body. Therefore let them act in unity, let them in no way follow the movement of their own will in order to know in all things the will of the Sovereign Lord. And since this can be done only by means of the obedience, they will dedicate themselves more particularly to acquiring the perfection of this virtue."

Memorandum to Pius VII, D.C. p. 258

"All those....who desire to enter these Societies may be admitted, no matter what their condition or employment, provided these are compatible with the way of the counsels; they will not be obliged to leave their occupations. But it is necessary that they be so desirous of their perfection that counting as nothing everything that could prevent them from attaining it, they manifest themselves as ready to follow Our Lord Jesus Christ everywhere He would deign to lead them...."

Plan of the Society of Jesus, D.C., p. 73.

....Let them show they are ready to follow Jesus Christ our Lord everywhere He will deign to lead them."

First Circular Letter, L.C., p.30.

"The law of obedience requires us to place ourselves wholly at the disposal of our Superiors."

Ibidem, L.C., p. 29

"...each one as a true child of obedience should choose nothing and refuse nothing of all that is commanded of him. Each one must be ready for everything, even to climb the slope of Calvary in the following of Jesus."

Little Retreat of Three Days (English edition p.11)

(with reference to the motto: "Do whatever He tells you." "This is the lesson Mary's words teach us: Our desires must embrace all. But in practice, each one must - and can only act - according to what she knows to be the will of God and His designs over her, learning this especially by means of those who hold His place to her."

Rule of Conduct, Chapter II, (English edition pp.24-25)

"In their choice of occupation, made with the consent of the Superior, they will give less heed to their own interest and inclination than to the glory of God, their own salvation, and the wants of their neighbor. When they are free to choose, the preference should be given to the exercise of the works of mercy, especially spiritual."

Memorandum to the Bishops, D.C. p.173

"In the choice of occupation, directed by obedience, they will consult not so much their own preference as the need of the faithful and the glory of God. Those who would need to earn their living by laborious work will be watchful to sanctify every moment of it...those who would be more free will place both their work and their means at the service of good works."

Plan of the Society of the Heart of Jesus, 1792, D.C. p.82

Constitution of 1818, D.C. pp.519-520

Memorandum to Pius VII, D.C. p.261

"When there is something important to decide, such as to undertake an employment, change an abode, take a journey, begin a considerable work, etc., if the choice of these things be free, the members cannot make any decision without the express permission of the Superior when

she is present or without having presumed that permission in case she is absent. If it does not depend on them to act or not to act, it would, however, be proper to acquaint the Superior of it and consult her on the manner of acting."

Ninth Circular Letter, L.C. p.315.

"Among professions....there are none among those which are lawful and compatible with Christian perfection which our members cannot exercise; though we recommend to subjects, when they are free to choose, to prefer those professions where most service can be given to the Lord, fewer dangers run to salvation, and more means exist for sanctifying self and others."

Conferences on the Vows (English edition p.61)

"We must be extremely careful....not to seek after benefices with great eagerness if we are ecclesiastics. And if we are laypersons, we must not seek anxiously for well-paid and prominent positions, but we should rather prefer those posts where we may hope to do most work for God and for our neighbor."

Plan of the Society of the Heart of Jesus, 1792, D.C., p.81,
Memorandum to Pius VII, D.C. p.263

"While laypersons might exercise all sorts of professions proper to their state....they must nevertheless be counseled to choose by preference work which is the least dangerous to themselves and the most useful and edifying for the neighbor."

Letters of Father de Clorivière:

To M. de Cisé (1806) L., p.414 (English edition p.286)

(speaking of a priest of Chartres destined by circumstances to become Superior of the DHM.) "Represent the Daughters of the Heart of Mary to him as devoted to all kinds of good works, outside the cloister, under the direction of the pastors; that it is for this reason that they have nothing which can distinguish them exteriorly; that nevertheless they tend to perfection, as so many holy virgins have done with the help of grace for so many centuries.

