

The Statutes of the Oblates of the Augustinian Monks of the Primitive Observance

## Introduction

1. The Holy Spirit constantly calls all baptized persons to deepen their union with the Lord and to strive constantly to give a fuller expression to their baptismal commitment. This stirring or restlessness find its answer, as Augustine of Hippo so aptly wrote, in God: "You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."
2. Holy Mother Church sets aside six weeks of prayer and penance for the preparation of the Solemnity of Easter, the celebration of the Lord's resurrection. At the Easter Vigil from ancient times new members are admitted to the Church through the administering of the Sacrament of Baptism. It is traditionally the practice during the Holy Vigil, as well as during the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout Easter Day, for all the faithful to renew their baptismal vows, thus illuminating the mandate of the Lord to seek his kingdom by "being perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." By making our baptismal vows and in their Easter renewal, we accept the call that summons all the faithful people of God to holiness. Dying to oneself each day and rising with the Lord is our sharing in the Paschal mystery of Christ Jesus.
3. Throughout the ages men and women have been called by the Lord to unite themselves more closely to him by leaving all and following him in the consecrated life. From the dawn of the Christian life there have been many who lived their special consecration while at the same time living in the world. We see this in the lives of the holy virgins of the past, many of whom were martyred for their faith.
4. In the latter part of the third century a young man arose who heard the voice of God speaking to him in a profound way through the holy Gospel. Antony felt the Lord was asking him to live out his Christian vocation in a radical way, and so he determined to leave all, to be totally dependent upon God's divine providence and to live in solitude. Eventually his life as a hermit was disturbed when others came to live with him and learn from him in order that they too might grow in Christian perfection, and thus monasticism began its development in the Church. Monasteries of men and women began to spring up rapidly in the east and gradually progressed to the west. The most notable person to bring monasticism to the west was our Holy Father St. Augustine.
5. Gradually men and women who because of their circumstances and responsibilities were not able to leave the secular life and yet still desired some special life of consecration began to attach themselves to existing monasteries as extern lay members, and so the oblates were born. The Servants of God of St. Augustine, Augustinian Monks of the Primitive Observance, have embraced this noble gift of the Church in establishing the Oblates of their community. The Oblates are men and women, cleric and lay, who live in the world but have

united themselves to the Lord in a special bond as secular members of our religious family.

6. The Oblates of the Augustinian Monks of the Primitive Observance reverence the many men and women throughout the centuries in the Augustinian tradition who have lived such consecrated lives and have contributed greatly to the life of holy Mother Church. The greatest of these was St. Monica. The venerable mother of St. Augustine was a woman of her times and lived fully the vocation of wife, mother and eventually widow. Her life was intimately involved with the life of her son and when he determined to leave all and follow the Lord in the monastic life she remained close to his side, joining him in the life of prayer, contemplation and the pursuit of holiness until her death. Many other holy men and women give strong witness to the consecrated life of the Oblates.
7. The following are the Statutes of the Oblates of the Augustinian Monks of the Primitive Observance.

## Part I

### The Life of Prayer

Above all else, dear brothers and sisters, love God and then your neighbor.... The purpose of our coming together is to be intent upon God in oneness of mind and heart. (Rule 1.1,3)

8. To grow in their union with the Lord and to seek his kingdom above all else is to be the character that marks the life of an Oblate. Prayer, then, is the cornerstone of the Oblates' offering to God as they seek to follow God's divine will for them through the consecrated life of the Church.
9. Time must be set aside each day by the Oblate for personal meditation. When possible this should take place before the Blessed Sacrament. Time each day with the Lord is precious, and the time given by God's servants to union with the most holy Trinity is not to be omitted, but one's circumstances in life may dictate the length of time given to meditation and contemplation.
10. St. Augustine fell in love with the Lord and was totally converted to him through the reading of sacred Scripture. Likewise, those who desire to consecrate their lives more closely to the Triune God should spend time each day with the word of God.
11. Spiritual reading is the hallmark of any person seeking a deeper union with God.
12. The public worship of the Church should be the center of the Christian life and certainly of the Oblate.
13. Daily participation in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass is expected except for illness, advanced age or other unforeseen circumstances. Being united to the Lord and

his death and resurrection through the Paschal mystery aids in our spiritual growth.

