

All for the Service of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament¹

Angers, Monday, October 17, 1864

My Sisters, the first day has ended. Normally, we use the first day [f retreat] to recollect ourselves, in order to get ready to soar. We don't do much on the first day: we take our place at the feet of the Good Lord; we clean our heart and our mind, then we get started. You will see that the Good Lord will speak to your heart: then we proceed.

Here then is your Rule²; it is based on ours. Since you come from the same trunk, you must be based on the same rule. You don't have all the rules that we have – you don't have the priesthood – you cannot have them; you don't have what pertains to studies. **What pertains to you is adoration**: you have the same as we have. **Then you have manual labor and retreats for pious women**. We also have retreats; regarding manual work we cannot have that. There is a chapter on religious rites. In your rule, there are fine distinctions needed for your position; but the principles are the same. You have had some adjustments, but we haven't had any yet. The second part of your rule is better than ours: it is clearer. It's the same rule, but the style is different.

We have four houses: the professed, the novitiate, the scholasticate, and the house of solitude where some of our men want to be isolated like at the Chartreuse. We have not started (this 4th one yet); I'm looking for a place – perhaps in Jerusalem; we shall see about that.

This is not the first rule you had. The key ideas were contained there. Ours had not yet been accepted by Rome. We needed a more detailed form. That's fine.

Here is the first chapter – nothing other than the key ideas of the entire Society. Everything is included. The rest is the goal; here you see the means. We begin by giving you your title: The least family – you are the youngest. You were blessed on the same day that we were, during the first audience with the Holy Father, when we received our laudatory brief, on the eve of the Epiphany, at the first Vespers. I could no longer have an audience with the Pope, when I happened to meet Bishop Fioramonti. He took your supplication and told me: I'll take care of it. You were very lucky: you were blessed from the very beginning, while other communities only when they are fully developed. There were merely a few of you gathered together – like a family – and the blessing was in perpetuity. Today you can see that what the Good Lord blesses, he blesses well. **What is your purpose?** You are for solemn worship, exposition day and night. There are very few congregations who have solemn worship – there are only the Reparatrix in Paris and you, in the entire world.

[...]

I know only the Reparatrix who have solemn worship; Marie Reparatrix does not have night adoration. You have nocturnal. The women adorers of Rome have perpetual cult: but, at night, they remove the Blessed Sacrament around four or five o'clock; they have nocturnal adoration. Many others, like the Picpus Sisters, the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament have adoration, but they don't have exposition. You have adoration immediately, from the outset.

[...] Listen, if ever the Good Lord wants you to have new foundations, don't go with too few, as we did. From the first day, you must make adoration: you must start like you are doing today. You need at least sixteen; eighteen – you need extras, because some might get sick.

¹ Number 516. *La règle de 1864. Chap. I et II.*

² *Constitutions de la Congrégation des Servantes du Très Saint Sacrement*, Paris, Adrien Le Clère et Cie, Printer for Our Holy Father the Pope and the Archbishopric, 1864.

You have two ends, pay close attention; you are for the apostolate, you have an apostolate. Which one? That of the four ends of sacrifice; it is the most beautiful that you could have.

1° To give to our Lord the worship of adoration and love.

2° To thank him for having loved humanity so much.

3° To ask pardon for the entire world: that is reparation.

4° To pray for priests, for the entire world, and for all who work for the glory of our Lord.

Notice St. Theresa. If only all of you together could equal one like her... This saintly woman had been chosen by God to combat Lutheranism that threatened to overrun Spain and the whole of Europe. She says in her autobiography: My dear Daughters, our purpose is to work for the salvation of souls, so that God may bless the preachers who work for the salvation of souls. Also, that order had never needed reform.

Is that all? You also have retreats. You understand that this is not yet the time for this, but the time will come when you will be able to receive persons who will come for retreats. What will happen? You will do much good by forming adorers in the world. **What else? Work for the Eucharistic cult, making liturgical vestments, albs, cloths for our Lord, so that he will be well served.** This is the virtue of St. Martha. When you have time you can do this. That is your end. – Now your furniture is not yet in order – but you have done it. You finished the decorations for the Cenacle, and for those of Paris, did you not? The Blessed Virgin was the first sacristan: she took care of everything; she was the mother.