III - AVAILABILITY AND ABANDONMENT
IN THE CORRESPONDENCE
OF FATHER DE CLORIVIÈRE²

Letters of Father de Clorivière

To M. de Cicé (1789) Letters, (English edition p.14)

"Make this peace consist in the accomplishment of the Will of God. Attach yourself inviolably to this Divine Will, desire nothing but it, never subordinate it in any way to your own will; but as you have taken the resolution, despoil yourself efficaciously and constantly of all will in order to wish only what God wishes and as He wishes; in a word, say always and in every circumstance the Fiat Voluntas Tua with a sincere and courageous heart, and nothing can trouble your peace."

To M. de Cicé (1789) Letters, (English edition p.16)

"As to the fear that you feel that this good work, if you undertook it, might keep you at St. Servan, it is a very human fear which must be repressed. It is contrary to the perfect abandonment that Providence is asking of you. It is to anticipate the laws of God, and to wish to see into the future. Think only of serving God as well as possible and leave to Him the care of regulating the place, the time, and the manner with which you should, do this.

Moreover, persevere always in your good sentiments, and think rather of giving all perfection possible to the actions you perform than of undertaking new things for God. It is better to wait until God brings them to us than to seek them ourselves. It is a means of avoiding instability and anxiety of soul which feeds on novelty."

To M. de Cicé (1791) Letters, (English edition p.44)

"He wishes that we dispose ourselves as far as is possible on our side, and that without foreseeing too many future difficulties, we do at the present time all that His lights point out to us; then when difficulties present themselves, He arms us and clothes us with His strength in order to surmount them."

To M. de Cicé (1794) Letters, (English edition p.84)

"Let us do all that we can for the greater glory of God, and may all our desires, all our plans be entirely subordinated to His divine will. Our fate is in His hands. Let us do what Prudence requires for our preservation,

² The quotations in this section are grouped by persons addressed, in chronological order for each person, as in the Letters of Father de Clorivière.

but let our cares be without anxiety. Arouse within yourself the liveliest confidence."

To M. de Cicé (1802) Letters (English edition p.103)

"Let us not lose sight of what we have to do, both of us, for the glory of God. Let us not anticipate God's time, let us wait patiently for it, but let us not allow it to pass when He deigns to present it to us. Let us place all our confidence in Him. It is not in vain that He has brought us here from so far away; we have reason to hope that He wishes to make use of our weakness to bring about something for His glory. Let us fear only to place an obstacle to the accomplishment of His designs by our infidelities."

To M. de Cicé (1804) Letters (English edition p.1146)

"I have already told you often, God wishes that you excel in the virtue of obedience and abandonment. You protest that you wish to be a true daughter of obedience. But, in this desire that you testify, although with resignation, to be in another position than the one where God has placed you, and in which I have told you more than once He wishes you to remain; in this desire, I say, do you not feel that you are acting in a manner little conformed to the perfection of obedience and of abandonment? If we were in calm, if you were successful if that would draw praise upon you, perhaps the fear of applause could suggest to you a similar desire; then again humility should yield to obedience."

To M. de Cicé (1804) Letters (English edition p.1147)

"...we must see the will of God in everything and accommodate ourselves to it in every circumstance."

To M. de Cicé (1804) Letters (English edition p.153)

"God will make it known to us when the time to speak comes; perhaps this time is not far away. Meanwhile, let us be patient and place our confidence in the Lord. He will finish, He will perfect the work which He has begun, unless we ourselves destroy it by cowardice, by abandoning everything and doing nothing; or by rash presumption, which would lead us to do too much and to act imprudently and at the wrong time."

To M. de Cicé (1805) Letters (English edition p.165)

"Let us resign ourselves to whatever God wishes; He is goodness itself, and knows better than we what is suitable for His glory and our good. Man will do only what He wishes. Many reasons would make me desire to remain; but I ought to wish for nothing and if God wishes me elsewhere I wish it also; and I hope He will deign to supply for my absolute

powerlessness. Let us think only of serving Him the best we can, and let us abandon ourselves and all our works into His hands."