14. The Church encourages all her members to pray the Liturgy of the Hours. Lay Oblates should pray daily Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer. The other Hours should be prayed when time permits, using the Augustinian supplement for the Augustinian feasts. Priests who are Oblates are also called in virtue of their sacred ministry to pray the Office of Reading, one of the Daytime hours, and Night prayer. Priest Oblates should celebrate the Augustinian feasts using the supplement whenever possible.
15. All Oblates should grow in their love and devotion for the sacrament of the Eucharist. They should strive to be in the presence of the Eucharistic Lord as much as possible. Where Eucharistic exposition and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament are available, they should take advantage of these special gifts. Priest Oblates should encourage those under their care to grow in the love of the Blessed Sacrament and help their flock develop this devotion.
16. Oblates should celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation frequently. One shares in the inner healing of the Lord whenever one celebrates this holy mystery.
17. Spiritual direction is often a benefit in the spiritual life. Oblates should seek spiritual directors who are wise in the spiritual life, who understand well and promote the teaching of holy Mother Church, and who will encourage the Oblates in their life of consecration. The Abbot of the Monastery, or his delegate to the Oblates, should be consulted before one ventures into a relationship with a director.
18. The Monastery shall set aside days of recollection for the Oblates. Unless excused by the Abbot, all members should participate.
19. A yearly retreat is required of each Oblate. It takes place at the Monastery unless otherwise stated. Priest Oblates normally make a separate retreat at the Monastery but under certain circumstances may join with the lay members in their retreat.
20. Penance is a gift from God and helps us discipline our lives in accordance with His divine will. Fridays should be days of penance in ordinary time. In Lent Oblates should keep Wednesdays and Fridays, and Mondays when possible, as days of penance. Advent, especially the days before December 17<sup>th</sup>, is a penitential season. Any penance one wishes to practice should be placed before the Abbot before it is undertaken. Remember that the best penance is living one's daily life with acceptance.
21. The brothers and sisters, being members of a monastic community, should strive to study the sacred liturgy of the Church and the documents pertaining to the sacraments and liturgies of the Church.

22. Augustinians have a deep reverence for the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all Augustinians are placed under her maternal protection. The Mother of God is our Patroness, and her cult is to be fostered.
23. Each member should strive to grow in his or her relationship with the Virgin Mary. Unless circumstances prohibit, the Rosary or the Corona of the Blessed Virgin Mary should be prayed each day.
24. The feasts of the Mother of God are always to be kept, especially those having a special place among the Augustinian Monks: the Solemnity of Our Mother of the Good Shepherd, the Solemnity of our Mother of Consolation, the feast of our Mother of Good Counsel and those of our Mother of Grace and our Lady of Help. The brothers and sisters should honor the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and each Saturday should be dedicated to the mother of our Redeemer.
25. The communion of Saints has a sacred place in the Augustinian's heart. St. Joseph, the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary and foster-father of the Redeemer, is of primary significance and is the Protector of the Order. Certainly our holy Father St. Augustine is each member's father and teacher and his mother St. Monica is each one's holy mother. All the saints and blesseds of the Augustinian Family are our brothers and sisters, and their friendship and aid are to be sought.
26. Each Oblate is called to intercede for all members of the Augustinian family, especially the monks and their fellow Oblates.
27. The relatives, friends and benefactors of the Monastery and of the Oblates are to be prayed for always. Oblates should unite their prayers to those of the Augustinian Monks of the Primitive Observance, who have a special charism to pray for priests.
28. Our brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in the Lord must always be prayed for.

