

(From Mo. Marguerite Guillot Conferences to the Novices)

DIRECTION – SUBJECTS TO BE TREATED THEREIN – April 2, 1866

Director is necessary for everyone, postulants, novices and professed; for the first, in order to form them in the religious life, for the latter, in order to advance ever further in perfection.

In general you let direction frighten you too much; when you are called to it, several among you become upset, confused, and do not know how to say what they wish. All that come from the fact that you do not know how to go about it; you do not have the right idea of what direction is.

Direction is simply laying open your heart frankly and completely about your religious life, the manner in which you conduct yourselves therein, and about the manner in which you do your duties; it is being frank and open about your trials, your difficulties, your work, etc. in order to receive the advice, the enlightenment or even the reproaches you need.

You must prepare your direction in advance and for that purpose, you must recollect yourselves, pray and ask the light of the Holy Spirit. Then, when you have taken note of what you feel you should say, maintain in yourself a recollected attitude and try to arouse in yourself sentiments of faith and humility.

You are under no obligation to speak of matters concerning the state of your soul, and of your conscience, and we must not question you about it. You are entirely free to remain silent on all that regards the interior. If you wish to reveal it in a spirit of faith, you may do so, but no one can oblige you to do so.

After having awaited your turn in silence and recollection, you must approach the person who directs you with humility and receive with docility and gratitude her admonitions, her instructions and even the penances she may impose on you.

Here are the different subjects that you have to treat of in direction:

1. Health – some talk too much about it; others make the state of their health a veritable mystery and this is a lack of simplicity. When you feel indisposed and having thought it over before our Lord, you realized that this slight ailment could become serious, speak of it very simply because with some care it can often be remedied at the beginning. If they are not treated in time, slight ailments can degenerate into illnesses or serious infirmities.

But do not be too concerned about passing discomforts that soon disappear with a little rest. Make known the state of your health; you must do so in order that I may know the kind of employments to give you, or those from which I must remove you.

2. Prayer – which for us is adoration. You would do well to say how you make it, how you prepare for it, what difficulties you encounter, or what troubles assail you therein; you must say if prayer is easy, if it is consoling or troubling, it is distracted and difficult, and to what causes you attributed this state. We shall teach you how to bear these feelings if they are trials, or we shall indicate what you have to do if they are the result of some faults; we may even forewarn you, if it be necessary, against illusions of the imagination and self-love.

Finally, you will receive all the advice you need to learn to equip yourselves well of this, your primary duty.

3. The Rule: Say how you observe it and mention the points on which you recognize that you are at fault; say whether these negligence are habitual or accidental. Say what are the points that you find hardest to observe and for what reason. In this manner, we can help you to correct yourselves while if you do not make these things known, it would be to the detriment of your souls.
4. The Employments: You must say how you do your work and with what dispositions of submission you perform it. Also mention the attraction or repugnance that you feel in fulfilling these employments.
5. Mutual Support: Say in what manner you conduct yourselves with your Sisters, whether you have difficulty in getting along with some of them, and whether there are some with whom you are less at ease, for this might come from a sympathy or antipathy that would have to be corrected.
6. Character defects: We all have our individual character which has its defects that we must combat. Some are astonishingly sensitive and are always giving endless reasons to prove they are not sensitive; others are impatient, others sulky, cross, etc. At direction you must study your character and say what you know about it so that the person directing you may be able to help you to correct your faults.

You understand my dear Sisters that you must not wish to treat all these subjects at each direction; you must concentrate on the one that seems most important. Finally, whatever subject you may choose, speak simply and clearly about it. There are some who speak a lot and say nothing, who repeat the same thing several times, who mix one thing with another, tiring themselves uselessly. Do not be like that: say what you have to say and when the question has

been settled do not comeback anymore on that point. After Direction, thank God for the advice that has been given to you and be grateful for it.

You always have some grace to be thankful for. If you are happy it is a grace of joy; if you are sad as a result of not having been understood, of not having obtained what you wished, or not having said all that you wished, it is a grace of suffering for which you must be grateful. A Servant of the Blessed Sacrament must seek consolation only in our Lord. So then, my good daughters, follow the advice that I have just given you; act, my good daughters, follow the advice that I have just given you; act always with a spirit of faith and far from being difficult, direction will be easy and will serve for the greater good of your souls.