To M. de Cicé (1805) Letters (English edition p.168)

"The pretext of living under obedience is an illusion. It is not the obedience that God wishes from you; it would be sweet, easy, and ordinary. What God wishes from you is more crucifying, more perfect; it is that which you practice in the place where circumstances, where God, where I myself, holding His place in your regard, have placed you, and in which you must constantly sacrifice your tastes, your inclinations, your will, your judgment. I have said this to you, my dear daughter, with so much the more freedom, since my conscience renders testimony to me that in this I seek only the glory of God and the spiritual good of your soul. God wishes that, while I live, which cannot be too much longer, you exercise towards me the most perfect obedience in what will not be manifestly contrary to the law of God. One same spirit ought to animate us, that of our Lord Jesus Christ, and following our Rules, you should in some way receive impulsion from your superior as the members of a body receive it from the soul which animates it."

To M. de Cicé(1805) Letters (English edition p.192)

"We are in the midst of a period of violent storms; in vain would the pilot then like to steer his ship, his vigilance and his wisdom have become useless. While the violence of the storm lasts, he must necessarily abandon himself and his vessel to the care of Divine Providence while waiting for the weather to become calmer. This is just about all that we can do. God asks nothing from us save that we do not lose confidence in Him and that we try to inspire others with this confidence, and moderate the too great ardor of those who, under our eyes, do not act with enough circumspection. This is just what you have done."

To M. de Cicé (1805) Letters (English edition pp.207-8)

"Let us submit to the will of the Lord and let us accept all from His hand. When one feels it impossible to act, one is well assured that He does not require it of us."

To Mlle d'Esternoz (1801) Letters (English edition p.453)

"(leaning only on God). Dare to hope everything from His power and His goodness, and never draw back at the sight of any good work that He puts before you. It suffices if you have not sought it by vain presumption."

To Mlle d'Esterno (1803) Letters (English edition p.1460)

"...the spirit of this Society being to lend itself to all kinds of good works."

To Mme de Saisseval (1806) Letters (English edition p.475)

"Be in great dependence on this divine will, consult it in everything, and be very faithful in following its movements when you experience them; and be on your guard not to oppose them in anything. Be a slave to this fidelity, but a willing slave, a slave of love."

To Mme de Goesbriand (1798) Letters (English edition pp.495-6)

"In the offering, one must consider what its extent is and what are the motives. The extent: it embraces everything, it exempts nothing; it covers all time, every minute. By it, one gives to God all one has received from Him, both for soul and body. There is nothing that one ought not to use for the glory of the Lord. The motives which lead us to make this offering are numberless; with reference to God, His infinite goodness, His sovereign dominion, His benefits, etc.; with reference to ourselves, our littleness, our state as Christians, what we have received from God, what we hope to receive, what Jesus Christ has suffered for us, etc.; with reference to the neighbor, the means of being truly useful to him. With reference to the thing in itself, there is nothing more just, more sublime, more advantageous.

To Mme de Goesbriand (1799) Letters, (English edition p.502)

"Keep yourself in the firm and sincere resolution of refusing nothing to God, and of doing without any reserve all that He asks of you, being well persuaded that He will never ask anything without giving you abundantly all the graces you need to accomplish it. This generous resolution which exempts nothing enlarges and strengthens the heart. It is true that there is still a great distance between the resolution and the perfect execution. You will doubtless fail in keeping it many times, but then you will again renew your resolution, and God, Who regards the heart, will instantly forgive you all your failings, and He will give you powerful graces so that they may each day become lighter and fewer.

A very essential point for this is to correspond promptly to the inspirations when the Lord makes you feel interiorly that there is such a duty to fulfill, such an act of virtue to practice, of sweetness, of patience, of charity; do not fail to perform at once whatever is enjoined you. In the Book of Canticles the Spouse calls His Spouse; she hesitates one moment before rising to open to Him; when she then does it, she no longer finds her Spouse; He has already departed. When one corresponds at once to the inspiration, the most difficult things do not

cost at all, because the presence of grace sweetens them; but if one puts them off a little, the slightest things are done only with great difficulty. This prompt and faithful cooperation to grace is the most important thing in the spiritual way. It is on this, as far as we are concerned, that our entire spiritual advancement depends."

