

(From Mo. Marguerite Guillot Conferences to the Novices)

ON THE CHAPTER OF FAULTS AND DIRECTION – July 23, 1865

I am going to speak to you, my Sisters, on the Chapter of Faults and Direction.

There are two kinds of accusations – the first is made in the Chapter Room before the Community; the second before the Superior or the Mistress of Novices in the Novitiate.

At the first, we accuse the exterior failings against the Rule, the customs, directives given, and failings in the employments. The accusations must be made in a spirit of faith, with attentiveness, respect and seriousness, for if we have the proper attitudes, we will obtain pardon for those things of which we accuse ourselves.

I am going to read you a passage from a learned theologian on the subject of the Chapter of Faults, and you will see what he has to say about it; *“The Chapter of Faults is almost a sacramental accusation by which we accuse the faults that we have committed against the Rule, in the employments, at the recreations and elsewhere. This accusation is made in Chapter where we receive from the person who presides a penance which is more or less severe, more or less painful and humiliating. The manner of accusations depends on the laws established in the Order.”*

We must avoid divulging the faults of others when making our accusations, and we must accuse ourselves with humility, seeking out those faults which humiliate us the most. The Chapter of Faults is such an important and useful exercise for the preservation of good order in the Community, and so conducive to advancing in religious perfection that all religious orders have established it as an efficacious means of practicing virtue.

You know, my Sisters, what formula we use in the Congregation. Always make your accusations with humility, discretion and exactitude, and by thus accusing your own faults you will make amends for them before the Community and before our Lord.

Let us pass on now to private accusations and to direction. There, it is good to accuse ourselves with more details in order to help our Superior to know us better. I do not tell you to accuse your sins; certainly not, but without speaking of your sins there are intimate things that can be said and which permit the person who directs you to give you the advice that is most suitable for you. But you must speak of these things freely yourselves if you wish to do so, for no one can or should ask you questions of a personal nature, that is, questions pertaining to the interior domain. You are free.

Some of you are perhaps ill at ease about your direction, not knowing how to go about it. Just be very simple, seeking in direction only the means of living your religious life better. Discuss your adorations, what are the ordinary subjects you choose, the fruits drawn from them, the difficulties encountered therein; let them speak of your religious life, of the sorrows and struggles you encounter in it. Ask the advice you need to practice the religious virtue, and to fulfill your tasks or employments, etc.

A Direction made with necessary implicitly, humility and submission, enlightens the soul, prevents or dispels many temptations and difficulties and makes the soul enter ever more completely into its vocations.

How I wish that you may draw the greatest possible fruit from your Directions, for the better service of our Lord.