The sick

29. Members of our community who are ill are to be remembered and whenever possible cared for.
30. If members of the Oblates live near a sick brother or sister then they should attend them when possible and pray with them.
31. When a brother or sister dies the Office of the Dead is to be celebrated for the repose of their soul, the Mass of Christian Burial is to be celebrated by the Abbot or his delegate if this is possible and they may have the privilege of being buried in the habit of the community. If the Monastery has a cemetery, then according to the custom of the monks they may also be laid to rest with or near the deceased monks.

## **Part II**

### **The Consecrated Life as an Oblate**

32. On the day of one's baptism a person becomes a child of God and a sanctuary of the Most Holy Trinity. The day of baptism restores to each person the dignity lost through original sin. All religious life is centered in this primary consecration.
33. One who joins the Oblates is seeking, through the monastic witness, to deepen this baptismal consecration. All brothers and sisters must learn from the beginning of their formation this ideal.
34. Priests who seek to become Oblates do so realizing that they wish in the active priestly ministry to have a deeper spiritual life through the monastic witness and to grow in fellowship with other priests and with the monks who are seeking the same goals.
35. Traditionally monks and nuns give themselves to God through the religious profession of vows. Usually these are the three evangelical vows of chastity, poverty and obedience.
36. Oblates enter into their life of Consecration married, single or ordained priests. Our Father Augustine taught that in God's garden there are different flowers that reflect the glory of God, and each has its place.
37. The Holy Spirit calls each one to draw closer to the Lord in different ways and through different means. Each person must be seen as sacred, and each vocation, whether the ordained priesthood, married life or single life must be respected and reverenced. The consecrated life must lead the Oblates to deepen their primary vocation in the mystical body of Christ and in his Church.
38. When an individual comes to make the oblation as an Oblate, the formula of profession indicates the desire to grow in love with the Lord through life as an Oblate. Each person is called to manifest and grow in the virtues of the Evangelical Counsels according to his or her state in life. The saint of the laity, St. Francis De Sales, teaches that a married man must not live like a Capuchin Friar and a bishop must not live like a monk, but each must live an authentic spiritual life according to the way the Lord has called them.
39. Certainly every one, whether married, single or a priest, must be chaste. Husbands and wives must respect and love their spouse with chaste conjugal love. Single men and women are called to live a life of purity and holiness. Priests must be chaste in their observance of their commitment to celibacy.
40. All Christians are called to be detached from the world, and though they need to provide for their livelihood they are not to become materialistic. All of God's

children are called to reach out in love and charity to take care of less fortunate brothers and sisters. Catholics must be cheerful givers and must learn the practice of tithing, especially to their parish and the Monastery; in this way poverty, according to each one's state of life, is achieved.

41. Catholics are called to be obedient to the Pope, to the magisterium of the Church and to the local bishop.
42. Married couples are to have love and respect for each other and to work together to build up family life and society.
43. Priests must be obedient to their Ordinary.
44. When novices make their profession they are called to live their consecration in accordance with their particular state of life and following the footsteps of our holy Father St. Augustine and the example of our holy Mother St. Monica.

#### Formula for Act of Oblation

45. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

In this year of our Lord ... on the ... day of ..., I, N., in this monastery of N., led by the Holy Spirit, declare my intention to follow Jesus Christ more closely and to give a fuller expression to my baptismal consecration. Therefore, calling upon the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, our holy Father St. Augustine, our holy mother St. Monica, and all the angels and saints,

I give myself to God and unite myself to his will by my Oblation according to the Rule of our Holy Father Augustine, as espoused in the Statutes of the Oblates of the Augustinian Monks of the Primitive Observance.

I wish to continue my quest for God and to serve the people of God, especially the priests, for the love of God and in the presence of my brothers and sisters. I promise obedience to you, Reverend Father, Abbot of this monastery, and I pray that the Lord will grant me His grace and enable me to live faithfully with you, in the unity of love, and have one mind and heart with you, intent upon God for His glory, my salvation, and the good of His Church.

