

P O V E R T Y

FROM THE STUDY OF THE CATALOGUE I INFER THAT IN THIS HOUSE,

1) THERE ARE 16 RELIGIOUS, WHO ARE INCAPABLE OF OWNERSHIP OF TEMPORAL POSSESSIONS, 2) THERE ARE 5 RELIGIOUS, WHO STILL RETAIN THE OWNERSHIP OF THEIR PORPERTY, 3) NO ONE MAY USE TEMPORAL GOODS WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE SUPERIOR, WHO WITH FATHERLY CARE AND FORESIGHT PROVIDES FOOD, CLOTHING AND OTHER NECESSARIES OF LIFE, FOR ALL, ACCORDING TO THE RIGHT RULE OF CHARITY AND EQUALITY. IN OTHER WORDS, THIS HOUSE IS A RELIGIOUS HOUSE OF POOR MEN. THOSE WHO LIVE IN THIS HOUSE ARE MEN WHO, HAVING HEARD IN THEIR YOUTH THE VOICE OF THE MASTER, ADVOCATING DETACHMENT FROM EARTHLY POSSESSIONS, APPROACHED THE ALTAR ON A MEMORABLE DAY, AND PUBLICLY VOWED PAUPERTATEM, PERPETUAM, IN SOCIETATE JESU. THEY ARE MEN WHO KEEP ALWAYS IN MIND THAT CHRIST ENTERED THE WORLD IN POVERTY AND IN POVERTY DEPARTED FROM IT; AND THE BETTER TO IMITATE CHRIST AND TO BECOME ACTUALLY MORE LIKE HIM, HAVE CHOSEN RATHER POVERTY WITH CHRIST POOR THAN RICHES. THEY ARE REAL PILGRIMS ON EARTH, FROM WHOSE GOODS THEY ARE DETACHED AND ARE TRUE CITIZENS OF HEAVEN, WHEREIN THEIR TREASURE LIES. WE ARE POOR, YET WE ARE HAPPY, BECAUSE MANY TIMES WE RECEIVE A HUNDREDFOLD REWARD FOR THE SACRIFICE WE HAVE MADE; WE ARE HAPPY, BECAUSE FREE FROM EARTHLY IMPEDIMENTS, WE CAN RUN FASTER IN VIA DOMINI, CAN PREACH, TEACH AND LABOR FOR THE THE SALVA^U TION OF SOULS, WITH GREATER LIBERTY, EFFICACY AND EDIFICATION: WE ARE HAPPY, BECAUSE, IMBUED WITH THE SPIRIT OF POVERTY, WE ARE UNVULNERABLE TO THE ATTACKS OF ENVY, ANGER AND OSTENTATIOUSNESS.

IN THE MIND OF ST. IGNATIUS, POVERTY IS FOR RELIGIOUS ORDERS A WALL, A BU^UWARK, A REFUGE, WHICH DEFENDS THEM AGAINST MANY ENEMIES, AND PRESERVES THEM IN THEIR PROPER STATE. HENCE THE DEVIL AND OTHER