To attain these goals you will make vows. You realize that you are not here primarily to become religious sisters. If that is what you want, then go to some other convent where the members become perfect in order to go to heaven as religious. These good religious will become good teachers, good nurses, working out their salvation. That is not our purpose. What are we aiming at? **To become good adorers.** As the shortest way to reach perfection, we take the vows of poverty – detachment; chastity – the purest life; obedience – like our Lord; and the Eucharistic vow – which is perfection itself. You come with the mantle of honor, in order to have the right to appear on the prie-dieu with the required conditions.

[...]

The apostolate of the Society is to make you religious, to introduce you and accompany you to the antechamber; then we leave you – you are the one to enter. Who has the right to ask you: What happen between you and our Lord? That is your personal affair. **What is your spirit?** The spirit of love. There can be no other, since the spirit is drawn from the end, and the end is the Eucharist – the supreme abiding love. Since it is love that has brought you, you must have this spirit of love. The love of Jesus Christ can only be a love of sanctification, of crucifixion; you can and you must have this, but ultimately, it is not the characteristic of the love of the Blessed Sacrament. Its character is simply love – this shall be your supreme law. So the one who loves the most will be the one who is most in her vocation.

Notice how our life differs from the Jesuits, the Cistercians, and the Carthusians. They concentrate on obedience, penance, and solitude, saying: The one who is the most obedient, or the most penitential, or the most solitary is the best religious. We say: **The one who loves the most is the best religious.** If ever asked for information, just present this first chapter: everything is there; the rest is only a further development.

The second chapter. You realize that there is no limit to what could be added. However, God will guide you. You must know clearly that you have been accepted only to become adorers – that is the end you have chosen. No one asked: Will she become a saint, will she bring honor to our Society? We were not even concerned about your wealth – not at all. What did we ask? **Will she be a good adorer?** In worldly service, doubts are investigated. Even if you had wealth and all the qualities of the world, if you

are not a good adorer we don't want you; you will not be a member of our community. Our Lord does not want it. You were chosen only to be adorers, nothing else. You may have qualities that can be of service; since you are adorers, everything can serve the master. Personally, I would like to see every virtue, science, and great men to come and serve our Lord – he is king. We refuse no one, but we ask: Can you serve the master? If one agrees and says yes, that's fine! Be happy; that's everything.

You understand that you must be attached to the roman Church, as to your life. She gives you her priests. Without her blessing, you would not exist. My blessing would have meant nothing; it is the Holy Father who gives the blessing and the increase. If all requests had been granted, we'd have enough for an entire village.

Everything written in the liturgical laws is sacred: no one among us accepts anything else – absolutely not. The Holy Father does not always command; but his wish is our command. [...] We obey the Pope at all times. That is why we allow only what is liturgical in our cult – everything else is only an innovation from some bishop.

[...]

You must never accept any external work. The service of a person, even king or emperor, must never make you leave your service. Adoration makes you a sacred person, totally, that's enough for you. Mary chose the better part: the contemplative soul, the contemplative life. In the world, contemplative persons are despised.

[...]

My Sisters, become aware that the contemplative life is more perfect than the apostolate. If you want to participate in good works, go elsewhere. Those who do not like the contemplative life do not appreciate this state. The world likes to see people involved in hospitals, at the foot of a bed. The Carthusians, the contemplative souls save the world; others merely apply the graces obtained by the contemplative life.

[...]

Note that we don't give you the same motto as ours. That is for priests; we are for apostolate and you for service. It would be too misleading. We are at the higher end of society – we are priests, and it fits us. And so, at the head of your letters, you should not put: *Adveniat regnum tuum*, but rather: ***All for the service of Jesus in the most Blessed Sacrament.***

[...]



Points for reflection:

Here, what definition is given to the word “mission”? What means does St. Peter Julian propose to express that mission?

What relation does he see between adoration and external works? (cf. RL # 1)