I, N., accept your Oblation and receive you as an Oblate of the Augustinian Monks of the Primitive Observance, affiliating you to the Monastery of N., in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

#### Symbols of Oblation

46. At the beginning of formation a medal of St. Augustine or another symbol is given to the novice.
47. At this time they also take one of the Saints or a blessed of the Augustinian family as a special patron; they may, with permission of the Abbot, take a patron other than an Augustinian Saint or blessed. If they desire, the Abbot may select a patron for them.

48. On the day of profession they receive the habit of the Oblates. The habit of the lay Oblates consists of a white tunic, a black cincture, a scapular and capuche with a collar, without a hood, and the Augustinian cross. Priest Oblates, according to tradition, wear the habit of the professed community. The Abbot reserves the right to make exceptions for individual Oblates concerning the habit. The full habit is worn only at the Monastery and only for very special events such as the profession of new members, the Solemnity of St. Augustine or the funeral of a brother or sister. The usual habit is the Augustinian cross. Brothers and sisters are buried in their full habit.

### **Part III**

#### **The Government of the Oblates**

49. Those who are called to become Oblates may do so either as individual Hermit Oblates, who are directly under the Abbot or the Abbot's delegate, or as members of a Chapter of Oblates.
50. Individual priests or laymen and women, may choose to become Hermit Oblates either because they are called to a relationship of greater solitude while still joining with the chapter Oblates at certain times for spiritual growth or because there is not a sufficient number in a geographical area to begin a chapter.
51. A chapter of the Oblates is established when two or three men or women who desire to follow the Augustinian Monks of the Primitive Observance make a request to the Abbot of the Monastery.
52. According to custom, on a particular day the Abbot gathers with the candidates, and during Vespers or one of the other Liturgical Hours, or even during a non-liturgical prayer service, but not during the celebration of the Mass, he admits to the novitiate the men and women desiring to live the monastic life as Oblates. The novitiate ceremony for priests or clerics may be held separately because of the particular relationship the ordained have with the monastery.
53. Novices, whether cleric or lay, are directly under the Abbot and the monk he appoints as novice master. The novitiate is for two years, and only after successfully completing the novitiate may the novice make his or her Oblation.
54. A man or woman should be twenty-one years of age before joining the Oblates, but the Abbot may permit a younger person if he deems it appropriate. There is no upper age limit for a candidate.
55. The Oblates should meet monthly in chapter to grow in their spiritual life, to learn more about the Augustinian life and to be of service to the Monastery.
56. Their bond with the community is strengthened when they are able to attend the celebration of Mass or the Canonical Hours in the Monastery.

57. They will also grow in fraternal love and charity when they volunteer their time and talents to the needs of the monks.
58. Each chapter should elect a dean who is president of the Chapter and is directly under the Abbot. The Abbot reserves the right of appointment, however, or he may ask the brothers or sisters to elect their dean from a number of candidates whom he has selected.
59. If the dean is a layperson, then the Abbot may appoint one of the priest Oblates as chaplain, or he may appoint one of the priest monks. If the dean is a priest, then he serves as chaplain.
60. The dean is elected by a simple majority vote.
61. Any priest Oblate is directly under the Abbot, and if there are sufficient numbers of priests they may be either under a Dean from one of the monks, or they may establish their own priestly chapter.
62. Other brothers and sisters should be elected as officers of the chapter, namely an assistant, who assists the Dean and conducts the meetings in the absence of the Dean, a secretary, and a treasurer. The officers are to be elected for a two-year term, but the chapter or the Abbot may make exceptions to this ruling if it is appropriate.
63. Bylaws may be drawn up by each chapter to govern that particular chapter.
64. Each chapter should select a patron for their chapter.
65. Each year the treasurer of the chapter must render an account to the Abbot and to the Bursar of the Monastery.
66. It is good for the Oblates to gather informally with each other for fraternal fellowship. Spending time in recreation helps to build community.
67. Oblates who are gifted in some special talents that would enhance the local chapter or the Monastery should be willing to share their gifts with the community.
68. Each Chapter may develop ways to raise funds for their chapter and especially to help support the Monastery.
69. When one is professed as an Oblate of the Augustinian Monks one must renounce any other affiliations as an oblate or third-order member of another community. Any Oblate who wishes to be an oblate of another monastery or a third-order member of another community must seek a release from their obligation with the Augustinian Monks of the Primitive Observance.