To Father Lange (1800) Letters (English edition pp.569-70)

"For that remember these two words submission and detachment, which Father Huby prescribes as of the greatest use in regulating the will. Submission without reserve to everything which the Divine Will permits or ordains; the most entire detachment from one and every low and natural affection. Submission in everything which contradicts your own will, humbles your spirit, mortifies the desires of nature. Detachment from every complacent return on self or from a too tender sentiment for yourself. Let everything be indifferent to you save the will of God. See nothing great, holy or amiable save this will. Be equally content to act or not to act, to do much or little, to rejoice or to suffer, when it is the will of God you are carrying out. This will not prevent you from feeling the sufferings which God Himself sends for the greater good of your soul, but they will give you no anxiety; they will by that become very meritorious."

To Father Lange (1806) Letters (English edition p.575)

"...let us obey with respect, and not seek to do a good that God does not ask of us, and which from now on would no longer be for us a good. It is the work of the Lord; He will know how, if it pleases Him, to conduct it to perfection by means which are unknown to men. He is content with what we have done; let us also be content; let us thank Him for having given us the grace to do so; let us bless His Holy Name and say to Him from the heart and from the mouth: Fiat voluntas tua.

To Father Lange (1807) Letters (English edition p.576)

"The will of the Lord is in everything equally adorable, equally amiable; His ways are infinitely above ours; they are not the same with regard to everyone, but they are always conformed to His wisdom, to His sovereign justice; this is what we shall see clearly some day in the next life, perhaps even in this one if we are faithful. Let us adore them then with profound respect; let us embrace them with loving submission and let us follow them with the utmost exactitude, without seeking to penetrate into them."

To Father Pochard (1800) Letters (English edition p.600)

"You are not ignorant that, in order to rob us of our peace and hinder us from profiting by present grace, he often offers to our spirit the ghost of

a future good which, perhaps, is not what God has destined for us. We will not give in to this illusion if we are well convinced that there is no situation, as long as it is the choice of Providence in our regard, where a faithful soul could not do what is more agreeable to God and more advantageous for itself. Those desires which deviate from this rule could only be very prejudicial to us."

To Father Faucheux (1812) Letters (English edition p.637)

"Good will, when it is sincere, and I do not doubt but that yours is, is everything in the eyes of God. Deus intuetur Cor. Your greatest care should be, with the help of grace, to fix it unalterably in God; to have always in the depths of your heart a firm determination to be ready to do without reserve all that you know He asks of you; not to refuse Him any of the sacrifices that you know will please Him, to tend at all times to what is holier and more perfect with regard to yourself, in the situation in which you are and in the holy ministry with which you are clothed, and avoid the slightest faults."

To Father Faucheux (1812) Letters (English edition p.638)

"The good you cannot do in one way, you do in another. Let us adore in everything the will of the Lord, and let us know how to conform ourselves to it. If what He permits presages still more trying times for us, let us place our confidence in Him; He will not allow us to be tempted above our strength. If our evils increase, He will augment our courage and our patience."

To Father Moreau (1810) Letters (English edition p.653)

"Keep yourself in everything, with the help of divine grace, in the firm resolution of refusing nothing to God that He can ask of you; of accepting from His Hand all He deigns to send you, whether it be good or evil; of seizing every occasion you have of glorifying Him and of preventing His being offended, that the souls with which you are entrusted may not perish or even turn aside from the right way."

Mother de Cicé Writings III p.12 Conferences on the Plan of the Society

"May our hearts be prepared in advance for everything that might be commanded us. If the Lord finds this disposition in us, we will be pleasing at every moment to His divine Majesty, as if we said continuously through the dispositions of our heart, "Lord Jesus, accomplish Your holy will in me for the glory of Your Holy Name. My heart is ready; yes, Lord, my heart is ready."