

VOTA MEA DOMINO REDDAM

EVERY JESUIT, ONCE A YEAR, IS GIVEN A PERIOD OF EIGHT DAYS TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY THE AFFAIRS OF HIS SOUL. IN ADDITION TO THIS, EVERY JESUIT WHO HAS NOT PRONOUNCED HIS LAST VOWS, IS GIVEN TWICE A YEAR A TRID^u~~X~~UM TO PREPARE FOR THE RENOVATION OF VOWS, WHICH ALTHOUGH IMPOSES NO NEW OBLIGATION IS CALCULATED "TO INCREASE DEVOTION, RENEW IN HIM THE MEMORY OF THE OBLIGATION WHICH BINDS HIM TO GOD AND TO STRENGTHEN HIS ATTACHMENT TO HIS VOCATION."

THERE WAS A DAY WHEN I TOOK THE THREE VOWS OF POVERTY, CHASTITY AND OBEDIENCE, AND THE FOURTH VOW OF ACCEPTING THE GRADE THE GENERAL MAY THINK FIT TO ASSIGNE ME TO, UT VITAM IN SOCIETATE PERPETUO DEGAM. EACH VOW WAS A DELIBERATE ACT, IN WHICH THERE WAS SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT I WAS PROMISING, AND THERE WAS A CONSENT OF THE WILL, PRECEDED BY TWO YEARS OF NOVITIATE. NONE OF THE VOWS WAS PRONOUNCED UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF FEAR; THEY WERE PROMISES, PERFECTLY FREE, MADE TO GOD HIMSELF. THIS IS A VERY SERIOUS THOUGHT TO BE CAREFULLY WEIGHED BEFORE TAKING A VOW, AND NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN AFTER TAKING IT. IN MY VOW I MADE A PROMISE TO GOD HIMSELF. IF THIS THOUGHT WEIGHS DOWN THE SOUL ON THE ONE HAND, IT IS ALSO CAPABLE OF INSPIRING IT. THE VOWS OF RELIGION ARE A STRICT OBLIGATION, WHICH MAN ASSUMES BEFORE GOD HIMSELF: BUT GOD IS GOOD ENOUGH TO GIVE HIS ASSURANCES ALSO TO MAN.