### Departure

70. If a brother or sister wishes to depart from the Oblates and from all obligations they must submit to the Abbot a written request for release. After consultation with his council and with the dean of the Oblates, the Abbot shall write a letter of departure.

### Dismissal

71. If a brother or sister fails to live up to their obligations and demonstrates a lack of unity with the Monastery and the other Oblates, then they must be warned by the Dean or the Abbot of their negligence. If they show no sign of reforming, then after a suitable time they must be warned again, this time in writing. If they still persist in not reforming then they are to receive, again in writing, another warning. Two weeks after the final letter is received with no indication of reform, the Abbot is to write a letter of dismissal and the man or woman is removed from being an Oblate.

### Conclusion

The Lord grant that you may observe all these precepts in a spirit of charity as lovers of spiritual beauty, giving forth the good odor of Christ in the holiness of your lives; not living under the law like slaves but living in freedom under grace. (Rule, ch. 8)

Let us always pray in the words of our Holy Father St. Augustine:

*Lord, let my whole heart be inflamed with love for you; let nothing in me belong to me and let me have no thought for myself; let me burn and be wholly consumed in you; let me love you with my whole being as one set on fire by you.*

Given in Glenwood at Mother of the Good Shepherd Monastery, DeLand, Florida,

The Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist,  
the Twenty-Fourth Day of June, Anno Domini Two Thousand Five,

Revised, the Solemnity of All Saints, the First Day of November, Anno Domini Two Thousand Eight,

The Right Reverend Anthony Mary Seamus of Jesus, O.S.A.Prim., Abbot

## The Rule of St. Augustine

The following version of the Holy Rule is taken from The Rule of Our Holy Father St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo: A translation from the Latin by Robert P. Russell, O.S.A., published by the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova, Villanova, Pennsylvania, 1976.

### The Rule of Our Holy Father Saint Augustine

#### Chapter One Purpose and Basis of Common Life

Before all else, dear brothers, love God and then your neighbor, because these are the chief commandments given to us.

2. The following are the precepts we order you living in the monastery to observe.
3. The main purpose for your having come together is to live harmoniously in your house, intent upon God in oneness of mind and heart.
4. Call nothing your own, but let everything be yours in common. Food and clothing shall be distributed to each of you by your superior, not equally to all, for all do not enjoy equal health, but rather according to each one's need. For so you read in the Acts of the Apostles that "they had all things in common and distribution was made to each one according to each one's need" (4.32,35).
5. Those who owned something in the world should be cheerful in wanting to share it in common once they have entered the monastery.
6. But they who owned nothing should not look for those things in the monastery that they were unable to have in the world. Nevertheless, they are to be given all that their health requires even if, during their time in the world, poverty made it impossible for them to find the very necessities of life. And these should not consider themselves fortunate because they have found the kind of food and clothing, which they were unable to find in the world.
7. And let them not hold their heads high because they associate with people whom they did not dare to approach in the world, but let them rather lift up their hearts and not seek after what is vain and earthly. Otherwise, monasteries will come to serve a useful purpose for the rich and not the poor, if the rich are made humble there and the poor are puffed up with pride.
8. The rich, for their part, who seemed important in the world, must not look down upon their brothers who have come into this holy brotherhood from a condition of poverty. They should seek to glory in the fellowship of poor brothers rather than in the reputation of rich relatives. They should neither be elated if they have contributed a part of their wealth to the

common life, nor take more pride in sharing their riches with the monastery than if they were to enjoy them in the world. Indeed, every other kind of sin has to do with the commission of evil deeds, whereas pride lurks even in good works in order to destroy them. And what good is it to scatter one's wealth abroad by giving to the poor, even to become poor oneself, when the unhappy soul is thereby more given to pride in despising riches than it had been in possessing them?

9. Let all of you then live together in oneness of mind and heart, mutually honoring God in yourselves, whose temples you have become.

## Chapter Two Prayer

"Be assiduous in prayer" (Coll. 4.2), at the hours and times appointed.

11. In the Oratory no one should do anything other than that for which it was intended and from which it also takes its name. Consequently, if there are some who might wish to pray there during their free time, even outside the hours appointed, they should not be hindered by those who think something else must be done there.

12. When you pray to God in Psalms and hymns, think over in your hearts the words that come from your lips.

13. Chant only what is prescribed for chant; moreover, let nothing be chanted unless it is so prescribed.

## Chapter Three Moderation and Self-Denial

Subdue the flesh, so far as your health permits, by fasting and abstinence from food and drink. However, when someone is unable to fast, he should still take no food outside mealtime unless he is ill.

15. When you come to table, listen until you leave to what it is the custom to read, without disturbance or strife. Let not your mouths alone take nourishment but let your hearts too hunger for the word of God.

16. If those in more delicate health from their former way of life are treated differently in the matter of food, this should not be a source of annoyance to the others or appear unjust in the eyes of those who owe their stronger health to different habits of life. Nor should the healthier brothers deem them more fortunate for having food, which they do not have, but rather consider themselves fortunate for having the good health, which the others do not enjoy.

17. And if something in the way of food, clothing and bedding is given to those coming to the monastery from a more genteel way of life, which is not given to those who are stronger, and therefore happier, then these latter ought to consider how far these others have come in passing from their life in the world down to this life of ours, though they have been unable to reach the level of frugality common to the stronger brothers. Nor should all want to receive what they see given in larger measure to the few, not as a token of honor but as help to support them in their weakness. This would give rise to a deplorable disorder – that in the monastery, where the rich are coming to bear as much hardship as they can, the poor are turning to a more genteel way of life.

18. And just as the sick must take less food to avoid discomfort, so too, after their illness, they are to receive the kind of treatment that will quickly restore their strength, even though they came from a life of extreme poverty. Their more recent illness has, as it were, afforded them what accrued to the rich as part of their former way of life. But when they have recovered their former strength, they should go back to their happier way of life which, because their needs are fewer, is all the more in keeping with God's servants. Once in good health, they must not become slaves to the enjoyment of food which was necessary to sustain them in their illness. For it is better to suffer a little want than to have too much.

#### Chapter Four Safeguarding Chastity, and Fraternal Correction

There should be nothing about your clothing to attract attention. Besides, you should not seek to please by your apparel, but by a good life.

20. Whenever you go out, walk together, and when you reach your destination, stay together.

21. In your walk, comportment, and in all actions, let nothing occur to give offense to anyone who sees you, but only what becomes your holy state of life.

22. Although your eyes may chance upon some woman or other, you must not fix your gaze upon any woman. Seeing women when you go out is not forbidden, but it is sinful to desire them or to wish them to desire you, for it is not by touch or passionate feeling alone but by one's gaze also that lustful desires mutually arise. And do not say that your hearts are pure if there is immodesty of the eye, because the unchaste eye carries the message of an impure heart. And when such hearts disclose their unchaste desires in a mutual gaze, even without saying a word, then it is that chastity itself suddenly goes out of their life, even though their bodies remain unsullied by unchaste acts.

23. And whoever fixes his gaze upon a woman and likes to have hers fixed upon him, must not suppose that others do not see what he is doing. He is very much seen, even by those he thinks do not see him. But suppose all this escapes the notice of man – what will he do about God who sees from on high and from whom nothing is hidden? Or are we to imagine that He does not see because He sees with patience as great as His wisdom? Let the religious man then have such fear of God that he will not want to be an occasion of sinful pleasure to a woman.

Ever mindful that God sees all things, let him not desire to look at a woman lustfully. For it is on this point that fear of the Lord is recommended, where it is written: "An abomination to the Lord is he who fixes his gaze" (Proverbs 27.20).

24. So when you are together in church and anywhere else where women are present, exercise a mutual care over purity of life. Thus, by mutual vigilance over one another will God, who dwells in you, grant you His protection.

25. If you notice in someone of your brothers this wantonness of the eye, of which I am speaking, admonish him at once so that the beginning of evil will not grow more serious but will be promptly corrected.

26. But if you see him doing the same thing again on some other day, even after your admonition, then whoever had occasion to discover this must report him as he would a wounded man in need of treatment. But let the offense first be pointed out to two or three so that he can be proven guilty on the testimony of these two or three and be punished with due severity. And do not charge yourselves with ill-will when you bring this offense to light. Indeed, yours is the greater blame if you allow your brothers to be lost through your silence when you are able to bring about their correction by your disclosure. If your brother, for example, were suffering a bodily wound that he wanted to hide for fear of undergoing treatment, would it not be cruel of you to remain silent and a mercy on your part to make this known? How much greater then is your obligation to make his condition known lest he continue to suffer a more deadly wound of the soul.

27. But if he fails to correct the fault despite this admonition, he should first be brought to the attention of the superior before the offense is made known to the others who will have to prove his guilt, in the event he denies the charge. Thus, corrected in private, his fault can perhaps be kept from the others. But should he feign ignorance, the others are to be summoned so that in the presence of all he can be proven guilty, rather than stand accused on the word of one alone. Once proven guilty, he must undergo salutary punishment according to the judgment of the superior or priest having the proper authority. If he refuses to submit to punishment, he shall be expelled from your brotherhood even if (sic) he does not withdraw of his own accord. For this too is not done out of cruelty, but from a sense of compassion so that many others may not be lost through his bad example.

28. And let everything I have said about not fixing one's gaze be also observed carefully and faithfully with regard to other offenses: to find them out, to ward them off, to make them known, to prove and punish them – all out of love for man and a hatred of sin.

29. But if anyone should go so far in wrongdoing as to receive letters in secret from any woman, or small gifts of any kind, you ought to show mercy and pray for him if he confesses this of his own accord. But if the offense is detected and he is found guilty, he must be more severely chastised according to the judgment of the priest or superior.

The Care of Community Goods  
and Treatment of the Sick

Keep your clothing in one place in charge of one or two, or of as many as are needed to care for them and to prevent damage from moths. And just as you have your food from the one pantry, so too, you are to receive your clothing from a single wardrobe. If possible, do not be concerned about what you are given to wear at the change of seasons, whether each of you gets back what he had put away or something different, provided no one is denied what he needs. If, however, disputes and murmuring arise on this account because someone complains that he received poorer clothing than (sic) he had before, and thinks it is beneath him to wear the kind of clothing worn by another, you may judge from this how lacking you are in that holy and inner garment of the heart when you quarrel over garments for the body. But if allowance is made for your weakness and you do receive the same clothing you had put away, you must still keep it in one place under the common charge.

31. In this way, no one shall perform any task for his own benefit but all your work shall be done for the common good, with greater zeal and more dispatch than if each one of you were to work for yourself alone. For charity, as it is written, "Is not self-seeking," meaning that it places the common good before its own, not its own before the common good. So whenever you show greater concern for the common good than for your own, you may know that you are growing in charity. Thus, let the abiding virtue of charity prevail in all things that minister to the fleeting necessities of life.

32. It follows, therefore, that if anyone brings something for their sons or other relatives living in the monastery, whether a garment or anything else they think is needed, this must not be accepted secretly as one's own but must be placed at the disposal of the superior so that, as common property, it can be given to whoever needs it. But if someone secretly keeps something given to him, he shall be judged guilty of theft.

33. Your clothing should be cleaned either by yourselves or by those who perform this service, as the superior shall determine, so that too great a desire for clean clothing may not be the source of interior stains on the soul.

34. As for bodily cleanliness too, a brother must never deny himself use of the bath when his health requires it. But this should be done on medical advice, without complaining, so that even though unwilling, he shall do what has to be done for his health when the superior orders it. However, if the brother wishes it, when it might not be good for him, you must not comply with his desire, for sometimes we think something is beneficial for the pleasure it gives, even though it may prove harmful.

35. Finally, if the cause of a brother's bodily pain is not apparent, you must take the word of God's servant when he indicates what is giving him pain. But if it remains uncertain whether the remedy he likes is good for him, a doctor should be consulted.

36. When there is need to frequent the public baths or any other place, no fewer than two or three should go together, and whoever has to go somewhere, must not go with those of his own choice but with those designated by the superior.

37. The care of the sick, whether those in convalescence or others suffering from some indisposition, even though free of fever, shall be assigned to a brother who can personally obtain from the pantry whatever he sees is necessary for each one.

38. Those in charge of the pantry, or of clothing and books, should render cheerful service to their brothers.

39. Books are to be requested at a fixed hour each day, and anyone coming outside that hour is not to receive them.

40. But as for clothing and shoes, those in charge shall not delay the giving of them whenever they are required by those in need of them.

### Chapter Six Asking Pardon and Forgiving Offenses

You should either avoid quarrels altogether or else put an end to them as quickly as possible; otherwise, anger may grow into hatred, making a plank out of a splinter, and turn the soul into a murderer. For so you read: "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer" (1 John 3.15).

42. Whoever has injured another by open insult, or by abusive or even incriminating language, must remember to repair the injury as quickly as possible by an apology, and he who suffered the injury must also forgive, without further wrangling. But if they have offended one another, they must forgive one another's trespasses for the sake of your prayers which should be recited with greater sincerity each time you repeat them. Although a brother is often tempted to anger, yet prompt to ask pardon from one he admits to having offended, such a one is better than another who, though less given to anger, finds it too hard to ask forgiveness. But a brother who is never willing to ask pardon, or does not do so from his heart, has no reason to be in the monastery, even if he is not expelled. You must then avoid being too harsh in your words, and should they escape your lips, let those same lips not be ashamed to heal the wounds they have caused.

43. But whenever the good of discipline compels you to speak harshly in correcting your subjects, then, even if you think you have been unduly harsh in your language, you are not required to ask forgiveness lest, by practicing too great humility towards those who should be your subjects, the authority to rule is undermined. But you should still ask forgiveness from the Lord of all who knows with what deep affection you love even those whom you might happen to correct with undue severity. Besides, you are to love one another with a spiritual rather than an earthly love.

### Chapter Seven Governance and Obedience

The superior should be obeyed as a father with the respect due him so as not to offend God in his person, and even more so, the priest who bears responsibility for all of you.

45. But it shall pertain chiefly to the superior to see that these precepts are all observed and, if any point has been neglected, to take care that the transgression is not carelessly overlooked but is punished and corrected. In doing so, he must refer whatever exceeds the limit and power of his office to the priest who enjoys greater authority among you.

46. The superior, for his part, must not think himself fortunate in his exercise of authority but in his role as one serving you in love. In your eyes he shall hold the first place among you by the dignity of his office, but in fear before God he shall be as the least among you. He must show himself an example of good works towards all. Let him "admonish the unruly, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, and be patient towards all" (I Thess. 5.14). Let him uphold discipline while instilling fear. And though both are necessary, he should strive to be loved by you rather than feared, ever mindful that he must give an account of you to God.

47. It is by being more obedient, therefore, that you show mercy not only towards yourselves but also towards the superior whose higher rank among you exposes him all the more to greater peril.

#### Chapter Eight Observance of the Rule

The Lord grant that you may observe all these precepts in a spirit of charity as lovers of spiritual beauty, giving forth the good odor of Christ in the holiness of your lives; not as slaves living under the law but as men living in freedom under grace.

49. And that you may see yourselves in this little book, as in a mirror, have it read to you once a week so as to neglect no point through forgetfulness. When you find that you are doing all that has been written, give thanks to the Lord, the Giver of every good. But when one of you finds that he has failed on any point, let him be sorry for the past, be on his guard for the future, praying that he will be forgiven his fault and not be led into temptation.